

Eiropas telpas sarunu objekti

HANNO SOANSA SARUNA AR RĪGAS TĒLNICĪBAS KVADRIENNĀLES *EIROPAS TELPA* KURATORIEM AIGARU BIKŠI UN KRISTAPU GULBI NOTIKA TALLINĀ 2004. GADA 13. JŪNIJĀ. TĀ BIJA OTRĀ DIVU *EIROPAS TELPAI* VELITĪTO INTERVIJU CIKLĀ, UN TĀS TĒMA NO VIS-PĀRĒJIEM JAUTĀJUMIEM, KAS TIKA APLŪKOTI PIRMAJĀ INTERVIJĀ, AIZVIRZĪJĀS PIE KONKRĒTAJIEM KVADRIENNĀLES DARBIEM UN TO IZRAISĪTĀS REZONANSES SABIEDRĪBĀ.

Hanno Soanss: Varbūt jūs gribētu aplūkot konkrētus darbus kā dažādu izstādes izveides aspektu piemērus? Es īpaši vēlētos pievērsties 50. gadu darbu attēlu izstādīšanai uz ārtelpu stendiem un skulptūrām publiskajā telpā. Vai jūs varētu nosaukt tos darbus, kuru izstādīšana, jūsuprāt, bija sevišķi izdevusies rezultāta vai interesanta procesa ziņā?

Kristaps Gulbis: Man sevišķi interesants šķiet tas, kas saistās ar ārpus izstāžu telpām izvietotajiem darbiem. To autoriem bija iespēja ierasties Rīgā jau iepriekš, lai iepazītos ar izstādīšanās vietām, tā ka viņi bija privilēģētā situācijā attiecībā pret pārējiem. Publiskajā telpā ir izvietoti vairāki interesanti, šeit pieminēšanas vērti darbi. Viens tāds ir Ērika Samaha saules bateriju darbinātais skaņu objekts, kas nomaskēts parkā. Tad man vēl būtu jāmin dāņa Tomasa Poulsena veidotais darbs, kas izvietots vienā no Rīgas tirgiem. Abi darbi ir labs piemērs tam, kādu vietējās publikas reakciju izraisa šādi mākslas objekti. Jāsaka, Tomasa Poulsena darbs ļaudīm patīk. Darba pamatā ir ideja par to, ka cilvēki šajā pasaules daļā ir ļoti lieli individuālisti, kuri domā galvenokārt par savu mazo pasaulīti. Tad nu mākslinieks vēlējās tos apvienot zem viena jumta, padarot viņu savstarpējo komunikāciju aktīvāku. Viņš izgatavoja jaunu tirgus stendu ar kopēju jumtu un nokrāsoja to košāku salīdzinājumā ar pārējo tirgus iekārtu – lētām koka konstrukcijām ar nelieliem plastikāta jumtiņiem. Un mēs vienojāmies ar zemniekiem, ka pēc Poulsena darba pabeigšanas viņi ar savām precēm ievāksies viņa stendā. Tomēr jau nākamajā dienā viņi paziņoja, ka pārceļoties atpakaļ, jo pircēji sākuši pārmet, ka viņi izlikuši preci uz skulptūras. Redziet – pie darba ir maza plāksnīte ar autora vārdu un nosaukumu.

Aigars Bikše: Nosaukums ir *Lete diviem pārdevējiem*.

KG: Tad nu pircēji pārmeta: kā nav kauna – tirgoties uz mākslas darba, uz skulptūras; vai tad jums nemaz nav cieņas pret mākslu? Pie tam izrādījās, ka arī pati konstrukcija nav sevišķi izdevusies, jo, kā žēlojās tirgotāji, tā neaizsargā dārzenus no saules. Jumta konstrukcija bija tāda, ka lietus laikā ūdens, ja arī nelija uz dārzeniem, tad pircējiem virsū gan. Mēs ar Aigaru apsvērām – varbūt mums vajadzētu mēģināt piedabūt tirgus direktoru samazināt šī stenda īres maksu. Tomēr nolēmām, ka mums nevajadzētu mēģināt iespaidot viņu lēmumus.

