

FILM CLOSING

Ivan Petrović's exhibition *Making Off* includes a documentary, printed frames taken from edited and unedited material, and a set-up of photographs.¹ This three-part project offers a technical comparison of different media formats, so thanks to Petrović, Walter Benjamin's remark made a hundred years ago is relevant again: *The difficulties that photography gave to inherited aesthetics were children's play in comparison to the difficulties the inherited aesthetics had with film.*

Petrović's film (in addition to numerous panoramic shots and situations within the private environment) is composed of several scenes of conversation with Serbian artists. In these, the emphasis is not on dialogue but on the atmosphere and experiential importance of the presence of recorded subjects.

In his photographic opus, Petrović had earlier treated his actors in a socially analytical way. Branislav Dimitrijević described his photographs not as images of events but as *events of images*². Petrović's approach, in which the recording process also represents the role of the author in the process, can spark our associations to many different artists in art history, not only within the cinema-verite movement, but also to Baroque painters who, like Rembrandt and Velasquez, enigmatically represented themselves in the social and political context of their time.

The choice of portrayed characters here is as interesting as the choice of situations in which they find themselves: from group bohemian identification, through individual poetic melancholy, to collective creative exhibition, these actors possess official wit, team spontaneity and deliberate timidity, presenting themselves as sub literate persons, privately close, not only to the photographer, but also to the supposed auditorium of the exhibition. Because of this distinctiveness, what can be interpreted as the author's subjectivity in the choice of protagonists is actually an objective analysis of his audience. These characters are not determined by the degree of social authenticity, but by the degree of expertise in staging an authentic impression, thus being conceptually closer to being protagonists than social heroes, and Petrović's focus more closely matches the profile of the lyricist than the typology of the visual artist. Figuratively speaking, Petrović's characters form a kind of night watch for the entire domestic art auditorium; these portraits testify to our total affiliation with historical time and potential catalogs of the future.

¹ A documentary, as well as frames from unedited and edited material, have the same title as this exhibition, and date from 2011 until present time. Exhibited photographs date from the early 2000s and are part of Ivan Petrović's private archive never shown in public.

² *Unexpected Stagings – On Ivan Petrović's Photographs*, exhibition catalogue *Everything is Good*, Center for Photography, Belgrade, 2017

Unlike the exhibited photographs, the conflict of interest between personal, public and private, as well as the dilemma of whether the author chooses actors or actors choose him, leave traces on Ivan Petrović's film work. Hence, the visual suggestions in portraying the characters act more like his desire to glorify his heroes ideologically than to establish a common relation to history through a critical distance towards them.

In a way, Petrović's photographs displayed at the Making Off exhibition are historical testimonies devoid of political significance. We see exactly the opposite case when it comes to his film - here we get political testimonies of controversial historical significance. Therefore, the photo album from the film speaks of the degree of difference between the two types of visual expression: while Petrović's film aesthetics lead us in the direction of cinematic documentation, his photo-aesthetics is closer to the world of dramatic fiction. Frames taken from the film are not in the function of propaganda material, but vice versa - Petrović's film is a behind-the-scenes program on making photo-tropes on the same subject. On the other hand, the landscapes in the film seem more realistic than the mimetic representations of nature in photographs (frames).

The authorial fluctuation between documentary (visual) and fiction (dramatic) is a dilemma that has largely captured the whole of 20th-century mediology. This exhibition shows how a *visual story* became more intriguing and provocative category than a visual document, and how much the *reading* of a painting today is a more avant-garde act than viewing it. That is why Petrović's indulgence in cinematic impression simultaneously raises a twofold authorial question: is a direct film without a screenplay really more convincing than a photo of life that has a screenplay?

ODJAVA FILMA

Izložba Ivana Petrovića *Making Off* uključuje dokumentarni film, odštampane frejmove preuzete iz montiranog i nemontiranog materijala i postavku fotografija.³ Ova trodelna celina nudi tehničko poređenje različitih medijskih formata, pa je, zahvaljujući Petroviću, ponovo aktuelna opaska Valtera Benjamina načinjena pre sto godina: *Teškoće koje je fotografija zadala nasleđenoj estetici bile su dečija igra prema onima sa kojima je nasleđenu estetiku dočekao film.*

Petrovićev film (pored brojnih panoramskih kadrova i situacija u okviru privatnog okruženja) sastavljen je od više scena razgovora sa srpskim umetnicima. U njima, akcenat nije stavljen na dijalog već na atmosferu i iskustveni značaj prisustva snimljenih subjekata.

