

Temporary Monuments. 2017. Pechersky gallery, Moscow. Russia

Is one's body capable of feeling the pain of another as his/her own? Is it possible to break up the collective memory into separate fragments and experience them physically by making them a part of your personal story?

Artist Fyodor Pavlov-Andreevich in his series "Temporary monuments" invokes the history of slavery in Brazil, the country where he spends most of his life. Although slavery was officially abolished in Brazil in 1888, it remains in a latent form of forced labor as well as in the colonial black-white division of people to this day. As a starting point for his performances Fyodor took seven of the most popular episodes of tortures and punishments of slaves.

The artist as a hero of ancient myths passes the trials reproducing every single episode, similar to the passing through the dead and the living water. He climbs up a palm tree and sits there for seven hours; he lies on the beach constrained and surrounded by vultures; drowns in the waves of the ocean; hangs suspended by his legs on a tree for hours; crosses the city on foot in a muzzle-mask and eventually chains himself to a post.

Performances-manifestos, from the futuristic to the contemporary ones, were the self-expression of the objectors trying to find alternative methods of exploring and experiencing art in everyday life, as well as an opportunity to express the inexpressible through gesture, choreography and their own bodies. For Fyodor Pavlov-Andreevich a body becomes the main work material. Like a choreographer he creates a phrase with a gesture, with a single action he carves an event, the icono-graphics of his action simple in its visuality create multiple layers of interpretations. From the local history he derives the questions of the universal freedom, the boundaries of public and private, to the topic of violence.

Jean-Paul Sartre in his book "Intentionality: A Fundamental Idea of Husserl's Phenomenology" says that our cognition is the absorption of a subject - we are like a spider or an insect embrace it, inject our digestive juices into it, decompose it into elements and then appropriate it. In a similar way the artist deconstructs the space, recreates it through a very personal experience of a particular situation or an action. The author reinterprets a certain historical moment, as if creates a frame and a focus, that actualizes the situation, invisible until then for the viewer.

Performative practices tend not to construct a moment but indicate the typical / characteristic features in it, thereby defining the fulcrum of contemporaneity. By using the case as a successful unity of time and place, actions and performances break through the fabric of conventional reality. Through an often shocking gesture they slow down time, grasp the typical in our reality and highlight it.

For Fyodor Pavlov-Andreevich the "Temporary monuments is a project that shows how a slave continues to live, in one form or another, in the head and in the body of each of us. All monuments last seven hours, since "7" is the maximum number of hours that the human brain is able to visualize. And each monument is now captured, firstly in my memory, and secondly, in the form of installations and microfilm. I do not believe in the conventional monuments. Their meaning melts away over the years. What remains is a physical monument - but it does not necessarily continue to have the same meaning for the spectators as conceived by the author. Whereas the temporary monument has a chance for a deep imprint in the memory of the beholder - as the memory retains the ephemeral much stronger than the physical".