



ŠTRAVS

ŠTRAVS

Jane Štravs

13.10. - 3.11. 2009

Muzej Stari grad, Varaždin, HR

Bijenale modne fotografije | Biennale of Fashion Photography
HR. VARAŽDIN 2009.

ŠTRAVS

Marina Gržinić Svijet u crno-bijelom | The World in Black and White

Walter Seidl Prolazne bilješke o urbanosti | Ephemeral Notes on Urbanity

Marina Gržinić Svet u crno-bijelom

rirano je od strane modnih svjetskih multikorporacija. **Danas** je međunarodna moda velika industrija poput farmaceutske industrije. I jedna i druga su označene kao vojni kompleksi s investicijama, generalima i vojnicima (modne) moći te gomilom ljudi; sve u svrhu zarađivanja što više novca. Sve se svodi na show business. Ide za proces pražnjenja, iako je sve tako ispunjeno i kičasto, kako bi se sakrila istina koja se na kraju svodi samo na novac, dok je život kao protest, kao pozicija nestao. Stoga, najbolja modna fotografija uopće nije zaokupljena modom već samom fotografijom i bijedom današnjeg vremena, rekla bih. **Kao** što Frank A O Ugiomoh tvrdi u svojem izvrsnom tekstu pisanim za Camera Austria (2009), „fotografija je, u prošlosti, bila poistovjećena s prikazivanjem trenutačne osebujnosti objekta njegovim reproduciranjem na papiru. Ovakva predodžba fotografije kao mjesta neometanog ponovnog određivanja i prikazivanja svog objekta otada je prošla stroge revizije.“ Dakle, fotografija je bila percipirana kao ne-intervencija, samo reflektiranje na papiru „objektivnosti“ objekta; kakva bajka, aparat kao fotograf? Ovo je passé. Fotografija se mora, suprotno tome, baviti društvenim odnosima. Fotografija nije čudo; ona je strategija, odluka. Ako se svijet mode slomio, barem u istočnoj Europi gdje su tisuće radnika na cesti, bez plaća, bez sigurnosti, bez „odjeće“, goli poput njihovih života, tada i najbolja modna fotografija također mora biti gola. **Dakle**, kao što Ugiomoh tvrdi da su fotografска djela Georgea Osodija posljedica situacije naftne eksplotacije u Nigeriji, tako možemo Štravsove fotografije smatrati posljedicom depresivnog, čak i katastrofnog stanja stvari u slovenskoj modnoj industriji. Trenutno je crno-bijela prava boja mode.

Oduzmeno li boju modi, sav glamur nestaje. Zato se sve što nudi ova modna serija Jane Štravsa svodi na tjelesne obline, seksepil određene univerzalne ženske ljepote, a gotovo ništa nije rečeno o modi. Ovdje se sve svodi na fotografiju i na način kako raditi s fotografskim medijem, s njegovim temeljnim jezikom te njegovim prošlim, sadašnjim i budućim mogućnostima. Svakako, najbolja modna fotografija nije usredotočena na modu već na sve ostalo. Uostalom, današnja moda nije fokusirana na odjeću već na brendiranje, stil i žanrove inkorporiranja te stvaranja vječnog poput ikone, trenda. Povijest modne fotografije u Sloveniji je kratka, ali osebujna, a u današnje vrijeme je na rubu izumiranja, što je jedna od mnogih posljedica ekonomske krize financijskog kapitalizma. Točnije, velika modna industrija u Sloveniji umire ili je, bolje rečeno, već mrtva. Ono što se smatra modom su mali privatni butici s običnom i vrlo skupom odjećom koju si mogu priuštiti samo oni koji imaju novac i moć. Modna fotografija može se naći u osrednjim časopisima koji izvještavaju o svakodnevnom životu, a te su fotografije jednakо loše kao i ono što se proglašava trendovskim i sponzo-

