Talking about identity in the age of globalization seems both redundant and necessary since identity has taken on such a prominent position in mainstream culture and politics. However, far from identity battles of the twentieth-century in the West, or ground zero of culture wars, nowadays identities are at the forefront of what many argue is nothing more than radical reification of categories, of recirculation and brining back to the master-fold of identity and oppression by using identity to create new niche marketing groups (such as gay or Black-oriented magazines,) to pit one identity against another, or create temporary reversals of roles within the same system of master-narratives. Most recently, it is the American elections that have show us, on a daily basis, how widely influential are the so-called politics of identity, and how highly problematic and ambiguous they can become. Where can we place the issue of identity, and how can we talk about it without relegating our thinking to the old dualist, subject-object problematic of being? How can we avoid the problems of categorization and solidification of singular identities?

In her text which examines the notion of post identity Judith Roof elaborates on the need for the existence of such a theoretical nomen:
Поимот „пост-идентитет“ ја продолжува низата „пост“-ови: постмодернизам, пост-структурализам, пост-kapitalizam, кои подразбираат една надмена неодреденост. Од една страна, како поимот авангарда, подразбираат скок нанапред, отстапка од постарите начини на размислување во насока на порадикални поими кои ги побиваат претпоставките и ги оспоруваат воспоставените „вистини“. Од друга страна, пак, сите „пост“-ови зависат од и се проникнуваат со поимите од кои текнуваат. Значењето на „пост“-терминот подразбира длабоко познавање на постариот поим, а претставката означува една амбициозна нова перспектива.

Поради сложеноста на прашањата и потребата од надминување на поимот просветлена индивидуалност заснована на внатрешноста на сопственото jас и на чисто социоконструктивистичкиот третман на идентитетот, се поставува и прашањето што претставува идентитет во двадесет и првиот век. Според Руф, идентитетите се правосилен израз на потребата од борба со проблематичните и жестоки другости во општествата. Меѓутоа, нè потсетува дека проблем се јавува доколку создадените идентитети се резултат на угнетувачки системи, кога обично се „или потврда на спротивната или оспорување на самата категорија.“ Освен тоа, кога идентитетите ќе се утврдат во засебни категории, како на пример македонски и женски, без да се земат предвид постојаните престапи кои секој од нас ги прави кога е идентитетот во прашање, тогаш и самите стануваат облик на жестока другост и исклучување. Во крајна сметка, прашањата разгледана уште повеќе се усложнуваат поради глобалните економија и култура засновани на поимите откривање и употреба на засебните идентитети, со цел продажба и создавање на сè повеќе нови пазари. Сево ова, пак, со цел враќање на идентитетите во матицата на глобалниот капитал, во виорот на таканапрените протоци: проток на пари, луѓе, пазари, стока и

The term “post-identity” reflects the impetus of other “posts”-postmodernism, post-structuralism, post-capitalism—all of which imply a cocky ambivalence. On the one hand, like the concept of the avant-garde, they suggest a leap ahead, a departure from older ways of thinking into more radical concepts that overturn assumptions and question established “truths.” On the other hand, all “posts” are dependent upon and entwined inextricably with the concepts implied by their root words. The very significance of the “post”—ing gesture depends upon large-scale familiarity with an older concept, the prefix signaling a hopeful shift in perspective.

Given the complexity of issues, and the need to go beyond the notion of Enlightenment individuality based on interiority of one’s Self, and beyond purely social-constructivist engagement with identity, the question is what is identity in the twenty-first century? According to Roof identities are valid expressions of the need to combat problematic and violent otherings created in our societies. However, she reminds us that the problem is that if identities produced are as a result of oppressive systems then they usually result in “either a reaffirmation of the opposition or a challenge to the category itself.” Furthermore, when identities are solidified into discrete categories of for example “female” or “male” without acknowledging constant transgressions that each of us goes through when identities are concerned, then they themselves become a form of violent othering and exclusion. All of these questions/problems are further compounded by the global economy and culture which is built upon the notions of excavation and usage of discrete identities in order to sell and create an ever-increasing number of new markets. All that is done to, in the end, bring identities back into the fold of the global capital, pull them into the vortex of the so-called flows: flows of money, people, markets, goods, and many other “things” subsumed under the multinational corporate
flag. However, as we are being constantly reminded these so-called flows are based entirely on the world separated into those who can engage in flows and those who are forever stuck in what Italian artistic collective Multiplicity has called “the solid sea”; people who are trapped in the back doors of global culture, who are stuck in airports, sea ports and anonymously slaving in upper-class homes. These instances of solidity, impenetrability, and transience are also instances which point to the paradox of identity politics, the fact that in many cases identity politics ignores or cannot see past its own shortcomings and violence.

