

CABARET VOLTAIRE

Dada Zürich

Zürich, 17.08.2010

Medienmitteilung

Lia Perjovschi

Dada Vermächtnis / Anti-Kunst

Dada Legacy / Anti Art

Opening Day: Thursday, 26 August 2010, 6 pm – 8 pm

Duration: 26 August 2010 – 20 February 2011

Lia Perjovschi (born in Sibiu in 1961, lives and works in Bucharest) was asked by Cabaret Voltaire to direct a focus of her art of continuous research at Dada with a view to creating a subjective mind map. She has created six Timelines of about a hundred diagrams.

An informal collaboration with Lia Perjovschi has existed since “Dada East? The Romanians of Cabaret Voltaire”, which opened at Cabaret Voltaire in 2006 and travelled to Sibiu, Prag, Stockholm, Warsaw and Tourcoing. Perjovschi was present at each of these venues, giving short introductions to CAA / CAA (Contemporary Art Archive / Center of Art Analysis), so that we were able to maintain a dialogue that extended over several years and finally resulted in an official commission. In February 2010 Lia Perjovschi and Adrian Notz were invited to the closing event of the exhibition “Dada South?” in Cape Town. This short stay as well as some of Adrian Notz’ visits to Bucharest have become as much part of Perjovschi’s research as have the instances when she received books about Dada.

Art / Anti-Art

Never before has Perjovschi worked on a single subject for so long. In the context of Dada East, she said that Dada gives them (the artists in Romania an identity), which might be a reason for her doing so. But Perjovschi is also interested in the movement of anti-art spurred by the publication of Hans Richter’s book “Dada – Art and Anti-Art” in 1964 and more recently elaborated in Thomas McEvelley’s book „Triumph of Anti Art: Conceptual and Performance Art in the Formation of Post-Modernism“ in 2005. This is how Hans Richter describes the impulse behind Dada: “We were part of a quest for an anti art, for a new way of thinking, feeling and knowing: New art in a new-found freedom!” ”

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7 Timelines

Perjovschi's research has resulted in seven Timelines, five of which are presented in the form of leporellos. There is a 29-page Timeline surveying general culture, starting in the Stone Age four million years ago and ending in the Information Age with the provisional date of 2025. 25 pages are dedicated to understanding Dada. For this, Perjovschi draws on Leah Dickermann's timeline published in the book "Dada: Zurich, Berlin, Hannover, Cologne, New York, Paris" which accompanied the Dada exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art in New York. A Timeline of seven pages puts Romania's Dada Movement into a historical context, giving the question of Dada East a new impetus. A nine-page Timeline pursues a similar goal by putting anti-art, Dada's legacy, in a wider historical context. A double-page spread documents the short stay in Cape-Town on the occasion of "Dada South". In 1990 Perjovschi started to write her own, subjective history of art as part of her project CAA. The current status of this ongoing project will be presented in a Timeline of 115 pages. The latest timeline focusses on McEville's book and elaborates Anti-Art as cognition and as ethics.

Contingency

Many of the diagrams are difficult to decipher due to their intention as personal notes. Texts and images are a shorthand for referring to the complexities behind them. As Perjovschi has it, they are pieces of research for further research, or a "Sysiphos-like" attempt to gather knowledge. Looking at them, one oscillates between seeming to understand one minute and admitting defeat the next as one is plunged into Perjovschi's constant struggle to analyze and order the world – or, in this case, Dada. We can say about the Timelines in Richter's words: "Dada has reaped the harvest of confusion that it sowed."

The Timelines do not enlighten but create a complexity that, very much in agreement with Dada, must be endured. Richter calls this contingency: "As a matter of fact, the idea of unity of opposites, so-called contingency, has been around since time immemorial. ... The insight that reason and anti-reason, sense and non-sense, plan and accident, consciousness and unconsciousness are interlinked and necessary parts of the same coin is just what Dada was all about."

Learning from Dada

Rather than presenting an end-product, this six-month exhibition at Cabaret Voltaire is a sort of stock-taking in preparation for Dada 2016. After about four years of Dada related exhibitions with very specific themes, *Dada Legacy / Anti Art* stakes out new territory, presenting the whole diversity and complexity of Dada. It is Lisa Perjovschi's suggestion to Cabaret Voltaire to pursue the question as to what can be learnt from Dada.

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