HS: Ja darbs pretendē veidot interaktīvus reālās dzīves procesus, vienojot cilvēkus un iespaidojot viņu uzvedību, tad vienmēr ir jābūt arī neveiksmes iespējai. Ja tā



nav, tad darbs ir jau iepriekš nodrošināts un nespēj pildīt pats savus nosacījumus. Tas padarītu labu ieceri bezjēdzīgu. Tad arī citos gadījumos, kad tā ir noticis, jums diez vai ir tiesības vērtēt projekta panākumus. Un jūsu tagad stāstītais – par reakciju, kādu izraisīja tirgošanās uz skulptūras, – labi atklāj kontekstu. Dānijā ļaudis būtu zināmā mērā sagatavotāki formāli uztvert mūsdienu sociālās skulptūras nosacījumus – tur tādējādi risks būtu mazāks. Manuprāt, tas ir interesants aspekts, kurā mākslinieks var risināt domu tālāk. Es gribētu atgādināt Klēras Bišopas sacīto *Telpas kolonizācijas* konferencē. Bieži šis sociālās skulptūras veids, kas tieši strādā ar cilvēkiem un viņu dzīves vidi, deklarē savu orientāciju uz aktīvu sabiedrības pārveidi. Tomēr bieži diskurss ap šādiem mākslas darbiem tiek veidots pārlieku sargājošs, cenšoties slēpt, ka tas neiedarbojas visos aspektos un vienmēr, par spīti labām iecerēm. Es domāju, jūsu lēmums bija pareizs, jo kuratori nereti mēģina slēpt kļūdas. Tālākā perspektīvā tas tikai mazina šādas mākslas patieso nozīmības potenciālu.

KG: No vienas puses, tirgotāju attieksme bija ļoti pozitīva. Viņi teica, ka viņiem objekts patīkot un viņi to izmantotu, ja vien sēdekli varētu atvirzīt drusku tālāk un jumtu nedaudz pārtaisīt. Te procesā sāk iekļaukties dažādi lokāli noteikumi, lokāli paradumi. Ārpusnieks tos neizprot. Arī latviešu mākslinieks varēja pieļaut tās pašas kļūdas – jo mākslinieki jau nepieder pie tiem ļaudīm, kas tirgojas šajos tirgos, mēs arī neesam zemnieki. Zemnieki būtībā apdzīvo šo tirgu un ir izveidojuši paši savu – viņu biznesam nozīmīgu lietu hierarhiju. Viņi var nedaudz atbalstīt arī mākslu – nekādu problēmu! – tikai ja tas sāk kaitēt viņu noietam, tad tas vairs nav pieņemami.

AB: Konkurencē starp ierastajām vienkāršajām konstrukcijām, uz kurām viņi bija pieraduši tirgoties, un šo jauno standarta konstrukcijas uzvarēja arī tāpēc, ka, pircējuprāt, precei vecajos stendos jābūt lētākai. Viņi bija nākuši pirkt dabiskus, īstus lauku produktus un sprieda, ka parastajos stendos ir vecā labā prece – īsti lauku ražojumi. Savukārt mākslas darba estētika izrādījās tuvāka prezentāciju letēm, kādas šeit tiek izmantotas tikai tirdzniecības centros.

KG: Ļaudis domāja – ja jau ir jauns stends, tad arī cenas droši vien ir augstākas. Tā viņi ir ieradināti. Tā ir parasta prakse – tirdzniecības vieta tiek labiekārtota un tad atkal atvērta jau ar augstākām cenām.

HS: Tas ir saistīts arī ar tēmu, kuru mēs sākām apspriest jau iepriekšējā intervijā, – par elitārismu, mākslu māksliniekiem. Lai jūsu mākslas centieni iegūtu nozīmi, jums vajadzīga publika. Ja jūs mēģināt modificēt rezultējošo mākslinieka iespaidu uz publiku, padarīt to "efektīvāku", sāk zūst tā sasaiste ar realitāti. Lai gan man patiešām patīk Tomasa Poulsena ideja, šajā darbības fāzē man tās īstenojumā nebūtu jājaucas. Mūsu pirmā saruna bija par "mums un viņiem" – un tas pats šķirums darbojas šeit. Misēkļi norāda uz tām atšķirībām, kas pastāv starp mākslinieka iedomāto tirgu un to, kā tas funkcionē ikdienas realitātē. Jaucoties procesā, mēs varētu galu galā nonākt pie naivās pārlicības, ka mēs varam radīt šiem tirgotājiem labākus stendus, neko īsti nezinot par tirgošanos – tā ir vēl viena elitārās pieejas forma, labu gribošs, bet aprobežots elitārisms.