Walter Seidl Prolazne bilješke o urbanosti

Shvaćanje fotografije kao alata za biliženje realnosti bila je neslužbena metafora u koju su protagonisti rane fotografije vjerovali. Unutar više od 150 godina njegovog postojanja, ovaj medij je uglavnom bio korišten za stvaranje stvarnosti u skladu sa subjektivnim pogledom fotografa ili umjetnika posredstvom tehničkog uređaja. **Na području** modne fotografije, fiksiranje fotografskog pogleda često se okreće prema urbanosti kao pozadini za namještene intervencije koje prenose ideju proživljenog iskustva. U ovom okruženju, prikazana odjeća istovremeno postaje i objekt i subjekt izmišljene radnje. **Razmjerom** do kojega su realnost i lica izmišljeni kroz modu u potpunosti je ovlađao Jane Štravs, umjetnik iz Ljubljane. Njegova se fotografija uvijek poigrava sa stupnjevima autentičnosti pronađene u stvarnim i namještenim situacijama. Uz odjeću, korištenje još nekih rekvizita i pomagala kao npr. vlasulja stvara momente u kojima se promatrači moraju zamisliti o djelovanju mode kao tvorvine koja određuje realnost, ali istovremeno predstavlja i fikciju. Štravsov vokabular svjedoči o svim nivoima koje fotografija može doseći, gdje modeli preuzimaju različite uloge od vamp do lascivnih objekata/subjekata ili domina, međutim bez prijetećeg efekta. **Sukladno** tome i Susan Sontag piše o fotografiji kao o tehničkoj i mentalnoj dispoziciji: "Fotoaparat ne si luje niti ne posjeduje iako može pretpostavljati, zadirati, ometati, iskorištavati i, u najdaljem dometu metafore, uništavati – sve aktivnosti koje, za razliku od seksualne energije i nagona, mogu biti vođene s udaljenosti i uz određenu suzdržanost". Svi ovi elementi mogu se naći u Štravsovim fotografijama kada umjetnik odabire posebne urbane pozadine koje skoro nestaju pri promatranju zbog jake prisutnosti ženskih modela. Stoga se on pokušava odmaknuti od pozadina kao simboličnih sugestija te se koncentriра na uloge ženskih karaktera kao "fatalnih žena". Snaga njihovih karaktera uvijek dominira prizorom, zbog čega pozadina ima funkciju urbanih gesti koje podržavaju prisutnost protagonista na slikama. Prizori su uglavnom crno-bijeli, što čak pojačava promatračev fokus koji je na modelima i njihovim crno-bijelim siluetama. **U većini** Štravsovih scenarija odabrani urbani elementi imaju jaka

industrijska obilježja, što pojačava snažnu prisutnost grafički konstruiranih prizora. U tom pogledu, prolazne urbane dispozicije vezuju se uz socijalističke stambene blokove, kao i uz morske krajolike, luke ili napuštene tvorničke pogone. Ovi arhitektonski elementi uglavnom naglašavaju urbanu pustoš, prostore koje još nije u potpunosti pobijedio kapitalizam, već su oni rezultat među-zona ili ne-mesta kako ih naziva francuski antropolog Marc Auge. Zbog toga modeli privlače punu pozornost svojim pokretima i pozama, što stvara dinamiku u prostorima koji su inače lišeni značenja. U jednom prizoru, žena udara šakom o betonski zid kako bi prikazala oprečnost između žitkosti tijela i beživotnosti arhitektonske materije. Ovakav odnos jasno postavlja ženu na nivo samodostatne individue i subjekta, svjesne kvalitete svoje snage i sposobnosti da potvrdi svoje mjesto u društvu. Ove novo stvorene "tjelesne konfiguracije u arhitekturi" (termin kojega je VALIE EXPORT upotrijebila za svoj rad 1970-ih kako bi označila odnose između arhitekture kojom dominiraju muškarci i odsutnosti žena u tom kontekstu) naglašavaju promjenjive parametre kojima prisutnost žene nadmudruje blijedeće arhitektonsko značenje nekoć podignutih zgrada. **Izuzetak** od strogog opisa urbanosti bilo bi Štravsovo fokusiranje na pomorske zone, gdje je i sam krajolik nabijen romantiziranim povijesnim značenjem. Međutim, tamni elementi Štravsovih crno-bijelih fotografija ističu ove pozadine kao prijeteću formu, postavljajući pitanja o destruktivnim i nadvladavajućim načinima čovjekovog uplitanja u prirodu. **Štravsova** fotografija ukazuje na učinke civilizacije, što je u raskoraku s uvjetima prostora i inherentnim načinima života. Ova dihotomija pruža mogućnosti za novo razumijevanje prostora i prolazne momente stvorene kroz kadar koji se koncentriра na urbanu tematiku.



