

What is the Act of Creation?

Discussions, screenings, mountains and streaming

The seminar/workshop/retreat at Saxnas is a continuation of a process that we undertook since 2009. It belongs to a sequence, so the beginning of this collective thought process needs to be recapitulated and brought to the present tense of Saxnas, 2012. And from there we will go further...

Here is an effort of recapitulation which doesn't do justice to the range of the process that we went through, but it might bring back some streams of thought.

We started in 2009 by looking together at the changing media universe. How are Facebook, Skype, google, Youtube, blogging, twitter, vlogging, etc entering the world of each individual and constantly defining new subjectivities? Coming from here we took the cue from Gilles Deleuze's text "What is the Act of Creation?" where he exposes the creative act as an act of resistance; we also clarified the concept of Dispositif that Italian philosopher, Giorgio Agamben borrows from Michel Foucault and which leads him to conclude that "...the profanation of the improfanable is the political task of the coming generation". The first seminar concluded with Lars Von Trier's "The 5 Obstructions", an obsessive work that seeks the zero degree of artistic creation.

In the following two seminars we addressed several issues creating multiple sutures between them. We clarified certain concepts from Serge Daney's article "The Traveling shot of Kapo" where he dwells in the questions pertaining to what can be summed up as "the morality of the tracking shot". From here we looked at popular culture films such as The Matrix and the youtube phenomenon of conspiratorial films and movements such as "Zeitgeist". Here the question of form became central again. What are the shortcomings of The Matrix even if its metaphor may be the most impeccable diagram to describe our world (from quantum to shamanism). What are the problems in Zeitgeist? What is the problem with the conspiratorial language? How does this concern an artist?

Students also brought in clips from different domains. We looked at representations of the recent revolutionary movements in Teheran brought in by Iranian students who lived through the events; we looked, amongst many others at a Latvian Reality TV program that prays on misfits and the downtrodden to entertain its viewers, and we heard the story of a student's experience with Bhutto dance, where the limits of convivial social protocols are sensed and rejected through the very depth and honesty of the experience of the body. Jean Rouch's ethnographic films in Africa were also brought into this mix, the question of attaining the larger spectrum of a body (collective and individual) that has been fully mediated to itself and bureaucratized to its last inch, became central.

Harun Farocki's "Videograms of a Revolution", a video which is successful in bridging the problem of form and content, was the closing act to this discussion which also dealt repeatedly with the need to be "one's own portal", not to relinquish one's agency and one's right to narrate one's world... and the need of a poetic address to the world. Refusing to abide to any of the consortiums of today's media world and to be in the dangerous zone of an un-legitimized truth that one has to negotiate fully in one's own terms. The profanity that Agamben's text speaks about, is tantamount to hacking one's own code, attaining one's own body or piercing through the normalizing mechanisms that tacitly police our society in deeper and deeper dimensions.

The last seminar/workshop took place in Säxnas. Taking into account the many subjects treated in the past sessions we were able to articulate many different dimensions that were at play. A great deal of the discussions went in the direction of shamanism, and to the larger field of the human spectrum that becomes available when certain regulatory mechanisms are broken. The drums that were consistently confiscated from the Sami shamans became a perfect crystal for our larger conversation. We witnessed first hand the way in which Sami children in a neighboring school have to re learn their pride and their tradition, and we envisaged the neurotic romanticism that a nation (and a whole world civilization) demonstrates in trying to recover its lost connection to the earth and to its own body... via the cultures that they themselves destroyed in the name of progress and Christianity.