AB: Viens no galvenajiem pretendentiem uz žūrijas balvu bija Hārvija un Ekroidas darbs. Kad mākslinieki pirmoreiz ieradās Rīgā izpētes braucienā, viņi apsvēra dažādas iespējas. Viens no iespējamiem variantiem bija lielformāta attēli, kas tiktu veidoti, izmantojot fotosintēzi. Viņi izvietoj uz sienas tumšā telpā audzētu zāli un projicē uz

tās fotogrāfiju – milzīgu, līdz 10 metriem augstumā. Pateicoties fotosintēzei, divu nedēļu laikā attēls atveidojas dabiskajā materiālā. Tad viņi zāli nomērdē, tā konservējot darbu. Rezultātā tiek iegūts milzīgs dabiskas izcelsmes gobelēns ar fotogrāfijas negatīvu. Mēs viņiem atradām trīs dažādas potenciālās vietas, trīs arhitektoniskus objektus, kurus viņi varēja izmantot savai instalāciju sērijai – padarīt tos zaļus, apaudzējot ar zāli. Efekts, protams, ir fantastisks. Arhitektūra, ēka zaudē savu materialitāti un it kā pazūd. Jo garāka aug zāle, jo nearhitektoniskāka kļūst ēka – tai zūd visas detaļas, un tā sāk funkcionēt vidē kā vienota zaļa masa. Rīgā mākslinieki to realizē graustā, postažā, un tur tas darbojas sevišķi labi.

KG: Tai vietā uz katra soļa ir narkomānu izmētātas šļirces...

AB: Mākslinieki strādāja pāris dienas, kamēr sakopa to vietu. Tad ēku pārklāja ar māla maisījumu, kam piejauktas zāles sēklas. Kad tās sāka dīgt, ēka pamazām pārvērtās zaļā masā. Bija ļoti interesanti vērot, kā tas maina mūsu apkārtējās vides uztveri.

KG: Vizuāli, man šķiet, tas bija ļoti spēcīgi, ļoti iespaidīgi. Bet mēs bažījāmies par to ļaužu iespējamo rīcību, kuri tur ierodas, lai apreibinātos ar narkotikām vai alkoholu, un dažkārt pavada nakti. Līdzās ir cietums, tā ka vieta nav pati drošākā. Mēs baidījāmies, kas šādos apstākļos var notikt ar mākslas darbu. Sākumā uz pārklātās sienas tiešām kāds kaut ko uzrakstīja. Taču, kad cilvēki ievēroja, ka dīgst zāle, kad viņi sāka nojaust gaidāmo rezultātu, attieksme kļuva daudz saudzīgāka, nekā ierasts.

HS: Tātad jums izdevās sasniegt rezultātu, kas līdzinās Tomasa Hiršhorna īstenotajam ar viņa Bataija pieminekli (*Bataille Monument*) pēdējā *Documenta*, kad mākslinieks kaut kā iefiltrējās turku imigrantu kopienā un panāca savstarpēju uzticēšanos ar tās locekļiem, tā ka varēja pat atstāt tur dārgu televīzijas studijas aprikojumu bez apsardzes.

KG: Tas ir interesants fenomens. Mēs ar Aigaru apspriedām iespēju veidot mākslas centru kādā no trūcīgākajiem rajoniem, jo tur dzīvojošo cilvēku attieksme ir daudz pretimnākošāka. Es domāju, arī Ēriks Samahs uzņēma lielu risku, izvietojot ar saules enerģiju darbināmās flautas. Vai jūs tās redzējāt?

HS: Jā, es biju paša mākslinieka vadītajā ekskursijā uz šo objektu. Taisnību sakot – brīnišķīgs darbs. Kad spīd saule, flautas sāk spēlēt, bet, kad ir mākoņains, darbs – kas ir rūpīgi noslēpts – apklust un kļūst pilnīgi nepamanāms!

KG: Tas ir tas, kas man mākslinieka veikumā ļoti patīk – tas nav uzkrītoši nolikts pilsētas centrā, nav masīvs skulpturāls veidojums, kas sev pieprasa milzumu telpas. Man patīk šī diskrētā saskarsme ar publiku. Viņa darbs ir ļoti delikāts, savukārt tā publiskošanas metode – ne gluži. Uzturoties Rīgā, mākslinieks katru dienu pārvietojās pa pilsētu ar savu saules flautu rokā un stāstīja par to katram sastaptajam.

HS: Ar instrumentu rokā viņš izskatījās kā mags, kā Oza zemes burvis... Bija diezgan aizraujoši uzzināt, kā tas darbojas, uzskatījoties pēc saules gaismas.

KG: Vai zināt, ka to skaņu var arī ierakstīt? Instrumentā ir mikrofons. Šis instalācijas nav mākslinieka vienīgais darbības virziens, taču viens no tiem, ko viņš pastāvīgi attīsta. Bet, ja jūs salīdzinātu viņa darbu ar, piemēram, to, kuru veidoja Navaks, tās ir divas dažādas pieejas. Un Rīgā tie izvietoti viens no otra kādus 300 metrus attālumā.