Marina Gržinić The World in Black and White

there are as bad as what is listed to be trendy, and is sponsored by fashion global multicorporations. **Today** international fashion is a big industry as it is the pharmaceutical industry. Both are coded as military compounds with investments, generals and soldiers of (fashion) power and a bunch of bodies; all to make money, and again money. It is only about show business. It is a process of emptying, though everything is so full and kitschy, in order to cover the truth that is in the end all about money, while life as a protest, as a position is gone. Therefore, the best fashion photography is not at all about fashion, it is about photography and today misery, I would say. **As Frank** A O Ugiomoh states in his brilliant text written for Camera Austria (2009), "photography, in the past, has been identified with putting forward an instantaneous distinctiveness of an object by its reproduction on paper. This conception of photography as the site of an un-intervened re-enactment and simulacrum of its object has since come under strong revision." Therefore photography was perceived as a non-intervention, just reflecting on paper the "objectiveness" of the object; what a fairy tail, the apparatus as a photographer? This is passé. Photography is, on the contrary, about social relations. Photography is not a miracle; it is a strategy, a decision. If the world of fashion has broken down at least in the East of Europe, where thousands of workers are on the street, without wages, without security, without "clothes," naked as their lives, then the best fashion photography should be naked as well **Therefore**, as Ugiomoh claims for George Osodi photo works that they are the after-effects of the situation of oil exploitation in Nigeria, let's think about Štrav's photographs as the after-effects of the depressing, if not catastrophic state of the things in Slovenia's fashion industry. Black and white is the real color of fashion for the time being.

Take the color from fashion and all the glamour is off. All that you get in this Jane Štrav's fashion series is therefore the curves of the body, the sex appeal of a certain universal women beauty, and almost nothing is to be said about fashion. Here it is all about photography and the way of how to work with the photographic medium, with its basic language and its past, present and future potentialities. Definitely, the best fashion photography is not about fashion, but about everything else. Fashion today is not about clothes anyway, it is about branding and style and genres of how to be incorporated and made eternal as an icon, a trend. The history of fashion photography in Slovenia is short but distinctive, but today it is at the verge of extinction as one of the many outcomes of the economic crisis of financial capitalism. The big fashion industry in Slovenia is dying or, rather it is already dead, to be clear. What is that is seen as fashion is small private boutiques with ordinary and very expensive clothes that can be afforded only by those who have money and power. The fashion photography is to be found in mediocre magazines that report of everyday life, and the photographs

Dr. Marina Gržinić is artist and theoretician of contemporary art. She is researcher at the Institute of Philosophy ZRC SAZU in Ljubljana and Professor at the Academy of Fine Arts in Vienna.

Walter Seidl Ephemeral Notes on Urbanity

Photography as a tool to record reality has been a putative trope into which the protagonists of early photography have believed. Within more than 150 years of its existence, the medium has mostly been used to construct reality according to the subjective gaze of the photographer or artist and mediated through a technical device. **In the realm** of fashion photography, the fixation of the photographic gaze often turns towards urbanity as a backdrop for staged interventions which convey the notion of a lived experience. In this environment, the depicted clothes simultaneously become objects and subjects of the devised action. The extent to which reality and personae are constructed through fashion is mastered in the photography of Ljubljana-based artist Jane Štravš. His photography always plays with degrees of authenticity found in real and staged situations. Besides clothes, the use of several props and prostheses such as wigs deploys moments when the viewers have to ask themselves about the effect of fashion as a reality-determining yet fictionalizing entity. Štravš' vocabulary testifies to all the levels photography is able to ascertain, where models take on different roles from vamp to lascivious object/subject or dominatrix, yet without threatening effects. **Susan** Sontag writes about photography as technical and mental dispositive accordingly: "The camera doesn't rape, or even possess, though it may presume, intrude, trespass, distort, exploit, and, at the farthest reach of metaphor, assassinate – all activities which, unlike the sexual push and shove, can be conducted from a distance, and with some detachment." All these elements can be found in Štravš' photography, when the artist chooses special urban backgrounds which almost disappear facing the strong presence of the female models. He tries to detach himself from the backdrops and concentrates on the female character's roles as "femmes fatales." Their strength in character always dominates the scene, which makes the backgrounds function as ephemeral gestures just supporting the protagonists' presence in the pictures. The images mostly appear in black and white, which even heightens the beholder's focus on