The category of identity as understood by contemporary theory acknowledges the notion of transgression, fluidity, in-between-ness, and difference. Such thinking about identity is termed “thinking otherwise” and investigates the ways in which individuals do not fit into categories as assigned by discrete identities. Furthermore, such modes of thinking also acknowledge that if nothing else, culture wars and identity politics as experienced in the West, and especially in North America, need to be thought about again, turned inside out in order to understand the complexity and idiosyncratic nature of being in today’s world. Gilles Deleuze’s work is probably the most successful in its breaking of the categories of identity, and his ability to point out the sites at which solidarity of identities is broken by transgression (transgender, trans-nationalism, and various new media and cyber phenomena such as feminist cyber pornography for instance.) Deleuze calls our attention to “life” in all its forms, life which cannot be contained and which through its inevitability changes everything around it. An example of “life” at work, of thinking otherwise for Deleuze can be most clearly seen in philosophy and art and it is the latter that I would like to discuss in more detail. Contemporary
poинакво размислување, ќе најдеме во философската и уметноста, а втораа би да разгледала поинакво размислување за идентитетот. Преку нејзиниот естетски и сетилен однос со светот и особенит проток на живот низ уметноста, уметниците ги избегнуваат замките на категориите и на дуалистичкото, поимско размислување. Делез уметничкиот чин го сфака како чин налик на философското, а ќе ги разгледаме и начините на кои се проникнуваат. Сето ова ќе биде поврзано со специфична уметничка практика, за која како пример ќе го земеме творештвото на српската изведувачка Тања Остојиќ. Таа речиси секојпат работи со поимањата на идентитетот и неговата проблематика од гледна точка на уметничка од Источна Европа која живее меѓу порозните граници на ЕУ и во рамки на честопати компликуваниот уметнички свет. Возразам две конкретни дела, постерот/паното од 2004 година, По Курбе, почејокон на светош (After Courbet, L’origine du Monde), и Повели (Be My Guest), од 2001 година, изведба и видео. Би сакала да ги поврзам уметноста како вид непоимско размислување налик на философското творештво на Делез, како и влијанието на уметничкото творештво, како што го опишуваше Делез во својот текст за Френсис Бекон (Francis Bacon), не само врз нашиите сетила туку и врз нашето самочувствие, на што ќе го надоврзам и на што Брајан Масуми (Brian Massumi) го нарекува афект и создавање идентитети, или настан на идентитет. Како афективното влијание на уметноста врз гледачот е пример на идентитет кај когошто различната е истовремено и потврда? Трудов прво ќе го разгледа влијанието на сфакањето за идентитетот на Делез врз уметноста и на уметноста како креативен чин на поинакво размислување. Потоа ќе ја разгледа art practices are, I argue with Deleuze, primary examples of thinking otherwise about identity. Through their aesthetic and sensory engagement with the world, and the ways in which life flows through art, artists are able to avoid falling into the pitfalls of identity categories and dualist, representational thinking. Deleuze’s notion of the artistic act as the act parallel to the philosophical event, and the ways in which the two intersect will also be analyzed. All of this will be related to a specific artistic practice exemplified in the work of Serbian performance artist Tanja Ostojić. Ostojić almost always deals with notions of identity from the standpoint of an Eastern European female artist who lives in-between the porous borders of EU and within the often-problematic international art world. I will look at two specific works: After Courbet, L’origine du Monde poster/billboard from 2004, and Be My Guest from 2001, a performance and video work. I seek to make a connection between art practices as modes of non-representational thinking parallel to Deleuze’s philosophical work, moreover I seek to make a connection between the impact of artwork, as Deleuze describes it in his text on Francis Bacon, not only on our senses but most importantly on our sense of self thus also establishing a relationship between what Brian Massumi would call affect and creation of identities, or event of identity. How is art’s affective impact on the viewer also an instance of identity event in which difference is at the same time affirmation? Thus, this paper will first analyze the impact of Deleuze’s thinking about identity on art and his understanding of artistic practices as creative acts of thinking otherwise. Further it will look at art vis-à-vis the theory of affect as postulated by Brian Massumi and several other aesthetic and artistic theorists. Finally, I argue that by looking at Ostojić’s work in this context we can understand the ways in which various artistic practices, in this case performance, embody philosophical notions and thus
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уметноста во контекст на теоријата на афектот на Брајан Масуми и на уште неколку теоретичари на естетиката и уметноста. И на крај, преку творештвото на Остојиќ, би сакала да покажам како уметничките дела, во случајов изведби, ги опредељуваат философските поими и стануваат физички начин на размислување, или размислување преку телото.

