

Ein Augenblick! Four young Greek artists

Excerpt from the text written by Apostolos Palavrakis for *Ein Augenblick! Four young Greek artists*, at Beck & Eggeling, Düsseldorf. Participating artists: Dimitris Ameladiotis, Nikos Aslanidis, Alkis Boutlis, Anastasis Stratakis.

... Dimitris Ameladiotis deals with a very different aspect of time. He combines everyday items in a new and unusual way. This seemingly arbitrary combination of very different everyday items firstly makes them unusable and secondly changes their integrity, as previously secondary characteristics, such as colour or texture, are set in the foreground in place of their function. This is why the newly constructed is very different from the concept of a "ready-made". There is no additional manipulation of the items. They are not treated, broken or reshaped in any other way. This means that the original function of the item remains visible, but in composition completely loses its relevance in the eye of the observer. The life cycle of the everyday item, from production, to usage, to wearout is complete. The process of combination of certain items has seemingly been stopped at a specific point. It seems as if in a different situation that piece could have become something completely different. The moment itself receives a very special meaning in observation.

Particularly noticeable here is the fragmentation in his works, which might also be described as attention to detail. Ameladiotis sometimes combines tiny objects and structures to produce objects which are two dimensional, or seem to be. His attention to detail reminds us of the call towards a "culture of the blind spot" which Wolfgang Iser, among others, demanded: "What would remain to be developed today against the modern utopia of a fully aesthetic culture, is a *culture of the blind spot*. Critical culture should see its most important purpose there." (Iser, Wolfgang 1990: *Ästhetisches Denken*, Stuttgart, pg 38). Such a culture of a blind spot carries as a theme the unaesthetic; that, which is not seen at a first glance. According to this theory, in the extreme attention to detail in Dimitris Ameladiotis' work the aesthetic steps back in favour of the unaesthetic. This artist's sculptures, unlike others, do not provide a centre of attention. Instead, it is the many details that lead to many different impressions, but dissolve them immediately.

This means that the inspiring combination of impressionist dissolution plays a significant role in here as well. Existing and familiar relationships between the used items and materials are removed and pushed towards something new, something belonging to the new whole. In one moment you recognise something in its original function, but in the next moment you realise the complete removal of this function.

While other artists often intentionally lead the observer to perfect, almost repellent surfaces and expensive materials, Dimitris Ameladiotis rather leads the him towards an "inner world". He turns away from the surface and grants insight into the inner works of the sculpture, which can eventually not be distinguished from the surface, by using small details and opening the structure. Considering the fact that many of the materials consist of modern waste, this process could be understood as a critique to a society dominated by surfaces, layout and masquerade.

Tangibility seems to have been given particular meaning. The observer often feels respect, awe or even rejection, resulting from his own lack of knowledge about the hidden technical creation

process, which is why he experiences a demystification of this process when observing the works of Ameladiotis. Freed from the question about the creation process, as he is able to perceive it directly, he is able to concentrate on the actual impulses inside the sculpture.

In his works Dimitris Ameladiotis almost generates his own cosmos. He achieves this by linking many tiny parts to impossibly long chains. He sets up parts next to each other, opposite each other, he mixes and combines materials, he experiments playfully and he achieves a permanent balance between random and planned, between order and chaos, between intuitive and rational, between distanced and empathic, between compression and dissolution. Eventually the cosmos is only held together by the semantic of things. In other words, the traces in the past and the narrative context. The different parts can be seen as memory media. They have the power to tell a story and to remind. They transport memory, be it individual or collective.

Through their usage in Ameladiotis' art the everyday items also receive a new dedication, which preserves them from disappearing or from being liquidated. The item now points to its own history and at the same time receives a new meaning in its art context. A form of archiving is used here, which distances itself consciously from today's Zeitgeist dominated by electronic and virtual media.

Whilst metamorphosis was still an aspect of interpretation in the works of Nikos Aslanidis, here it goes into the foreground as an essential element of creation. This new dedication of everyday items at the same time underlines their transience. But transience here does not stand as an aspect of time itself, but rather tightly connected to metamorphosis. The rededication as ending point of a seemingly arbitrary development gives the whole thing an aspect of evolution and development.

Dimitris Ameladiotis therefore deals with the transience as an aspect of time and creates a moment in the present, which can be perceived as the result of a fictitious process. In other words, the works of Dimitris Ameladiotis depict the ending point of the fictitious evolution or history.

It is exactly such an ending point of a fictitious history as a moment that Anastasis Stratakis works with. As in the works of Ameladiotis, rededication plays a role here, but on a different level: while Dimitris Ameladiotis leaves the item in its original characteristic, Anastasis Stratakis alters the essential characteristic of the item. The first artist achieves rededication by the combination of items, the second an artist this rededication is achieved through memory ...

Apostolos Palavrakis

Düsseldorf, 2012