HS: Tomēr, es domāju, abas metodes ir vitāli svarīgas mūsdienu skulptūrai. Joprojām ir daudz darbu, kuri operē ar masu un materialitāti, un arī darbi, kuri ir jau gluži vai pie nepamanāmības robežas, bet arī ļoti iedarbīgi, vērotāju aktīvi iesaistoši. Tie bieži pārsteidz cilvēkus nesagatavotus. Labākais rezultāts tiek sasniegts, kad ļaudis, kas katru dienu dodas cauri šim parkam, pēkšņi pamana kādas ļoti smalkas pārmaiņas.

KG: Navaks man stāstīja, ka darba uzstādīšanas laikā garām gājis kāds vecs krievs un noprasījis: "A ti kto takoi?"¹ Navaks kādu laiku vilcinājies ar atbildi un tad paziņojis: "Ja nemec."² Tad vecis arī kādu brīdi klusējis, apsverot dzirdēto. Galu galā viņš atteicis: "Nemec – eto vsjo taki lučše čem latiš."³

HS: Un arī to var paveikt tikai publiskās telpas skulptūra. Tā var atklāt problēmu samezģojumus publikas apziņā, kuri tur ir pastāvīgi un iespaido lēmumus, bet reti tiek formulēti vārdos. Bieži vien tiem ir sakars ar nacionālo piederību un sociālo statusu. No vecāka krievu strādnieka visnotaļ var sagaidīt lāstu "jūs – fašisti tādi", un viņam tas izskan apmēram tāpat kā "jūs – vācieši tādi", kaut arī tas jau ne tuvu nav viens un tas pats. Un tad viņš pauž: "Vācieši tomēr ir labāki nekā jūs – latvieši tādi."

KG: Un ko jūs domājat par Hansa Houvelingena darbu?

HS: Varbūt man nedaudz apšaubāmas šķiet viņa idejas Eiropas telpas importa sakarā – it kā Latvija līdz šim nebūtu bijusi Eiropas daļa, un viņš tagad ir atvedis šurp kaut ko no holandiešu modernisma, lai šo telpu šeit iedibinātu. Tomēr man patīk, ka modernisma vēsture tiek uzskatīta par vērtību, par kaut ko vispāreuropeisku. Kāpēc lai holandiešu modernisma darbu nepārbaudītu, ievietojot citā kontekstā un laika ietvarā? Ja to varētu turpināt, uzceļot īstu ēku – iespējams, pirmo vadoša holandiešu mūsdienu arhitekta projektētu celtni Austrumeiropā –, tas būtu patiešām lieliski.

KG: No vienas puses – ir interesanti sekot arhitekta domai par to, vai šeit ir vai nav Eiropas telpa. No šāda viedokļa tas jau atkal ir jautājums par "mums un viņiem". No otras puses – būtu interesanti vērot rīdzinieku attieksmi.

AB: Manuprāt, tas būs viens no darbiem, kas nedaudz provocēs. Sākotnēji šķita, ka arī Ekroidas un Hārvija darbs provocēs cilvēkus. Bija ļoti grūti saņemt atļauju, jo instalācijas vieta bija kādreizējās kapsētas teritorijā, un kapela ir arhitektūras piemineklis. Tomēr atbildīgās institūcijas direktors ir diezgan mūsdienīgi domājošs – viņš labi saprot, ka ir svarīgi veidot saikni ar šodienas aktuālo kultūru. Ja nedarbojas nekas aktuāls, bet tikai atmiņas, tad nekas nepaliek no šodienas, no mūsu laikam atbilstošiem simboliem. Rīgā joprojām smagi jācinās pret ļaudīm, kuri uzskata, ka visam nozīmīgajam pagātnes mantojumam jātiek iebalzamētam vai butaforiski atdarinātam – kā Melngalvju nama gadījumā.

HS: Bet kā mākslinieki iedomājās savu darbu kādreizējās kapsētas kontekstā? Tā kā identisku darbu viņi veidojuši arī citā vidē, tad tas kļūst par atšķirīgu kontekstu testu arī viņiem pašiem...

AB: Savu instalāciju viņi veidoja pamestā baznīcā un tādējādi it kā atgriezta dzīvību šajā vietā. Pirms tam ēka netika izmantota un bija pakļauta izpostīšanai. Viņu māksla rosināja tās nozīmības atjaunošanos. Tā arī atklāja šajā apkārtnē dzīvojošajiem, tiem, kas ir pie šīs ēkas pieraduši, jaunu pieeju vecajai baznīcai. Pamestā vietā neviens vairs nerūpējas par vides stāvokli – šis mākslas darbs orientējas tieši uz šo rūpju rosināšanu. Kaut vai tikai

tas, ka viena celtnē šajā vietā tiek iztīrīta, palīdz citādi uztvert apkārtni, tas izsaka citādas esamības iespējamību.

