

The STATE is like a phantom which has appeared, seemingly with the purpose of serving the common comforts and order of the people. But has anyone ever seen an ideal state, where all residents feel sufficiently happy and blessed by order? No matter how the phantom might encourage beautiful hope and reality, even the most noble country is home to some who are dissatisfied or irritated, oppressed orphans and rebellious citizens. The STATE is like Figaro - at one moment someone is bringing it a well-greased treat, at the next moment someone is stepping on its corns with elephantine vigor. The search for order leads into the jungles of irrationalism which have been crocheted by bureaucracy. There, in the jungles of *Ordnung*, all manner of thinkers, utopists, anarchists and rabble-rousers find endless streams of inspiration which feel like the warmth of the sun shining on both sides. Everyone can almost say, "If I were king, president, boss"

So what? The arts have things to say, too. They have their own glory songs and vicious unmaskings and plans for marchers by the different drum. Let us remember the biting compositions of Kafka and Orwell, Eisenstein's *Potemkin* and Forman's *Hair* and *Cuckoo's Nest*. But in contrast to art rendered in dark tones, there is the crackling irony of the good soldier Schweick or of the drawings of our own Latvian artist Māris Bišofs.

In Latvia, with its experiences with totalitarianism, the idea of the STATE in art appeared mainly as "flags billowing upward, surrounded by sunbeams". But there, in the shade of the flags, Auseklis Bauškenieks created his mocking paintings, and Ivars Poikāns his graphics with their social hooliganism. And their teeth sank into the fatty rump of the STATE. The restored Latvian state makes us think about new order and it makes our artists think about a new cognizance of the STATE. But whether or not it is new, the Latvian STATE regardless is only a reproduction of universal models. And the specifically Latvian aims of the artist anyway hit the STATE in its generality. This point is not made to raise the IQ of the artists but to amortize the conservative perceptions of those who honorably tend the sacred cows, perceptions which in these times are often wounded by the artists. May the exhibition STATE be a sort of metaphoric, artistic alternative to the serious and care-laden everyday, without the billowing of flags, but with the tooth which knows how to clamp down on a tender place.

Jānis Borgs

A FAIRY TALE

Projekts VALSTS kā viena veicis ir kļuvis par patstāvīgu konceptuālu mākslas darbu, t.i., kas pretendē uz robežjodu starp dzīvi un mākslu. Tas (VALSTS) radās kā ideja par to, ka organizējot reālo pasauli, ir iespējams izveidot mākslas procesu, veidojot par to visu informatīvu mākslu, vai rašanās jauna tipa VALSTS. Tas tā arī noticis. Vairākus mēnešus panāvi, mēdziet sagrībēt, bet tomēr radot šo lielo konceptuālo mākslas darbu, kas līdzīgi pasakaļ par to, kādi mēs pašreiz esam. Apzināti utopisks projekts ar spēles brīvi radošo atmosfēru, kurā ironiski groteski un nopietnais, kā mēdz būt, iet roku rokā. Bet visu pēc kārtas. Māksla tomēr ir palikusi māksla, neraugoties uz to, vai tā ir pašreiz modē, vai nav. Tāds izrādījās šis projekta mērķis. Mēs to nosaucām par VALSTI. Projekts VALSTS paredzēja pēdīt trīs lietas: 1. Realitātes nosacījumu mākslas izveidē. Šo nosacījumu dimensijas un perspektīvas izdienes uzvarēs un tātad, to - cik šķūsi

The project "STATE" was once a unified entity, and now it has become a self-standing conceptual work of art. In other words, the project aims to occupy the border zone between life and art.

STATE started out as an idea. The idea was that by organizing provocative artistic processes in the realistic space of perception and by creating an informative myth about it all, a new type of STATE can be created.

And that is what has happened. Perhaps a little bit naively. Perhaps a little bit hopefully. But still, a big, conceptual work of art has been created, and it reminds us of a fairy tale which is about the kinds of beings which we are right now. It is a "consciously utopian project" with "the free and creative atmosphere of a game, where the ironically grotesque goes, as they say, 'hand in hand' with the serious."

But let's take it from the beginning.

Art remained art, regardless of whether it happened to be in fashion.

That proved to be the goal of this project. We called it - STATE.

STATE proposes to examine three things:

1) The conditions of reality in our perception: the dimensions and perspectives of everyday perception and, therefore, the question of the extent to which creative elements can be included in these dimensions (perspectives).

2) If we discover conditions of reality which truly lead us to a new understanding of the word "art" - then what is art? What are the boundaries of art? What are its new conditions?