the models and their black and white silhouettes. Curves and lines reverberate in all the images which lead to strong graphic compositions. **In most** of Štravš' scenarios, the chosen urban elements bear strong industrial features, which support the graphically constructed images in their powerful presence. In this respect, the fleeting urban dispositions relate to housing units and seascapes, harbors or abandoned factory units that mostly convey moments of urban wasteland; these are spaces which are the result of in-between zones or non-places with regard to Marc Augé. Hence the models attract full attention in their strikes and poses, which create dynamics in spaces which would be otherwise bereft of meaning. In one scene, a woman strikes her fist against a concrete wall to create tension between the fluidity of the body and the inanimate disposition of the architectural matter. This relation clearly places the woman at the level of a self-contained subject that wants to assert her position in society. These newly created "body configurations in architecture" (a term VALIE EXPORT used for her work in the 1970s to refer to the relations between male-dominated architecture and the absence of women in this context) reinforce the changing parameters with which the presence of women outsmart the fading architectural buildings.

An exception to the austere depiction of urbanity would be Štravš' focus on maritime zones, where the scenery itself is loaded with romanticized historic meaning. However, the dark elements of Štravš' black and white photographs render these backdrops a threatening gestalt, asking questions about the destructive and conquering modalities of human interference into nature. **Štravš'** photography points at the effects of a civilization, which is at odds with the conditions of space and the inherent living modalities . This dichotomy opts for a new understanding of space and the ephemeral moments created through the medium's take on urban matter.















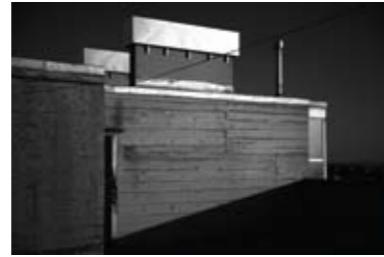








Cattinara #7 | C-print, 2006, 150 x 220 cm



Cattinara #5 | C-print, 2006, 150 x 220 cm



Maritime #7 | C-print, 2006, 150 x 220 cm



Maritime #6 | C-print, 2006, 150 x 220 cm



Cattinara #1 | C-print, 2006, 150 x 220 cm



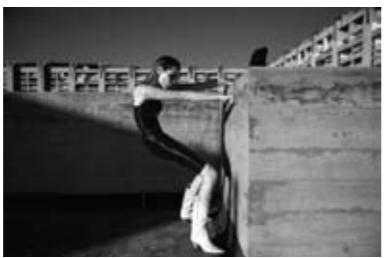
Cattinara #2 | C-print, 2006, 150 x 220 cm



Maritime #9 | C-print, 2006, 150 x 220 cm



Maritime #1 | C-print, 2006, 150 x 220 cm



Cattinara #8 | C-print, 2006, 150 x 220 cm



Cattinara #3 | C-print, 2006, 150 x 220 cm



Maritime #2 | C-print, 2006, 150 x 220 cm

Jane Štravs

Roden 1965. godine u Ljubljani. Znanstveni Centar Slovenske Akademije znanosti i umetnosti objavio je 2003. godine monografiju njegovih fotografskih radova s uvodnim studijama Marine Gržinić i W.J.T. Mitchell. Njegovi radovi se nalaze u brojnim javnim i privatnim zbirkama. Živi i radi kao slobodni fotograf u Ljubljani. | 1965 born in Ljubljana. In 2003 a monograph about his work was published by the Scientific Research Centre of the Slovenian Academy of Science and Arts; the essays were written by Marina Gržinić and W.J.T. Mitchell. His works are part of numerous public and private collections. Lives and works as a freelance photographer in Ljubljana.