HS: Šī nolaistā vietā esošās ēkas iztīrīšana un mākslas darba veidošana tajā ir visai interesants piemērs, kā ļoti poētisks darbs, klasiska instalācija, var reizēm radīt spēcīgu sociālo efektu nekā tieši sociāli vērsti, programmatiski sociāls darbs.

KG: Bet ir vēl kāds interesants aspekts – ja to darītu jūs vai kāds cits no vietējiem māksliniekiem, reakcija būtu atšķirīga. Manuprāt, Latvijas sabiedrībā kopumā ir ļoti pozitīva attieksme pret ārzemniekiem. Ja ārzemju mākslinieki ierodas Rīgā un pievērš uzmanību šai vietai, tad te jābūt kaut kam patiešām vērtīgam.

AB: Tas gan attiecas uz ļaudīm, kam ir kāda sākotnējā informācija, bet šī rajona iemītnieki... Mēs baidījāmies no vandaļu postījumiem. Tomēr ļaudis, kuriem par mākslu nav nekāda priekšstata, nepavisam nebija agresīvi noskaņoti pret šo darbu.

KG: Nepavisam. Viņi visi gribēja ar tur strādājošajiem māksliniekiem aprunāties.

AB: Tā kā tas nav pilsētas centrs, tad tur uzturas vieni un tie paši cilvēki. Viņi sazinās savā starpā. Ja viens paziņo, ka, redziet, šis puisis no Anglijas te taīsa kaut ko foršu, tas darbojas kā bezdrāts telegrāfs un piesaista uzmanību. Izrādījās, ka vietējais informācijas lauks iedarbojas ļoti labvēlīgi.

HS: Kā ir ar vidusmēra auditorijas interesi – vai tā vairāk fokusēta uz darbiem publiskajā telpā vai uz izstādītiem?

KG: Praktisku apsvērumu dēļ vairāk cilvēku ir apskatījuši darbus izstāžu zālē – nav jāpārvietojas pa visu pilsētu ar karti rokā. Mēs jau visi esam slinki un domājam, ka to taču var paspēt rit vai nākamnedēļ, kamēr ir jau par vēlu. Bet kāda ir Latvijas mākslas profesionāļu attieksme pret šo notikumu – kā tev šķiet, Aigar?

AB: Kad žurnālisti izrāda vēlēšanos ar mums aprunāties, tad man šķiet, ka viņus vairāk interesē publiskās telpas māksla.

HS: Bet varbūt tas tā ir tieši tāpēc, ka vairāk nekā desmit gadus ir bijis vērojams tāds mūsdienu mākslas deficīts publiskajā telpā? Tagad viņi var arī novērtēt starpību.

KG: Ļoti bieži uzdots jautājums ir – kā šie darbi mijiedarbojas ar to publiskās telpas mākslu, kas Rīgā ir, ar pieminekļiem? Tomēr es nekad agrāk neesmu Latvijā vērojis tādu kultūras jomā nespecializēto mediju interesi. Kad mēs izsūtījām preses relizes un uzaicinājām viņus uz akreditāciju, saņēmām atbildi, ka viņus tas neinteresē. Tagad viņi mūs uzmeklē un paziņo, ka ir mainījuši savu viedokli un vēlas rakstīt par šo notikumu. Viņu skatījums uz šo notikumu un tas, kā viņi izsakās par mākslu, ir visai interesanti. Tas nepārprotami atšķiras no mūsu redzējuma, taču iesākumam, protams, nav slikti.

AB: Kas attiecas uz atsauksmēm medijos, 50. gadu mākslas darbi funkcionē ļoti sekmīgi un skulptūras publiskajā telpā arī. Savukārt par ekspozīcijām izstāžu zālēs – kaut arī tas ir mūsu svarīgākais elements – publikas interese ir ierobežota, lielāko tiesu interesējas profesionāļi.

KG: Šķiet, ar vienu darbu mums ir izdevies pievērst gluži necerēta publikas segmenta uzmanību – ar Dena Šipsaidsa darbu. Man piezvanīja no alpinisma biedrības un lūdza, vai nevarot izmēģināt to veidojumu *Arsenālā*, kas taisīts no alpinisma treniņiem domāta materiāla. Vispirms viņi ieradās skulptūru apskatīt, pēc tam tajā uzrāpties. Tas ir paradoksāli – tirgū pircējus mulsināja tas,

The Conversation Pieces of "European Space"

THE INTERVIEW WITH THE CURATORS OF RIGA SCULPTURE QUADRENNIAL, "EUROPEAN SPACE", AIGARS BIKŠE AND KRISTAPS GULBIS, TOOK PLACE IN TALLINN, ON 13TH JUNE 2004. AS IT WAS THE SECOND ONE FROM THE SET OF TWO INTERVIEWS RELATING TO "EUROPEAN SPACE", THE FOCUS WAS SHIFTED FROM THE GENERAL ISSUES ADDRESSED IN THE FIRST INTERVIEW TO CONCRETE ARTWORKS AT THE SCULPTURE QUADRENNIAL AND THE RESONANCE THEY PROVOKE IN PUBLIC.