Творештво

Тања Остојиќ е млада современа уметничка од Србија. Проблематиката на идентитетот не ја туѓа, а во своето творештво се обидува да ги оспори и преиспита односите на моќ и нивното делување во полето на политиката, културата и уметноста. Во суштина, во своите истражувања се одржува и ги открива матриците на либидото и нивниот тек и распределба во социокултурните сфери. Творештвото на Остојиќ опфаќа повеќе од десет години и низа уметнички активности: од изведби во кои своето голо тело го прекрива со мермерен прав и стои среде галерија, до дела од типот на Ке ју бидам ангел (I’ll Be Your Angel), во која го следи кураторот на 49. Биенале во Венеција, Харалд Земан. Во сите свои дела ја обработува важната тема за местото на женското тело во контекст на јавните и моќни мрежи на размена (бироа за доселеници, меѓународни уметнички организации, или јавни простори). Иако сиве овие мрежи се, наводно, простори во кои жените се слободни и рамноправни (барем на Запад), Остојиќ секојпат покажува дека сите тие се нереални замисли во кои женските тела секојпат влегуваат во некоја категорија, најчесто престапна, а во нејзиниот конкретен случај дури и порнографска. Затоа една од основните цели на Остојиќ е преиспитување на идентитетот, а нејзиното творештво може да го сфатиме како очудување (queering) на категоријата

The Work

Tanja Ostojić is a young contemporary artist from Serbia. She is no stranger to the problems of identity and through her work she seeks to challenge and question power relations and their workings in the realm of politics, culture, and art. More specifically, she has always used herself as the starting point for such investigations, always bringing to light matrices of libidinal desire and their flows and distribution in the socio/cultural realms. Ostojić’s work spans more than ten years of practice and encompasses a variety of artistic engagements: from performance works in which she covered her naked body with marble dust and stood in the middle of an art gallery, to works such as I’ll Be Your Angel in which she followed the 49th Venice Biennale curator Harald Szeemann. Through all of her works Ostojić touches upon a very important point and that is the positioning of the female body within the context of public and quite powerful exchange networks (immigration bureaus, international art organizations, public spaces.) Although all of these networks are supposedly spaces in which women are equal and free (at least in the West) Ostojić proves time and time again that these are all illusionary constructs which show that in fact women’s bodies are always-already in some kind of a category, usually a transgressional one, in her case even labeled as pornographic. Therefore, questioning identity is one of Ostojić’s primary goals. Her work can be understood as queering of the category
идентитет. Словенечката теоретичарка Марина Гржиниќ (Marina Grzinić) смета дека поимот квир, кој се обидувам да го поврзам со творештвото на Остојиќ, е „она‘ нешто помеѓу родот и полот кое ни овозможува да речеме дека нешто не е сосема одредено, ниту жена ниту маж, а ги обединува во едно радикално поставување на животот и медиумот, уметноста и културата“.

Остојиќ го разработува сфаќањето за идентитетот и успешно го извртува, или, што би рекол Делез, го детериторијализира како категорија.

"The body exerts itself in a very precise manner, or waits to escape from itself in a very precise manner. It is not I who attempts to escape from my body, it is the body that attempts to escape from itself by means of... in short, a spasm: the body as plexus, and its effort or waiting for a spasm."