U svom fotografskom opusu, Petrović je i ranije tretirao svoje aktere na društveno analitičan način. Branislav Dimitrijević je njegove fotografije opisao ne kao slike događaja već kao *događaj slike*.⁴ Petrovićev pristup, u kom proces snimanja predstavlja i ulogu samog autora u procesu, može asociirati na mnoge stvaraoce iz istorije umetnosti, ne samo u okviru pokreta *cinema verite*, već i unazad do baroknih slikara koji su, poput Rembranta i Velaskeza, enigmatično predstavljali sebe u društvenom i političkom kontekstu svog vremena.

Izbor portretisanih likova ovde je podjednako zanimljiv kao i izbor situacija u kojima se oni nalaze: od grupne boemske identifikacije, preko individualne poetske melanholije, do kolektivne kreativne egzibicije, ovi akteri poseduju službenu duhovitost, timsku spontanost i namernu trapavost, predstavljajući sebe kao sublitarne persone, privatno bliske, ne samo fotografu već i pretpostavljenom auditorijumu izložbe. Zbog te prepoznatljivosti, ono što se može tumačiti kao autorska subjektivnost u izboru karaktera zapravo je objektivna analiza njegove publike. Ovi likovi nisu određeni prema stepenu društvene autentičnosti, već prema stepenu stručnosti za *inscenaciju* autentičnog utiska, čime su pojmovno bliži proto glumcima nego društvenim junacima, a Petrovićev fokus više odgovara profilu tekstopisca nego tipologiji vizuelnog umetnika. Figurativno gledano, Petrovićevi likovi čine svojevrsnu *noćnu stražu* celog domaćeg likovnog auditorijuma; ovi portreti svedoče o našoj ukupnoj pripadnosti istorijskom vremenu i potencijalnim katalozima budućnosti.

Za razliku od izloženih fotografija, sukob interesa između ličnog, javnog i privatnog, kao i dilema da li autor bira aktere ili akteri biraju njega, ostavlja tragove na filmskom delu Ivana Petrovića. Otud, vizuelne sugestije u prikazivanju likova više deluju kao njegova želja da

³ Dokumentarni film, kao i frejmovi preuzeti iz integralnog i montiranog materijala, istog su naziva kao i sama izložba i datiraju od 2011. do danas. Fotografije koje su prikazane na izložbi datiraju s početka 2000-ih i čine korpus Petrovićeve privatne arhive i materijala do sada neprikazanog javnosti.

⁴ *Nenajavljene inscenacije – povodom fotografija Ivana Petrovića*, katalog izložbe *Sve je dobro*; Centar za fotografiju, Beograd, 2017.

ideološki proslavi svoje junake nego da kritičkom distancom prema njima uspostavi zajednički odnos prema istoriji.

Na neki način, Petrovićeve fotografije prikazane na izložbi *Making Off* su istorijska svedočanstva lišena političkog značenja. Upravo suprotan slučaj vidimo kada je njegov film u pitanju – ovde dobijamo politička svedočanstva spornog istorijskog značenja. Zbog toga, foto-album iz filma govori o stepenu razlike između dva tipa vizuelnog izražavanja: dok Petrovićeva filmska estetika vodi u pravcu sinematične dokumentacije, njegova se foto-estetika po značenju približava svetu dramske fikcije. Sličice preuzete iz filma nisu u funkciji propagandnog materijala, već obrnuto – Petrovićev film predstavlja zakulisni program o izradi foto-tropa na istu temu. S druge strane, pejzaži u filmu deluju *realističnije* od mimetski predstavljenih slika prirode na fotografijama (frejmovima).

Autorsko kolebanje između dokumentarnog (vizuelnog) i igranog (dramskog) postupka predstavlja dilemu koja je mahom zaokupljala i celokupnu mediologiju dvadesetog veka. Ova izložba pokazuje koliko je *likovna fabula* postala intrigantnija i provokativnija kategorija od vizuelnog dokumenta i koliko je *čitanje* slike danas avangardniji čin od njenog gledanja. Zato Petrovićevo prepuštanje filmskom utisku istovremeno postavlja dvostruko autorsko pitanje: da li je direktni film bez scenarija zaista uverljiviji od fotografije života koji ima scenario?