Hanno Soans: Maybe you would like to choose some works as examples of different aspects building up the exhibition. I would particularly like to mention the works from the 1950s installed on billboards and the sculptures in public space. Could you address the works, which in your opinion have been a particular success or interesting as a process?

Kristaps Gulbis: I found very interesting the issues concerning the works exhibited outside the exhibition halls. These artists could come to Riga beforehand for the research visits, so they were in a privileged position compared to the others. In public space there are some works particularly interesting to address here. One is by Erik Samakh, a sound piece feeding on solar energy and discreetly situated in a park. Then I should mention the work by FOS, Thomas Poulsen from Denmark, whose work is situated in one of Riga's marketplaces. These are both good examples of how local people can react to the artwork. Actually people like Thomas Poulsen's work. His initial idea about people in this part of the world was that they are very individual, thinking mostly about their own small worlds. So he wanted to connect them under one roof, making communication between them more active. He made a new stand with a common roof and painted it to look nice if you compare it with the existing structures in the market, which are cheap wooden things with some plastic for the roof. We agreed with the farmers who are selling there, that after Poulsen's work is finished, they will move to this new stand. But as they moved there for one day they told us they are going to move back because some customers started to complain that they sell their stuff on a sculpture. There is a tiny sign with the artist's name and the title attached to the stand, you know.

Aigars Bikše: The title is "Stand for Two Venders".

KG: So their question was, how dare you trade on an artwork, on a sculptural object, don't you have any respect for art? It also came out that the construction itself was not too good as the guys selling complained that it doesn't protect vegetables from the sun. The roof was constructed in a way that even if the water doesn't get on vegetables, it drops on customers, when it is raining. We discussed with Aigars whether we have to influence the director of the market, make him to reduce the

rent for this stand? But we came to the conclusion that we shouldn't try to influence their decisions.

HS: If there is a work, intended at building up real-life interactive processes connecting people and influencing their behaviour, there must always be the possibility to fail. If it is not there the work is pre-protected and cannot fulfill its own preconditions. It makes good effort meaningless. You can then hardly claim to measure the success of another occasion, when it might have happened. And what you told me now is revealing a lot about the context, this reaction to trading on a piece of sculpture. In Denmark people would have been prepared, to a certain extent, to formally accept the conditions of contemporary social sculpture – thus there would have been less risk. I think this is an interesting aspect for the artist to consider further. I wanted to recall here what Claire Bishop addressed in "Colonising Space" conference. Often this kind of social sculpture, working directly with people and their environment, claims to be orientated to actively changing society. But often discourse around this kind of work is overprotective trying to hide that it might not work in every aspect every time, despite good intentions. I think you made the right decision, because often curators are trying to mask failures. In longer terms that is reducing the actual potential of the importance of that type of work.

KG: From one hand there was very positive attitude from the guys selling in the market. They told us that they like the stand and that they would use it, only if this seat could be moved a little bit further and this roof redone a bit. There are some local rules, local habits stepping in. They cannot be understood by someone who is from outside. The artist from Latvia might have made the same mistake. Because artists don't belong to this group of people who are trading goods in markets, we are not farmers. They basically inhabit the market and they have developed their own hierarchy of things important for their business. They can support artwork a little, no problem, but if their sales are deteriorating, they cannot accept it.

AB: In the competition between the traditional rough structures they were used to be trading on and the new stand, the rough basic structures won also because customers expected that the price on the old stands would be cheaper. As they came there for authentic raw peasant food they believed that rough stands mean the good old thing and the product will really be from the countryside. The aesthetics of this artwork thus was closer to the aesthetics of presentation, which here is used only in the shopping malls.

KG: People thought that if you buy from new stands the price probably is also higher.

That is how they have been trained. It is a usual practice to refurbish a place to open up with higher prices.

HS: This is related to the topic we started to discuss in the previous interview, concerning elitism, art for artists only. You need public to make your effort meaningful. If you try to modify the result of artists' impact on public, to make it more "efficient", it loses its touch with reality. Although I really like the idea of Thomas Poulsen I shouldn't interfere with it in this phase. Our first conversation was about Us and Them – the same distinction works here. The drawbacks are addressing these differences, which exist between artists' imagination of a market place and the very practicalities of it operating. By interfering we might end up in a naïve conclusion that

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we might do better stands for people trading there without any experience about trading, which is another form of an elitist approach, benevolent but narrow minded elitism.