This is one instance of how Gilles Deleuze describes the relationship between the body and the work of art, more specifically Francis Bacon’s painting. In his book Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation Deleuze carefully lays out networks of contact and events of becoming between the body and the work. Through his investigation of the work of art in its immediate impact on the body, and the event of connection between the two, Deleuze also reveals his understanding of thinking otherwise, or thinking outside of the established re-territorialized domains of identity. Ronald Bogue states that in his writing on art, Deleuze clearly establishes the points of contact between philosophy and art stating that they both construct planes of consistency in their own particular ways. However, Bogue argues, in their collaborative work Deleuze and Guatari state that although philosophy and the arts operate similarly in the sense of planes of consistency...
At heart of Deleuze’s thinking about art and philosophy is his work on finding a different language of identity, one that does not fall within the subject/object categories but leads towards understanding of identity in terms of singularities. In Deleuze’s terms instead of thinking about the Self, one needs to think of a life. John Rajchman in his introduction to *Pure Immanence* argues that the notion of a life in Deleuze “involves a different ‘synthesis of the sensible’ than the kind that makes possible the conscious self or person.” This of course implies the importance of sensation in Deleuze’s reworking of identity. A life is therefore, a non personal category functioning through sensations. It pre-exists the Self, and is created through interaction of the forces of the senses and materiality of our lives- of being in the matrix of forces in the world. Rajchman writes again that “the being of sensation is what can only be sensed, since there precisely pre-exists no categorical unity, no *sensus communis* for it.” Understanding being-in-the-world through the senses and as an interaction of senses and forces both within a singularity and in the world at large posits that there can never be a stable Self, an individual Self, created out of a stable and thinking interiority. Deleuze writes in *Pure Immanence*:

> But we should not enclose life in the single moment when individual life confronts universal death. A life is everywhere, in all moments that a given living subject goes through and
that are measured by given lived objects: an immanent life carrying with it the events or singularities that are merely actualized in subjects and objects. Thus indefinite life does not itself have moments, close as they may be to one another, but only between-times, between-moments; it doesn’t just come about or come after but offers the immensity of an empty time where one sees the event yet to come and already happened, in the absolute of an immediate consciousness.

Therefore, self becomes a life which is constantly molded and shaped through the work of inside and outside forces, changing within a given moment in time. It then becomes more apparent that the reason why Deleuze views art with high regard is its character which produces a peculiar kind of reaction in the viewers, a reaction that hits the sensible core which is both inside and outside of the body. When for example Deleuze writes about Bacon’s painting in *The Logic of Sensation* he constantly points out that Bacon’s work produces a series of spasms. On the one hand the painting itself, within its own constitutive/formal matrix produces spasms, but it also goes further than that and transfers those sensations to the viewer. In a way the sensations pass through the bodies as there is a constant flow of forces between the work and the viewer, and between the work and the artist. Artists are therefore able to render matter expressive paralleling the ways in which philosophers are able to push thinking onto a plane of immanence. Bogue argues that this paralleling is what made Deleuze so interested in art. However, art and philosophy cannot be seen as identical, only parallel as each functions on a different plane, or level. This means that the ways in which Deleuze understands his philosophy to be functioning against traditional subject/object identitarian thinking, is mirrored in his understanding of art that at the end produces a similar anti-identitarian temporary unification between the artwork, artist and the viewer. In short, as Rajchman
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argues “asymmetrical synthesis of the sensible” which produces the event of becoming in art requires “an exercise in thought, which, unlike the synthesis of the self or consciousness, involve a sort of dissolution of the ego.” It is precisely this moment of the dissolution of the ego that the traditional indentititarian thought cannot imagine, and that art practice produces through its affective functioning. We can argue even further that art challenges indentitarian thinking both on the level of its form- through functioning of the materiality of the work, its bodily, sensual connections to the viewers and the artists, but it also produces it through its content by refusing to give away meanings, or by creating meanings through the senses requiring of the viewer to surrender herself to the work in order to understand it. So to come back to the question posted in the introduction to this essay: How can we think otherwise? In aesthetic/artistic terms according to Deleuze thinking otherwise happens in the instance of becoming when the viewer and the work are engaged in an exchange of forces, sensations, and affects. Rajchman argues that Deleuze’s transcendental empiricism is “the experimental relation we have to that element in sensation that precedes the self as well as any ‘we,’ through which is attained, in the materiality if living, the powers of ‘a life.’” Thinking otherwise in artistic terms therefore demands becoming the work itself, it is the way in which the artworks bring the viewer into their fold but at the same time also become something different. In Thousand Plateaus Deleuze argues that each individual is “an infinite multiplicity, and the whole of Nature is a multiplicity of perfectly individuated multiplicities. The plane of consistency of Nature is like an immense Abstract Machine, abstract yet real and individual.” An infinite multiplicity implies a constant shifting of the ‘I’ from one becoming the next as we live in the world. The shifting or becoming for art can mean that each encounter with the work is at the same time also an event of becoming the work, and becoming Other.
With this in mind we can argue then that each act of performance art is also an act of becoming in its most concrete sense, but in a meta-communicative sense as well. Thus, Tanja Ostojić’s work *Be My Guest* from 2001 is an instance of such a becoming. The work involved an interesting set-up in which the artist rearranged the floor of the gallery *Pallazo delle Esposizioni* in Rome by placing a hot tub in the middle. The invitations sent out for the show announced that the show will be a casual gathering with food and drinks. What awaited the invited guests when they arrived at the gallery, however, was something very different. Ostojić was sitting in the hot tub with the curator of the show. The food for the occasion was served at and around the tub. Ostojić and the curator both being
naked proceeded to engage in what appeared sexual games. Marina Gržinić argues that this instance of playing with notions of sexuality and art is in actuality an instance of over-identification or “of traversing the fantasy” and of incarnation. By what Gržinić calls over-identification Ostojić has pushed the fantasies of art to their limit by explicitly engaging in public display of sexuality on the gallery floor. What is even more important is that this openly sexual behavior involved the curator of the show thus pushing the art-curатель relationship further into the fantasmic game. I would argue that by staging the scene of the ultimate libidinal scene, Ostojić has also staged an event of becoming one with the curator and a symbolic becoming one with the audience. The act of simulated copulation is an act of becoming Other. The body of the female Eastern European artist staging the work in the so-called Western context therefore has inverted the usual “order of things”. The apparent sexuality which Ostojić has engaged here created an uncompromising political questioning of power relations-relations in which it is the male Western curator who usually has the ‘upper’ hand so to speak. In Ostojić’s case by exposing and pushing that power relationship to its limit, and by re-arranging the gallery space she has overtaken that space and through an act of becoming has reverted both the role of the audience - which has instead of watching a show become participant in a group sex act - and the role of the gallery/curator who has become a tool/stage for the artist to play out the reversal of roles. Furthermore, as Gržinić argues another important element of this work is Ostojić’s strategy of incarnation. Gržinić states that “over-identification is played-out in front of our eyes in ‘flesh’ (incarne) and ‘hot’ blood.” The strategy of incarnation, so common to many of the performance artworks, in this case is an event in which the audience becomes the artist’s lover - departing from their usual peeping Tom position. At one point during the evening
art critic Ludovico Pratesi jumped into the tub and finally crossed that sacred threshold between the artist and the critic - in the flesh - consequently establishing that this performance becomes important in its insistence to refuse the usual positioning of all the players in the artistic community. Further, it is its transgressional manner through which Ostojić creates what Deleuze has called the Figure in his writing on Bacon. Although *The Logic of Sensation* is a text written about quite a traditional form of art – painting - it touches upon some universal modes in which artworks operate. In his description of Bacon’s work Deleuze uses the term Figure to describe the ways in which the artist’s work traverses strict representational apparatus of Western painting and engages the viewer through passing of the force of sensation from the work to the viewer. He writes:

In this attempt to eliminate the spectator, the Figure already demonstrates a singular athleticism, all the more singular in that the source of the movement is not in itself. Instead, the movement goes form the material structure, from the field, to the Figure.¹⁵

Through the instance of exchange of forces between the two, the body (both the body of the work but also the body of the artist and the viewer,) exerts itself into what he calls the spasm, an instance of becoming something else. In this instance there is no I – Other divide but an instant flow of forces. In *Thousand Plateaus* Deleuze and Guattari write about the plane of consistency of nature:

This plane has nothing to do with a form or a figure, nor with a design or a function... Instead, it is a plane upon which everything is laid out, and which is like the intersection of...
Affect

Bringing out the notion of spasm or shudder points towards the aesthetics of affect which is what we could call Deleuze’s writing on art. The affect could be characterized as a connecting line between the work, the artist and the viewer. Ronald Bogue argues that the affect, as described by Deleuze, is the instance of “becoming other” through which the artists are able to “render palpable in the work of art the impalpable forces of the world.” Such an understanding of art is embodied and goes beyond purely phenomenological approach of which Gilles Deleuze speaks when he writes about Bacon. He says:

Sensation is the opposite of the facile and the ready-made, the cliché, but also of the “sensational,” the spontaneous, etc. Sensation has one face turned towards the subject (the nervous system, vital movement, “instinct,” “temperament” – a whole vocabulary common to both Naturalism and Cézanne), and one face turned towards the object (the “fact,”
местото, настанот). Бидување-во-светот, како што велат феноменолозите: истовремено постанувам во осетот и нешто се случува преку него, едно низ друго, едно во другото. А на крајот, телото е и субјект и објект, праќа и прима осети. Како набљудувач, осетот го чувствува само доколку навлезам во сликата, доколку го дофатам единството меѓу сетилното и сетеното. Вака Сезан ги поучи импресионистите: осетот не се наоѓа во „слободната“ или бестелесна игра на боја и светлина (импресии); тој, напротив, се наоѓа во телото, дури и во материјалноста на едно јаболко. Бојата е во телото, осетот е телото, а не во воздухот.\footnote{18}

