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ТРАНСПОЗИЦИИ II

Наши пути к
трансцендентной
бездомности

TRANSPOSITIONS II

How we find our ways
to transcendental
homelessness

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The leitmotif of the project "Transpositions" is contained in its title, which links to the Latin *trānspositiō* (displacement, rearrangement). It is based on the idea of a new kind of mobility, a mobility that faces art professionals in the era of globalization. The infrastructure of contemporary art reaching out worldwide offers the author the opportunity of dynamic traveling from one point in the world to another, introducing a new dimension of presence and migrational working strategies.

A crucial role in this process belongs to the art residencies that have formed a branched international network during the last decades. It is almost impossible to imagine a contemporary artist's practice without this international component — whether it means participation in institutional programmes or just a natural change of sociocultural contexts in which he or she works.

The concept of "home" plays a central role in this exhibition. The word "home" begins a large-scale associative chain, that includes both singular terms such as address, house, geographic territory, cultural succession as well as ontological categories like safety, existence, and being (Dasein). The forming of such structure as "home," its organisation and recognition as a space unit, is closely related to the development of the civilisation in whole. The borders of home define the borders between such basic oppositions like internal/external, understandable/inexplainable, my own/the other's, order/chaos, and security/danger. In the archaic period the home played a central role in the mythological-religious consciousness as the essence of the world mastered by humans. It determined strategies, customs and traditions, many of which still exist in the modern world as omens, patterns of behaviour and daily rituals.

The notion of "home" first seems to be familiar and simple, but is fraught with a universal constant, the anthropological code of human evolution. How the human correlates with the home reveals the socio-cultural paradigm of a particular time and epoch. As the concept of a worldview has changed throughout human history, so has the character of relationships between people and the place (or state) that we call "home."

The search for home and the continuous construction of identity has a fundamental meaning for the modern artist's practice on a sociopolitical and an ontological level. It influences his or her field of interest and methodological approach. Art residencies impact the artist's perception of home in a paradoxical way.

On one hand, being in the state of transfer, stretched in time and space, and the deeply integrated international component in the work of the contemporary artists sets forward a tradition of alienation from "home" and "domestic" cultural patterns. Today, artists rarely

position themselves as exclusive representatives of a local culture and build their identity through adoption, synthesis and continuous exchange.

On the other hand, the opportunity for such unprecedented professional mobility expands and diffuses the borders of home. Art residencies offer the artists a developed infrastructure of a global home that enables living and working in situations of temporary belonging to a certain area, community and culture. Artists-in-residence make up modernity's nomads, who plough new routes and re-map current cultural geographies worldwide. On their way — which becomes the unending search for an imaginary home and tools for identity construction — they repeat the 20th Century's path of the man who had lost his connection to the land but found freedom in what György Lukács calls the state of "transcendental homelessness."

"Home" and "homelessness," which once were opposed to each other, are now two integral (and complementary) parts of existence. The modern day experience goes hand-in-hand with the fundamental feeling of nostalgia, the need to be home everywhere and nowhere, always and never. It is nostalgia as homesickness, navigation in an unfamiliar cultural field and the unconquerable crush between the past and future that becomes one of the most important and, at the same time, one of the most difficult to define phenomena in the context of contemporary art.

The "Transpositions II" project refers to the experience of artists from different countries, whose practice is related to modern nomadism, involves navigating cultural frontiers and working in art residencies worldwide. All the artists participated in the St. Petersburg Art Residency (SPAR) in the period between 2015 and 2017. The exhibition is a collection of individual routes in the search for "transcendental homelessness". In their works the artists open diverse perspectives on imaginary homes, and talk about how they create and destroy their own connection to the phenomenon of "home" and what it means to their creative work.

On the history of research of “home”

The history of research of the phenomenon of “home” is rooted in the philosophical heritage of the Antiquity. “Oikos” (ancient Greek: οἶκος¹⁴ — habitat, house) holds an important place in the treatises by Plato, Aristotle, and Xenophon, and often becomes a subject of debate. For example, Aristotle harshly criticizes the idea in Plato’s Republic¹⁵ of abolishing the home as an exclusively private sphere and replacing it with a collective co-habitation. However, generally, as a part of the hierarchical organization of the Ancient Cosmos, the oikos-home is presented as a place (topos) with its own order, sense, and “genius.”¹⁶

The crucial difference of the ancient Greek perception of home is its specific closed nature and locality. “The Greek himself was destitute of our understanding of landscapes, horizons, outlooks, distances, clouds, and of the idea of a far-spread fatherland embracing the great nation. Home, for Classical man, is what he can see from the citadel of his native ton and no more. All that lay beyond the visual range of this political entity was alien, and even hostile; beyond that narrow range, fear set in at once; hence, the appalling bitterness with which these petty towns strove to destroy one another.”¹⁷ The value of home as a particular geographic region is widespread in epic poetry and expressed in the motif of the hero returning to his fatherland (“The Odyssey”) and in his special relation to Earth (depicted in myths about Antaeus).