3) As a result of all this, the major question naturally was one about the individual's self-realization as a "mediator" in the field where reality encounters the conditions of art. In other words, a review of the conditions of subjectivization (and dimensions).

Perhaps jumping a bit ahead of our "fairy tale", we can say that the fundamental unit of the STATE is the "Me-state". It certainly is located quite near to the institutional conceptions of art.

The project conception also mentioned "art as a form of perception and productive activity", but not, unhappily (and this was the weak point of the proposal), the connection of this with the conditions of survival and self-realization which face the contemporary individual (the question of the context in which art "appears"). Essentially STATE is all about this, too: why doesn't each individual see around himself that which might create this spiritually productive activity (all right - let's call it art)?

Of course we could have let ourselves be overcome by illusions about the abilities, influence, "stabilization" talents, and other aspects of the modern mass media. We might have hoped that we could use these channels to show "art all around" - tell people, "Look! It's right there in your back yard!" But the abilities of the media in correlation with individual perceptions come from an entirely different direction and with an entirely different force. It's clearly a case where there is form (abilities) but no content (form).

Just like in a fairy tale, we hoped that the inhabitants of our STATE would be "each to his own" and that this would prove to be a unique formula for "egotistical autopoetization" as free self-realization of history.

But it is not thus. And the reasons for this failure to coincide lie far beyond the provenance of the given topic.

"All we have to do is learn the various forms of individual 'governance' - let's say distribution, observation, differentiation, recognition, understanding; art is a matter of signature". Sure, it was easy to say that in the conception. But it turns out that there is no such thing as "innocent sight" or "non-oriented sight".

Au contraire, in fact. Sight generally is both "guilty" and "trained".

And then we suspected that this "pseudoidealism" came up against (and was explained by) that which a certain Mr. Lyotard called the Unrepresentable and a certain Herr Heidegger called "prohibition/pretence", but which we have heretofore deemed, simply, "IT". Most probably "IT" and "the Unrepresentable" and "STATE" coincide.

II.

But first let us consider the "self-movement of form".

For instance, we assume that texture belongs to a specific thing but, at the same time, is a special universality. It is something like a densely filled void, where art simply is. Thus this feeling of universality might also be called the conception - the border zone between life and art. STATE aims to uncover this zone, to uncover the total merging of reality and unreality. Instability in life.

Think of it as a volume (parallel to a volume of idealism-deconstruction, which we will consider later) filled with an unceasing interplay, a game between the non-existent (invisible) and the existent, between the immaterial and the material, between the cultural symbol and the pure form, etc.

We seem to point attention toward nonrepresentational forms. Pure form. Sensual subjectivity. And that is already a question of the self-movement of form in all of its endless (diverse) possibilities.

This self-movement of form is also perhaps the new wholeness which our tired minds have been seeking.

Self-movement is an end in itself, but an individual who finds himself able to observe it

feels both humble and ironic when standing before it.

Yes, here we can talk about "emptiness - silence" in everyday matters.

Minimalism and multiple meanings all at once.

"Mystifying simplicity" (some kind of god).

Yes, it is a visual state which no longer is an image in the common sense of the word. It is a state which is endlessly concrete and at the same time all-encompassing.

Yes, here we can talk about a game with the internal self-purpose of reality as such. The artist becomes the exhibitor.

And it turns out that the self-movement of form does not need the level of the provocative, the level of the "finished work"; the level of the informative also does little to help.

Just as if we were in a real fairy tale, we might say that the self-movement of form surfaces like a "whale" - there and thus and in just the way which is needed to "breathe".

Follow the form. Feel it.

Creation through observation.

Become sight, and you shall feel.

Maybe that is the only thing which is truly worth considering - the aesthetization of existence, i.e., this new virtual reality, i.e., something possible, something that might appear, or which must appear under specific circumstances. But that, after all, is close to Mr.

Baudrillard's concept of "simulation", when art begins to lay claim to "the territories of life itself".

And truly, perhaps it is no longer necessary to establish an experience, to construct an image.

Perhaps it is enough just to exhibit. Perhaps there, beyond the individual image, lies another STATE, where time and space are something completely different. Our young artists seek to peer into this alternative STATE, where "me" is an open form of sight. Where the game with the non-image creates a new type of image.

III.

So what is IT?

Indeed, there is always the feeling that there is a "higher power" involved with this phenomenon of the self-movement of form. Ineffable. Elusive. IT (perhaps in earlier systems it was called an ideal).

It is the humility inherent in the self-movement of form. Humility before the form. It is an energy expressed in the form. Remember Jesus: "Under every stone there is God."

