

Leonida Kovač

DESIRE IN A GAZE FROM THE PICTURE

The paper is concerned with works by Central European women artists from the beginning and from the end of 20th century, i.e. from the period of early modernism and from the age when becomes perfectly clear that the modernist paradigm doesn't function any more.

The modernist ways of representation of women's body are juxtaposed to examples of self-portraits made by women artists in which we may perceive the active gaze from the picture. The main issue problematized by this paper is discussion on the Lacanian concept of desire. According to Lacan woman can be only the object of desire, but not the desiring subject. Reading the contexts (that are above all social) in which certain self-portrait appears, and exploring the function of the active gaze from the picture I am arguing the opposite. Also, the way on which the self-portraits by women artists relate to modernist rhetoric will be discussed (for example „Olympia“ by Katarzyna Kozyra).

The starting point is the opinion that identity is not something undivided, a stable unity of „consciousness“, but the term of shifting series of ideological positions. The works that will be discussed confirm the fact that the category of identity is changeable social construction. What they have in common is procedure of deconstruction of neutralising concept of art., and pointing out ideological charge of modernist fundamental notion of vision.

Leonida Kovač:

1962 - born in Split, Croatia

1986 - graduated in Art History and Archaeology at Faculty of Philosophy at Zagreb University.

1991 - M.A. degree at the same University

1987 to 1993 - employed as conservator in Institute for protection of cultural monuments in Zagreb.

- since 1993 curator of Museum of Contemporary art in Zagreb.

- since 1997 General Secretary of Croatian section AICA

- since 1990 participated with papers at 9 international symposiums, conferences and congresses on art and aesthetics

- curated 11 exhibitions

- published book „Konteksti“, 1997, and more than 100 texts concerned with contemporary art and art theory.