Later on, during the Hellenistic period, the idea of home and the types of actual houses themselves become subject to major transformations. With the fall of polis life ideals comes the epoch of homelessness and restlessness, and the place of the Greek oikos-home is taken by the Roman “insula” — a temporary rented living space. Man’s connection to the “home” in the material, physical dimension becomes even weaker in the Middle Ages, when the Christian tradition deprives the temporary “home on Earth” of any value and places the true, divine home into the kingdom of heaven. The distortion of this relation to and the destruction of the home results in the phenomena of pilgrimage and nomadism. It shifts value to the journey itself.

¹⁴ Another meaning of “oikos” — a household, in which the production of good and its consumption took place in a closed circle of the “home” (clan, family).

¹⁵ See *Plato*. The Republic, Books 1-5. — Cambridge: Loeb Classical Library, 1987. — 462 p.

¹⁶ It is important to notice that it is the antique philosophy that gave birth to the idea of ‘genius loci’, that endowed one or an other space, transformed through human’s labour, with a soul and a protective spirit. See *Gorina I. V.* Rozanov and P. Florensky: genius of place and cultural topos // *Bulletin of the Russian Philosophical Society*. — 2008. — No. 1 (45). — P. 33-37.

¹⁷ *Spengler O.* The Decline of the West. Vol. : Form and Actuality. — London: George Allen & Unwin LTD, 1918. — p. 83.

The growing tempo of society’s industrialization and the world order’s global rearrangement conclude the process of the “disenchantment” of reality¹⁸ (Entzauberung der Welt) and the de-sacralization of home. The homelessness of the human in the 20th century is projected on all the spheres of life and becomes one of the central themes in philosophy, art, and culture. Existential loneliness, defined by its contradiction of striving for individuality and collective life, again raises the question of belonging and self-identification.

The school of psychoanalysis grants home characteristics of a sociocultural indicator, a model which embodies the collective unconsciousness. The erection of buildings and settling of homes are perceived in direct relation to the development of the personality and the creation of life, similar to the juxtaposition of intellectual labour to an architect’s work in antique philosophy¹⁹.

The human’s search for home as a way of overcoming existential homelessness becomes equivalent to the search for the meaning of existence in philosophy. Thus, Martin Heidegger in one of his central texts²⁰ refers to the famous phrase by Novalis: “Philosophy is really homesickness, an urge to be at home everywhere.”²¹ He defines the fundamental mood of philosophy as nostalgia, the urge to be at home everywhere: “This is where we are driven in our homesickness: to being as a whole... we are always already on the way to it... We are underway to this “as a whole” We ourselves are this underway, this transition...”²²

The house, erected by the culture-building man, becomes the place of existence, enabling him to overcome alienation and find integrity of being. Nostalgia towards the imaginary home has no connection to the objective historic past, but is rather a melancholic yearning for the world in its unity, authenticity, and immensity. Art becomes the corner stone in this conception, which Heidegger considers the manifestation of the truth that allows man to find the lost sense of being in the connection to a metaphysical home.

Nostalgia, as the ache of homesickness, navigation in an unknown cultural field, and the unconquerable imprisonment between the past and the future, becomes one of the most important phenomena in the context of contemporary art. Yet, it remains very difficult to define. The search for home as an identity gains a fundamental importance for the contemporary artist on both a sociopolitical and an ontological level. At the same time, it is important to highlight the differences between “nostalgia” and “melancholy,” which often push up against and recall one another. While melancholy rests on the experience of the emptied

¹⁸ See *Weber M.* Gesammelte Politische Schriften. — Stuttgart: UTB, 1988. — 600 S.

¹⁹ In particular, in the works by Aristotle — “Metaphysics”, “The Parts of Animals” and “Nicomachean Ethics.”

²⁰ *Heidegger M.* The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics: World, Finitude, Solitude. — Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1995. — 377 p.

²¹ “Die Philosophie ist eigentlich Heimweh, ein Trieb überall zu Hause zu sein” (*Novalis*. Schriften. T. 2. Hg. L. Tieck, F. Schlegel. Berlin: 1826. S. 88).

²² *Heidegger M.* The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics: World, Finitude, Solitude. — Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1995. — pp. 5-6.



Andréa Stanislav, Dean Lozow (USA) Reflect (2009-2017)

Andréa Stanislav is an American artist based in New York City and Minneapolis, and an Associate Professor at the University of Minnesota. She received a MFA from Alfred University, New York, and a BFA from The School of the Art Institute of Chicago. Her works are feature themes of harmony and deconstruction in the natural world, as well as popular culture and the sublime. Her creations include unexpected visual manifestations, multimedia installations and monumental sculpture. Mirrored surfaces are of particular interest to the artist. An embodiment of their own allure, they ensnare the viewer through his or her own reflection. Since 2003, Andréa Stanislav has worked in close collaboration with artist and art producer Dean Lozow.