Perhaps for this reason the reality of the form is not important, but rather the "tangibility" of the energy therein. Because form, as it turns out, is not the awareness of something so much as the awareness itself. This is why in our fairy tale STATE there is always the question of the individual route to the seeing and creating of form and the "super-individual" content of form. This content contains the basic coordinates of being, the terms of positive existence, etc.

That, obviously, is IT, STATE, THE UNREPRESENTABLE.

It might also be described as, say, the presence of God in form, but that is probably tradition. Even closer is the concept "not yet conscious" (in the interpretation of Herr Heidegger).

Happiness and veneration mean being in touch with non-consciousness.

This area of sense seems to sustain life.

And let us remember Mr. Lyotard once again:

"The unrepresentable problems are the only ones which are worthy of consideration in the next century, the ones with which we must live." These are the "countless simultaneities", where conception of one's being means endlessly sensing, groping, guessing, and diving into the fullness and cosmos which lies right behind this wall.

Let's tear down this idyll!

Let's not forget that on the far side of all this stands irony. No matter how much we yearn for a new utopia, we must understand that anti-utopianism is our true life. There are moments of inhalation, moments like the "singing revolution", but even in our dreams we set out quotation marks and again quotation marks.

And in art, too, whether we want it or not, we are imbued with that which is traditionally defined as beauty, as poetry, as human yearnings for an invented and properly presented image of reality (to calm the heart), and we are also full of the aim to "tear down the sense of the text", of the deconstruction principle with all of its associations of interruption and uncertainty. It is a palette of "modern feelings",

where irony, parody, sarcasm and complexity shine brightly. This has all come together, and in a particularly fertile manner on the soil of our Latvian culture, where yearnings for harmony, home and hearth and calm relish coexist with occasional, desperate leaps aside to latch on to a positive feeling about the possible engagement beyond the existing twilight. These are leaps which are taken by very talented artists.

Again we speak about returning to "natural language" without pseudoideal influences. To language governed by nobility (Mr. Lyotard). And thus there is another volume where two sides coexist: ideals (in the old sense of the word) and deconstruction in their oneness and disintegration.

Virtually the only way to survive in this modern volume of mind contradictions is to go the route of the game with its problematization (Mr. Foucault), expansion of boundaries, "other" virtuality, differentiation.

We believe that this road is essential for Latvian art, too.

We must "be in the world of doubt and be alive".

IV.

Questions about the self-movement of form lead to considerations of context.

We know very well that all of that has existed in the world, or almost all of that has existed, and that is being done now, too. That which we are doing in the our STATE.

Apparently we can say that the self-movement of form is realized regionally, or even individually.

And perhaps we must recognize that we exist in the context of things occurring elsewhere. Or perhaps not.

Perhaps we can be locally conceited and say that only the context of the context is fertile. Essentially this is a conversation about the idea of marginalization, both from the aspect of the society and the aspect of the individual. Not as a deficiency, but as a closeness to that which is already disappearing but which has not yet come into existence. Notes on the margins of what has already been read but the reading of which has not yet been continued. That is our situation.

In our STATE, the principle of uniqueness. The effect of every presence.

Modern art as such (the art of the self-movement of form) creates easy access. A natural and necessary reiteration. Perhaps this is associated with the concept of "incomparability", because then the criteria which might become the "argument of power" or the "meta-language" (i.e., the conditions of the preferable dictated from above) are lost. (Although these appear naturally, whether we want it or not, through the circulation of information, if nowhere else.)

But the "moment" dominates nonetheless.

And further: the self-movement of form provides for the "effect of presence". I.e., the viewer as a living part (center) of the work of art. The air is full of a common method, scheme, an overall legitimacy within the boundaries of which there are "variations". In this respect we can say that the contemporary artist (just like his earlier antecedents) is, in a sense, the artist-executor, the artist-performer of the "idea".

This art exists in the place and time when it is created, and at that point its value is unique. This art (or this scheme) is, in and of itself, a movement (radiance) of ideas and conceptions (psychologically or socially significant) which can be materialized uninterruptedly.

The question is simply about a human being in action, and that is a question about the STATE. But the main goals, age-old and good, are:

- 1) to problematize the existing situation in contemporary Latvian art;
- 2) to stimulate a discussion in our society about the boundaries of art;
- 3) to heighten society's limits of tolerance for phenomena which by no means could be considered "pure art".

V.

And then they were married and lived in their kingdom happily ever after, living a long, long life until they both died at the same time, when they were very, very old. And their only and handsome son began to rule the kingdom in their place.

And that is the end of the fairy tale.

Ivars Runkovskis