

Tik Tak / Reflection and self-reflection

I like to think about this exhibition and about the special conception of this project, as a work in progress that inevitably runs parallel to one of the basic thoughts of the Hungarian philosopher, Ágnes Heller's theory, according to which democracy is a communicative practice. Heller's research focuses on the diversity of human needs, their identification and their legitimacy. Expanding the Marxist theory on human needs, Heller points out the importance of reflection, of self-criticism, and of the creation of new social and political perspectives. It is between these logically related concepts that the Memento Park of Budapest can get a possible interpretation, which is the central theme of the exhibition.

The sculptures carry the communist dictatorship's rhetoric, but prescinding from this image, one can also examine their ideological and artistic value. Moreover, the fact that the post-communist Hungary has not destroyed these statues, but decided to keep them, transforming them into "anti-memorials", a sort of warning, changed the communicative function of these sculptures.

This is a demonstration of a free and courageous dialogue with history, and the indication of the will, that the interpretation of the present does not seek to remove all the objects of the past. This is a difficult process, as it is difficult to burn the very recent past. Dictators and ideologues, silent and helpless, motionless soldiers, giant fossilized idols make us think of these questions thanks to Roberto Vignoli's photos taken in the Memento Park, through the summer of 2012.

On the contrary, it seems that Isabella Nurigiani's puppet-army, composed of 100 small sculptures, is losing its tempo, posture and the rhythm of the march. There are some who lean forward, some on the side, and others decide to start dancing, breaking the lines.

Obviously, stiffness and compliance are sharply opposed in the installation. However, this world is much more a fantasy than a metaphor to the reality, and it finds its counterpoint thanks to a document that serves as striking evidence.

Patrizia Dottori's work is based on a sample of a Soviet passport, which the artist found precisely in the gift shop of the Memento Park. A useless passport, one cannot cross borders with it, it rather discourages any journey and keeps away from the danger of ideological infection, a passport in which the artist inserted her own identity, her own picture, her thoughts and favourite quotes.

Reflection and self-reflection, therefore, do not belong only to the political and social history of Hungary, but they can and must belong to all human beings, even through art, which is, to return to Agnes Heller's thoughts, the self-consciousness of humanity.

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