

GRIM SOLO

PRESENTS

NANEZDRAVÍ !

BY Robert Barta

23.06-10.07 2011

CURATED BY

Vladimir Isailović

Opening: 23.06 19h

Wed.-Sun. 14-19 h.

Fichte Strasse 2, 10967 Berlin

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At the noon of modernism, the Use and the Form, were fighting for dominance. This conflict changed many hands, over various international round tables, to finally cease, with an agreement that the Form should give up a certain percentage of its jurisdictions to Use. That coincided with the appearance of the Concrete slab at the construction bureau, a long awaited event both by Pragmatists and Formalists. This grey mass of ground up stone and cement poured over iron substructures, perfectly portrayed the Zeitgeist.

Alas, the cement crumbles and tans into various shades of gray, leaving us with monuments whose veneer brings memories of simpler times. With the overall tendency that everything created, produced or constructed could and should be reduced to one monolithic concept of Form and Use. The House, the Shop, the School, the Factory, the Pub, the Beer. And all the workers of the world were united, at least while holding their Glasses.

After years of self reclusion the Form came back stronger, hyper-multiplied, spilling over in myriads of Forms where 1 Use could reflect and compare itself. But *too much choice* walks hand in hand with *nothing chosen*. And the long fought for Freedom of Choice, now drags itself through tired clichés of (Old)New vs (New)Old.

Out of this *L'origine du monde* setup, Robert Barta extracts raw material for his sculptural metaphors. And societies' clay shines revitalized in his hands. His uni-

verse is populated by objectified riddles, form/usage shifts that gather volume and a long sought dignity, which grants them a human like character, as far from metal singing birds of Byzàntion, as they are from AI robot-scientists of our age.

There's something in the water of the lands of Bohemia, that gives its inhabitants a particular veil of romantic resignation undermined by a quiet, yet crushing humor, that loves life and laughs at death, holding dear the harmony of form. (Like antique Greeks, but way funnier.) And Barta himself could be exported and reimported all over the globe, as Czech, German, or citizen of the Universe, but it is that Bohemian *daimonion* that always finds the work for his idle hands to do.

The popular myth tells us that the purpose of the ritual clinking of the glasses during the toast, was to mix the possibly poisoned liquid with others of those present as with the poisoners one, thus exposing him if flinching. Meanwhile, the looking in ones eyes (and soul) served as an instant polygraph of sincerity employed while pledging to life and health. And celebrating that spirit which via warmth and moisture, brews natures brew, bringing us all that's good to eat, but mostly what's good to drink.

Yet, if the *aurea mediocritas* is neglected, the drinking slides towards the trembling grounds of grinning & pouring (which melts the liver and all that is dear&near to it), thus handing to thanatos in our nature, the keys of the golden gates of *delirium tremens* (which, btw, got quite rebuilt since the last time I checked). Hence, the call to arms pronounced, becomes quite *uncheering* and *bartaesque* in its nature.

The topography of Barta's NANEZDRAVÍ imposes new dynamics of socializing, on the margins of the almost kafkaesque spatial envelope, which, dominated by the walls of the *Beergarden*, neglects comfort both to the Vitruvian and to the Modulor man. Even the eye contact, the very foundation of human encounter, is hindered by this inner structure, that encapsulates the kindred spirits (and their *spirits*) in a dissimulated hug of seated, yet excluded, staring beholders that circumnavigate the gallery, the city, the world.

In his strategy of overturning and overthrowing the use and the usual, Barta presents an anxious object par excellence – *Keep Your opinion*. Guest books primarily stand at the very bottom of the interest pyramid, gathering all of the materialized indifference in layers of gallery/museum dust and some fugacious entries by the weariest of showgoers. Yet, this object now obeys to its inner principles (newly imbedded by its creator Barta) and reacts to its new urges shaking off both the dust and opinionated visitors. But, the human spectator is truly a strange animal: exactly when he's not wanted, he would coerce the guestbook into

accepting his viewpoint, thus asserting his *alpha subject* dominance. And bringing the *succumbed object* to its original use - the one he's used to.

The extreme opposites of the horizon *inside - outside*: movement and open air, as the counterpoint of sedentary, smoky indoors, are set to coexist in the realm of NANEZDRAVÍ. The emblem of ultimate outdoors (before the very vacuum of macrocosm): the dry and seemingly empty wastelands of the desert, examined closely - are swarming with life. Spiky, scaly, buzzing, frolicky life. This antinomy of fullness that appears as nothingness, is a worthy *mimesis* challenge in Barta's battle against the *obvious*.

From the plains of mentioned outdoors to the depths of a dive bar, *flies*, those little couriers of life, attracted by the organic assortment of yumminess, often meet their destiny in the chamber between the two window frames. Adequately, within a bar simulation in the supposedly aseptic gallery interior, as in some nightmarish Pollock/Avery joint venture, the flies arrive at terminus of fine Fabriano windscreens, with their *collateral* overpresence reminding us of *lifelessness* of the profane act of driving around, the unromantic numbness of everyday spleen. The series *Never miss a flight*, and its monochrome expressiveness, put in perspective of transience (with the creator and his curator out of the picture and between some window frames) seem like a mischievous wink to future restaurateurs of Barta's: *have fun with your tweezers!*

As in completing a suitable wall landscape depiction, and having already delineated the fauna, the floral specimen has to gain its place. And it does with yet another defiant object - *Move it!* - the representative of the desert's vegetation, the cactus which (contrary to objectified use as in trembling guestbook), contrasts his nature, and his texture, engaged in a self actualizing activity of the game, in this case a Hula hoop.

Needless to say, Barta brings us on a proscenium of a particular theater, under a heated limelight, where, through his game of reversals, twists and squeezes, while humming a famous unfamiliar tune, tries to put us in a certain mood, and certain mode: to turn that brain dial from *standby* to *on* and to look around us through a healthy diopeter of (self) irony glasses. But not to become bitter but better and to try to do with our famed (5%) mental capacity "*more and more with less and less until eventually you can do everything with nothing*" & to switch then off to float on the wave of inebriation, like that ill famed inventor of art and wine did. Saying one another while grinning: Nanezdraví!

Vladimir Isailović
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1

Beergarden

material_wood, wood panels, varnish, mp3
player, loudspeakers, amplifier
measures_dimensions variable

2

Move it!

material_electric motor, gear box, electro-
nic control unit, plastic cactus, hula hoop,
wooden floor
measures_220 x 65 x 65 cm

3

Never miss a flight !

material_Fabriano 300g/m stampa paper,
insects, framed
measures_38 x 28 cm (without frame)

5

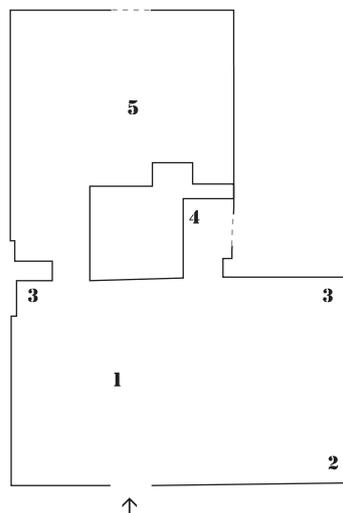
Drink !

material_silicone, stainless steel,
water, iced Pint glass
measures_dimensions variable

4

Keep your opinion

material_birch wood,
excentric motor 220V,
motion sensor
measures_120 x 50 x 50 cm



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