AB: Harvey and Ackroyd's piece was one of the favourites of the Jury. When the artists came first time to Riga, for a research trip, they were thinking of various possibilities. They also make huge pictures using photosynthesis as a process. So that was one possible variant. They take a dark room, grow grass on the wall there and project a huge photography on it, up to 10 meters. And with the help of photosynthesis taking place within 2 weeks the picture is transformed on the natural material. And they then kill the grass, conserving the picture. The result is a big naturally grown tapestry with an image in negative. We found for them three different places as potential sites for the series of installations they do with architectural objects, which they turn green by growing grass on them. The effect, of course, is fabulous. The architecture, the building loses its materiality and sort of disappears. The more the grass grows the less architectural the building seems, all details are reduced and it starts to work in the environment as a green mass. The place they are doing it in Riga is a desolate area, a rough place, and this works particularly well there.

KG: It was a place with a lot of needles left behind by junkies...

AB: The artists cleaned the place, working for a couple of days. The building was covered with the mixture of clay containing seeds of grass. When it started to grow the building turned into a green mass. It is very interesting how our perception of environment around it changes.

KG: Visually, I think it is very powerful, very impressive. But we were worried about the attitude of those people who go there and use drugs or drink there and sometimes stay overnight. It is close to jail, so this neighborhood is not very safe. We were concerned what will happen to the work in these circumstances. Something was indeed written on the building in the beginning. But when people started to notice the grass growing and anticipated the result, the attitude became more caring than it is usually.

HS: So you could get the same result like Thomas Hirschhorn got at the last *Documenta* with his "Bataille Monument", that he could somehow enter a Turkish emigrant community and establish a trust relationship between himself and the community so that he even could leave there expensive TV studio equipment without guard.

KG: This is an interesting phenomenon. We were discussing with Aigars the possibility of establishing an art center in some kind of depressed area, because the attitude of people living there is more generous. Erik Samakh, I think, also did take big risk with his flutes operating on the solar energy. Did you see that one?

HS: Yeah, I was at the excursion the artist gave about the piece. It is marvelous, actually. When it is sunshine the flutes start to play and when it is cloudy the piece, which is sort of invisible anyway, turns silent and disappears completely.

KG: That is something that I very much like in his work – it is not something rudely put in the city center as a massive piece of sculpture claiming a lot of space for itself. I like his discreet way of dealing with the public. His work is very sensitive, but at the same time the way he is

promoting his work is quite different. When he was here, he was every day walking through Riga with his solar flute in his hand talking about it to everyone.

HS: He looked like a magician, the Wizard of Oz, with that thing... It was quite impressive to get to know how his instruments work, making a tune out of light.

KG: Did you know that you could also record that sound? There is a microphone inside. He is not working only with this type of installations all the time, but this is one branch of his activities he is developing constantly. But if you for example compare his work with the work of Navakas, these are two different approaches. And in Riga they are exhibited maybe 300 meters from each other.

HS: But I think both methods are vital for contemporary sculpture. You still see a lot of work dealing with mass and materiality and also pieces, which are on the border of hardly being noticeable but work very strongly, engaging the viewer actively. They often get the people unprepared. So best of all the result is realized by people who pass this park every day and suddenly notice that something very subtle has changed.

KG: Navakas told me that when he was installing his piece there was an old Russian guy passing by and asking: 'A ti kto takoi?*' Navakas took some time and then answering back he claimed: 'Ja nemets.'** The old man was also silent for a while, taking his time for thinking. Finally he responded: 'Nemets eto vsjotaki lutshe tshem latish.'***

HS: And this is also one thing that only public sculpture can do. It can bring up problematic knots in public consciousness always there to influence our decisions, but seldom verbalized. Often these are things to do with national identity or social status. You could expect an older worker guy of Russian origin to curse "you fascists", which equals to him with something like "you Germans", but which of course is not the same thing at all. And then you get a thing like "Germans are still better than "Latvians".

KG: So what do you think of Hans van Houwelingen's work.

HS: Maybe I have some doubts about his ideas concerning importing European space, as if Latvia were not a part of European Space and he is bringing a bit of Dutch modernism over to establish it. But I like how history of modernism is considered as something valuable and trans-European. Why not to put a legendary piece of Dutch modernism in another context and time frame to test it? If this can be continued into carrying out the actual building, probably the first building of a leading Dutch modern architect in Eastern Europe, it would be great.

KG: On the one hand it is interesting to follow the artist considering if this is European space here or not. It is once again the question of Us and Them from his point of view. And on the other side it would be interesting to see the attitude of people in Riga.