www.stravs.net

Samostalne izložbe, izbor | Selected Solo Exhibitions

2009 *American Express*, Galerija G14, Bled, SI
2007 *Jane Štravs*, Galerija Equrna, Ljubljana, SI
 Public Image, Triestefotografia / "Bruno Bianchi", Trieste, IT
 Fuel, Galerie SZI, Vienna, AT
2005 *Road Movie*, Galerija Fotografija, Ljubljana, SI
2003 *Photographic Incarnations*, Mermaid Gallery, Dublin, IRL
 Oscar Wilde House, Dublin, IRL
 Galerie Westlicht, Vienna, AT
2002 *Fotografije 8202*, Mala galerija, Cankarjev dom, Ljubljana, SI
1998 Galerija Equrna, Ljubljana, SI
1996 Galerija Krka, Novo mesto, SI
1993 *Jane Štravs*, Moderna galerija (Museum of Modern Art), Ljubljana, SI
1992 Galerija Avla LB, Ljubljana, SI
1990 Likovni salon, Celje, SI
1984 Galerija Studentskog centra, Zagreb, HR
1982 Galerija ŠKUC, Ljubljana, SI

Skupne izložbe, izbor | Selected Group Exhibitions

2009 *Bijenale moderne fotografije*, Varaždin, HR
 Aktuelle Kunst In Graz, Galerie Remixx, Graz, AT
2008 *Behind Walls*, 15th Noorderlicht International Photofestival, Fries Museum, Leeuwarden, NL
 Behind Walls, European Month of Photography, Bratislava, SK
2007 *Kolekcija suvremene umjetnosti Marino Cettina*, Galerija Marin, Umag, HR
 Not-quite/Not-right: Histories, Bodies and Concepts in Contemporary Photography, Galerija Fotografija, Ljubljana, SI
2006 *Slovenian Contemporary Photography*, European Month of Photography, Bratislava, SK
 Dresscode, Pixxelpoint, 7. mednarodni festival digitalne umetnosti, Mestna galerija, Nova gorica, SI
 Not-quite/Not-right: Histories, Bodies and Concepts in Contemporary Photography, Galerija Božidar Jakac, Kostanjevica na Krki, SI
2005 *Euro Press Photo Awards*, Lisboa, P
2004 *Road Movie*, European Month of Photography, Galerie SZI, Vienna, AT
 Razširjeni prostori umetnosti, Slovenska umetnost 1985-95, Moderna galerija (Museum of Modern Art), Ljubljana, SI
2003 *Do roba in naprej, Slovenska umetnost 1975-1985*, Moderna galerija (Museum of Modern Art), Ljubljana, SI
 In Passing - structures of perception and moving, Pavel House, Bad Redkersburg, AT
2001 *Akt na slovenskem, III - Fotografija*, Jakopičeva galerija, Ljubljana, SI
 Oko in njegova resnica, Spektakel in resničnost v slovenski umetnosti 1984-2001, Moderna galerija (Museum of Modern Art), Ljubljana, SI
 Zero - Absolute - The Real, Galerija Marino Cettina, Umag, HR
2000 *Slovenska fotografija - Tendenze 1990-1999*, Galerija sodobne umetnosti, Celje, SI

Jane Štravš

13.10. - 3.11. 2009

Muzej Stari grad, Varaždin, HR

Selektor | Curator: dr. Želimir Koščević

Organizator | Organisation: Galerijski centar Varaždin

Bijenale modne fotografije | Biennale of Fashion Photography
HR. VARAŽDIN 2009.

Fotografije | Photographs: Jane Štravš

Tekstovi | Texts: Marina Gržinić, Walter Seidl

Prijevod | Translation: Maša Ljuba Maglica

Dizajn | Design: Saša Štucin, Gigodesign

Tisk | Printed by

Naklada | Number of Copies:

Izdavač | Publisher: Gigodesign d.o.o.

Ljubljana 2009

Copyright© Authors



GIGO
DESIGN+
COMMUNICATIONS