Така делото не е само ослободен \emph{objet d’art}, туку создава низа врски преку кои делото и гледачот, според Делез, го постигнуваат „единството помеѓу осетувањето и осетеното“.\footnote{19} Традиционалните

the place, the event) Being-in-the-World, as the phenomenologists say: at one and the same time I become in the sensation and something happens through the sensation, one through the other, one in the other. And at the limit, it is the body that being both subject and object, gives and receives sensation. As a spectator, I experience the sensation only by entering the painting, by reaching the unity of the sensing and the sensed. This way Cezanne’s lesson against impressionists: sensation is not in the “free” or disembodies play of light and color (impressions); on the contrary, it is in the body, even the body of an apple. Color is in the body, sensation is the body, and not in the air.\footnote{18}

Thus, the work is not just a disengaged \emph{l’objet d’art}, but creates a series of connections through which the work and the viewer, as Deleuze states, reach “the unity of the sensing and the sensed.”\footnote{19} Traditional metaphysical

Тања Остојић, \emph{По Курбе, почеток на светот}, постер/папо, Виена, 2004.

Tanja Ostojić, \emph{After Courbet’s, L’origine du Monde}, poster-billboard, Vienna, 2004.
notions of identity and subjectivity are shattered and the new aesthetic can thus be engaged - aesthetics of affect. Following the trajectory of the aesthetics of affect as discussed in Deleuze, I argue that Tanja Ostojić engages with and mobilizes affect as one of the ways to connect with the audience and shatter the usual object/subject (viewer/work) relationship. Moreover her work mobilizes affect by situating the body as both the site of affect production, and the site of affect reception. Brian Massumi offers an in-depth understanding of affect in relationship to image-production. His approach to reading visual representation through aesthetics of affect is firmly rooted in Deleuze’s work. Affect, according to him, is the gap or a space between “content and effect” of visual representation. Like Deleuze who sees the body being “the limit” and both the subject and the object, Massumi argues that the body and its responses are crucial to understanding of the gap in which affect happens. The gap could be explained as a supratemporal (but not divine) moment in which “what we think of as ‘free,’ ‘higher’ functions, such as volition, are apparently being performed by autonomic, bodily reactions occurring in the brain outside consciousness, and between brain and finger but prior to action and expression.” What he calls half-second is not an empty space between an action and our intellectual reaction, but a virtual space of affect in which body itself “infolds contexts.” Similarly to other theorists who write about affect, Massumi equates affect with intensity which keeps our relationship to what we are looking at in the permanent state of action, suspense and potentiality. What all of this means is that image reception cannot be analyzed solely in terms of its semantic possibilities and structures. Our understanding of image-perception and of knowledge itself needs to include non-linear, resonant feedback created through affective states. Such embodied knowledge establishes, or confirms affect as
реакција која се создава преку афективните состојби. Таквото отелотворено знаење го воспоставува, или го потврдува афектот како „асоцијален, но не претсоцијален.“ Ова би значело дека каква било деконструктивна истрага на восприемањето на слики мора да ја вклучи и полусекундата на афект за која зборува Масуми.

Постерот на Тања Остојиќ Po Курбе, почеток на светот од 2004 година е пример за тоа како естетиката на афектот може да ја ползува политиката на идентитет за да понуди неидентитска критика на предметот. Делото го обработува проблемот на (не)легалните доселеници и трговијата со жени од Источна Европа. И што е најбитно, делото го критикува начинот на кој жените и нивните тела се кодираат и етикетираат во западноевропски контекст. Делото ја третира и западната историја на уметност цитирајќи познат, мртов уметник. Инсталацијата на Остојиќ се состои од огромен постер во чиј преден план се наоѓа долниот дел од торзот на уметничка изложен на голем број рекламни паноа во Виена и во градскиот парк во Грац. За разлика од сликата на Курбе, телото на Остојиќ не е голо; носи гаќички во препознатлива сина боја со дванаесетте звездици на Европската Унија лоцирани токму на публичната зона. Она што е интересно и придодава на афективното дејство е приемот на кој наиде кога постерот беше поставен на огромните паноа во Австрија. Постерот веднаш беше прогласен за порнографија и неколку седмици ја шокираше земјата. Како што самата Остојиќ тогаш забележа, иронично е што во делото нема голотија. Освен тоа, не може ни да се спореди со некои далеку поеасклицитни слики кои секојдневно се среќаваат по медиумите. Причините за лошитот прием во Австрија се кријат во афективната игра меѓу сексуалноста на уметничката и јавниот простор кој го “асocial but, but not presocial”. This would mean that any kind of deconstructive investigation of the image-reception needs to include the half-second of affect which Massumi talks about.