The project "Reflect" has a synthetic nature that includes an interactive performance, a site-specific sculpture and ongoing artistic research on modern forms of communication. The piece develops as it migrates. It also follows a migrational strategy; the constant change of locales — in different spaces and across the world — is a precondition to its very existence. It shifts freely from city to city, from country to country, and from continent to continent. The scene of action, however, remains the same: the space of the global home.

"Reflect" manifests itself in the medium of sculpture, in several pieces of clothing made by the artists themselves and recreated by the public. The development of the work starts with Andréa Stanislav and Dean Lozow placing themselves and their 'wearable' sculpture in a particular socio-cultural environment. Their intervention consists of a chain of spontaneous meetings. The artists move intuitively through the urban space, encountering its actors at random. Every person the artists meet is offered one of the thousands of mirrored buttons from the artists' costumes in return for his or her own image, captured with a digital camera. This ritual, performed in the tradition of Jean Baudrillard's model of symbolic exchange, turns the act of communication into the main value, a generally accepted currency of the post-Fordist communities. The dialogue between the artists and the participants of the performance leaves out the small talk and refers to broad and complex notions that go beyond the day-to-day, for instance: home, identity, and belonging.

The number of pin buttons lessens with every contact that takes place until all of the buttons are given away and the mirrored surface of the costumes is completely lost. The archive of portraits is then re-worked and re-organized by the artists along with the audio recordings that become an invisible background for the sculptures in the final installation. The mirrored buttons are replaced with miniature photographs creating a kind of a collective portrait at the interfaces between a personalized family album and random profile images in social media. The global home is mapped as the project migrates from one place to another and connects people worldwide as members of an imaginary family.

Reflect was first performed in 2009 at the AiOP and DUMBO Arts Center in New York, USA. During the next years it traveled to different countries around the world, including Russia, where it was part of the 5th Moscow Biennale of Contemporary Art in 2013.

Андреа Станислав, Дин Лозов (США) Reflect (2009-2017)

Андреа Станислав базируется в Нью-Йорке и Миннеаполисе и является доцентом Университета Миннесоты. Она окончила чикагскую Школу Искусств и получила степень магистра изящных искусств в Университете Альфреда в Нью-Йорке. Работы Андреа Станислав обращаются к темам природной гармонии и её деконструкции, массовой культуре и элитарности, воплощаясь в неожиданных визуальных манифестациях, мультимедийных инсталляциях и монументальных скульптурах. С 2003 г. Андреа Станислав работает в тесном сотрудничестве с художником и продюсером Дином Лозовым.

Проект «Reflect» имеет синтетический характер и объединяет в себе интерактивный перформанс, сайт-специфическую скульптуру и продолжающееся художественное исследование современных форм коммуникации. Проект основан на миграционной стратегии и свободно перемещается из города в город, из страны в страну, с континента на континент. Место действия, впрочем, остаётся неизменным: пространство глобального дома.

В материальном измерении «Reflect» принимает форму скульптуры, которая представляет собой набор предметов одежды, созданных самими художниками и реконструируемых зрителем. В качестве отправной точки произведения Андреа Станислав и Дин Лозов, одетые в свои «носимые» скульптуры, вступают в определённую социо-культурную среду. Их интервенция – это цепочка коммуникационных актов, следующая интуитивному маршруту и определяемая городским пространством и его актёрами. Каждому, кого встречают художники, предлагается сделка: он(а) получает один из тысяч зеркальных значков с костюмов художников в обмен на цифровую фотографию, которая делается тут же, на месте. Этот ритуал, исполненный в традиции символического обмена Жана Бодрийера, превращает акт коммуникации в главную ценность, универсальную валюту постфордистского сообщества. Диалог между художниками и участниками перформанса пропускает так называемый «small talk» и сразу переходит к широким и сложным идеям за пределами каждодневных тем. Предметом разговора становятся такие понятия, как «дом», «идентичность» и «принадлежность».

Вместе с каждым контактом количество значков уменьшается, и зеркальная поверхность костюмов постепенно исчезает. Затем архив собранных портретов перерабатывается и реорганизуется художниками вместе с аудио записями, которые становятся невидимым фоном для итоговой инсталляции. Зеркальные значки замещаются миниатюрными фотографиями, которые складываются в своеобразный коллективный портрет на стыке семейного альбома и случайных фотографий из аккаунтов в социальных сетях. Карта глобального дома приобретает свои очертания по мере того, как проект передвигается из одного места в другое и объединяет людей по всему миру подобно воображаемой семье.

Перформанс «Reflect» был впервые представлен в 2009 г. в AiOP и DUMBO Центре Искусств в Нью-Йорке, США. В последующие годы проект путешествовал в разные страны по всему миру, включая Россию, где он стал частью Пятой Московской Биеннале современного искусства в 2013 г.

«Из-за большого количества путешествий и перемещений, которые сегодня входят в практику современного искусства, наш дом — это те сообщества, в которых мы участвуем».



«Because of the amount of travel and relocation that the art practice entails — home is represented by the communities we elect to participate in.»