AB: I think this will be one of the works, which is a bit provocative. At first it seemed that also the piece by Ackroyd and Harvey provokes people. It was very hard to get the permission for the work, as the installation site was a former cemetery. And also as this chapel is part of architectural heritage. But the director of this institution is quite an advanced in his attitudes. He well understands the importance of creating links with living culture of our days. If there is no present involved but only reminiscences, nothing remains from the present day, no sym-

bolism adequate to our age. There is a big battle in Riga between people who have an attitude that everything important from the past has to be mummified or presented as a fake show, like the House of Blackheads, for example.

HS: But how did the artists think of working in the context of a former cemetery? As they have done similar work in another context the piece is like a test for different contexts for them too...

AB: They did an installation in a former church, which sort of woke up the place. Earlier it was planned to demolish the church, as it was not a functioning space. Their art gave a new push to the meaning of the place. It also showed another way of drawing nearer the old edifice to people who live there, who are accustomed to that building. In a desolate place nobody pays attention to the environment any more. Their work focuses on getting this attention. Just cleaning up one building in this area helps to think of all the surrounding houses differently, it makes difference as a potentiality articulated.

HS: To clean one building in a desolate environment and make a work there is quite an interesting lesson of how a very poetic piece, a classical installation work can sometimes carry a stronger social effect than a directly social work, a programmatically social piece.

KG: But there is also another interesting aspect – if you would have done it or someone from the local artists the reaction would have been different. I think in Latvia in general we have a very positive attitude towards foreigners. If foreign artists are coming to Riga and paying attention to this place there must be something really valuable there.

AB: This mainly goes for people who have some background information, but the inhabitants of this area... We were afraid of the possible damage by vandals. But the people who are coming without knowing anything about art were not aggressive about the work.

KG: No. They were all very eager to talk with the artists working and so on...

AB: As it is not a central area the local people are used to communicate between each other. If one of them says this is a guy from England doing something nice there, it works like post without letters drawing attention. The local field of information has luckily turned out to be favourable.

HS: What about the interest of the popular audience, is it more focused on the public artworks or the exhibition.

KG: If you look at it from the practical point of view more spectators have seen indoor works: people in general are lazy to walk around through the whole city with a map in one's hand. We think we can do it next day or next week until it is too late. But what is the attitude of art professionals in Latvia towards the event, what do you think, Aigars?

AB: Journalists who are willing to speak with us, seem to have more interest in public art.

HS: But maybe it is exactly because there has been such a deficit of public contemporary art for more than a decade. And now they also can recognize the difference.

KG: A very usual question is how these works interact with public art we have in the city of Riga, like monuments? But at the same time I have never noticed in Latvia such an interest from media not specialized in culture. When we sent press releases and invited them for accreditation for the event they told us that they are not

interested. And now they approach us and say that they have changed their mind and want to make an article on the event. Their perspective on the event and how they talk about art is interesting. It obviously differs from our point of view, but that's a good start indeed.

AB: Judging from the media resonance the works from the 1950s work very good and also the public sculpture. But the exhibition halls, although they are the central ones, have a limited number of public with mostly professional interest.

KG: There is one example showing that we managed to rouse interest of an unexpected section of public – this is the piece by Dan Shipsides. I got a call from a mountain climbing society as they wanted to test out this piece in the *Arsenāls* Hall, which was built from the props of mountain climbing. They first came to look at the sculpture and then to try it out. It is a paradox as in the market place the customers were insulted by the fact the farmers are trading on a piece of sculpture, which really was made for trading, but these guys came to us to test out their skills in the exhibition hall. They were not afraid to take initiative. Of course I told them that it is very good that they made the decision to try it. They thanked us for popularizing the mountain climbing.

AB: That was the original idea when we planned to install it in a supermarket initially. But we couldn't reach an agreement on security measures. The most interesting is that they did find this work at the exhibition and were not shy to ask permission.

It is often these small communities, which sort of open the works up in a really interesting way, make them live in context and give something really interesting to talk about later. It is the niche audiences, which turn the sculptures into conversation pieces, molding the social discourse.

KG: With regard to the exhibition as a whole, many have accused Aigars and me of the absence of any "message". Among art professionals, a "message to the people from the curator" is customary. We are both artists and have built this exhibition around other principles, which interest us: to record the situation and show what was regarded as valuable in different cultural milieus in the particular time period: 1950. un 2004. And again, we have reached a situation of "us and them".

This boundary line in particular seems the most interesting to me: it was the reason why it was worth organising the "European Space" event at all. Thus, the answer we received from the Riga Main Administration of Police regarding its refusal to initiate a criminal case concerning the theft of technical equipment necessary for maintaining a work of art placed in the Great Cemetery represents clear evidence that there is still a great deal to do in the realm of relations between art professionals and society before we can even begin to try to communicate, if not in the same language then at least in a mutually intelligible fashion.

* Who are you?

** I am German.

*** German is still better than Latvian.