Tanja Ostojić’s poster After Courbet’s, L’origine du Monde from 2004 is an example of how aesthetics of affect can engages politics of identity offering a non-identitarian critique of the issue. This work addresses the problematic of illegal/legal immigration and sex-trade of women from Eastern Europe. Most importantly, the work mounts a critique of the ways in which those women and their bodies are codified and labeled in the West European context. The work also addresses the Western history of art by quoting famous, dead male artists. Ostojić’s installation consisted of a large poster foregrounding lower portion of artist’s torso exhibited on a number of billboards in Vienna and in Stadtpark in Graz. Unlike Courbet’s painting, Ostojić’s body is not nude; she is wearing panties in recognizable blue colour with twelve stars of the European Union promptly displayed on her pubic area. What is interesting about the work, and what adds to its affective functioning is the reception it got when it was displayed on large billboards in Austria. The poster was immediately pronounced pornographic and scandalized the country for several weeks. As Ostojić herself noticed at the time what is ironic is that there is absolute no nudity in the work. Furthermore, it actually does not compare to some, much more explicit images one would encounter in everyday media. Reasons for the poster’s infamous reception in Austria lie in the affective play it created between artist’s sexuality and the public space the work inhabited. More than just a representation dealing with the libidinal
Identities

The body doesn’t just absorb pulses or discrete stimulations; it infolds contexts, it infolds volitions and cognitions that are nothing if not situated. Intensity is asocial, bit not presocial - it includes social elements but mixes them with elements belonging to other levels of functioning and combines them according to different logic.25

If we follow Massumi’s argument then Ostojić manages to create specific formal elements to create zones of relationship between sex, identity, and nationhood, the larger-than-life billboard also extended itself out, taking over the space around it by its size and content. Thus, this enormous Eastern European vagina was usurping already liminal, insecure spaces the cities thus playing up the possibilities of transgression and slippage.
интензитет кои, пак, делуваат во меѓупросторот, во просторот во кој нашата познавателна страна сè уште не го сфатила она што телото веке го открило. И што е поважно, бидејќи слика е од сексуална природа, ваквото на натпознавателно восприемање на делото е уште посилно зашто гледачот веке станува дел од Другиот – во случајов, вагината на постерот. Можеби ваквото потсвесно делување на постерот е причината што беше така жестоко осуден, а во весниците се најде заедно со порнографските вести.

Од друга страна, пак, делото на Остојиќ создава и своевидна амбивалентност бидејќи нè повикува да „навлеземе“ во делото, но и нè одбива со своите димензии и тематика. Ваквата формална амбивалентност го прави гледачот сè уште посилно свесен за текстурата на делото. Ричард Дајер тврди дека природата на нерепрезентацијските знаци е иконичка, во терминологијата на Чарлс Пирс (Charles Pierce). Меѓутоа, наместо означување и означеноста да се поврзат по сличност, нивната врска кај нерепрезентацијските знаци се воспоставува преку сличност во однос на основната структурираност.26 Ова значи дека гледачите се пробиваат во и низ делото преку сирукцирани на чувствено за делото – интуицијата, или афектот на делото, а не некаква јасна сличност со препознатливите визуелни знаци. И на крај, ако се навратиме на текстот за Бекон од Жил Делез, она што тој го наредува Битисување-во-светот, или постанување во светот, овде би ја означувало близоста или навлегувањето на гледачот во Битното на самиот објект и нивно обединување во осетот.27

На крајот, сега ова не донесе до начините на кои делото на Остојиќ постои во областа на таканаречената релацион естетика. Во таков еден intensity which in turn function in the space of in-between, a space in which the cognitive side of us has not yet understood what the body has already infolded. More importantly, the fact that the image is sexual in nature makes this supra-cognitive reception of the work even more potent as it always-already makes the viewer become a part of the Other- the vagina in this work. Perhaps this subconscious functioning of the poster was the reason for the work to be publicly denounced in such a ferocious way, and placed in the newspapers together with the pornographic news.

On another level Ostojić’s poster also creates a kind of a formal push and pull as we are invited to “enter” the work but are also overwhelmed by its size and subject-matter. This formal push and pull of forces makes the viewer very cognitive of the texture of the work. Richard Dyer argues that the nature of non representational signs is iconic, in the sense that Charles Pierce would call iconic. However, instead of signifier and the signified being related in terms of resemblance, their relationship in non representative signs is established through resemblance in terms of basic structuration.26 This means that viewers make their way in and through the work by relating to the structure of the feeling for the work- its intuition, or the affect of the work rather than any clear resemblances to recognizable visual signs. Finally, to go back to Gilles Deleuze’s text on Bacon, what he refers to as Being-In-The-World, or becoming in the world, here would mean the closeness or entering of the viewer into the Being of the object itself, becoming one in the sensation.27

This finally brings me to the ways in which Ostojić’s work exists in the realm of the so-called relational aesthetic. Through such a practice the viewer is immersed into the
An excerpt from an Austrian newspaper article about Ostojic's work.
to Brennan this long-standing notion automatically excludes any real social formation. She adds that “we are, nonetheless, peculiarly resistant to the idea that our emotions are not altogether our own.”

And it is in the “sharing of emotions” that the transmission of affect can happen. Therefore, transmission of affect is a social process in its origin according to Brennan, but it is also biological and physical.

Ostojić’s poster plays exactly with this relationship between the political and the affective being and calls for a social relationship with the viewer in which the viewer is pulled into the fold of the work. The space of the poster because of its size and choice of placement in the public (commercial space) is extended into our, or real space. This form of artistic practice, involving poster-making, video works and performance events, in its very nature eludes regular systems of commodity exchange and the art market. Therefore, Ostojić’s works, either through their content, through the production of affect, or through exhibition/curatorial practices engage the social and the political proving that affective is also political—this in short can be called relational aesthetics.

Conclusions

I have started this paper by referring to the problematic position identity has in today’s culture. As argued, the complicated and often paradoxical situations that come out of the push and pull of the so-called identity politics are based on identitarian thinking which cannot go beyond subject/object relationships and the creation of innate Selfhood. The work of Gilles Deleuze points towards possible thinking outside the identitarian conundrum by
offering a way of thinking differently about being in the world. Being in the world as proposed by Deleuze is not one limited by so-called discrete identities, but marked by constant state of flux which actually more aptly describes our everyday relationships and negotiation of the Self. Connecting Deleuze’s philosophy to aesthetics leads to an inevitable understanding of art as an invaluable form of critique of identification politics precisely because of art’s ability to engage its surroundings on the level of the affective, subconscious forces. Finally, the positioning of art in the social and the political sphere needs to be reexamined and the works which enact the breaking of identity politics need to be more fully examined.

I have chosen to engage the notion of affect as the basic force through which identity politics can be shattered. As such, the affect is effective because of the loss of selfhood that it demands. The Self is no longer possible in Massumi’s half-second of the body’s response to affective stimuli. Furthermore, artworks which successfully engage affect demand of the viewer and the artist to surrender to the matrix of forces produced through the work and in that sense become one/Other with the work. In case of Ostojić’s art which often picks up the libidinal fantasy as its organizing aesthetics, the surrender of the viewer means a surrender to often controversial politics of the work- the viewer becoming artist’s lover for example. Consequently, this form of artistic creation can be called relational aesthetics. Relational aesthetics is a way to create art and at the same time escape the dead weight of identity politics. What is even more important is that such an artistic engagement follows Deleuze’s analysis that powerful art creates a spasm, a fluid zone of

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Ush te poznačajno je što takvijot umetnički angajman ja sledi analizata na Deleze deka močnata umetnost создава грч, флуидна зона на сили и интензитет, преку која се дофаќа нивото на иманенцијата, а „живот, веќе независен од Битието или подложен на Дејство – апсолутно непосредна свест чие делување веќе не се однесува на битие туку постојано се поставува во живот”.

Превод од англиски јазик: Калина Јанева

Notes:
2. Ibid., 2.
7. Ibid.


11. Ibid., 11.


14. Ibid., 74.


20. Ibid., 24.

21. Ibid., 29.

22. Ibid., 30.

22. Ibid., 30.


28. Ibid., 3.


References:


