

Dramatisations of the objects

by Apostolis Artinos

The object does not exist! What exists is its perception, its constant and persistent textualisation. A dialectic resistance that collides against its solid materiality. An otherness which, although formalised, continues to resist any attempt at understanding it. In the horizon of these metonymies, the Thing, the materiality of the Thing, is exhausted at its forms, its transmutations, at the event of a total absence-presence. The point where it is revealed is also where it is concealed. And again in this revelatory place of concealment there is nothing substitute about it, nothing that conceals something else and appears instead of it; there is only this form of the Other. The laws of the natural, the norms of authority, scientific discourse and the artwork keep incessantly shaping this question of origin. They are all manifestations of Logos that dictate the language, its differences, but also the trace of its unique signatures.

In times of crisis the forms also take on their decline, their vulgar side. On the one hand an in-ation of forms available for consumption—for instance, the architecture of post-modernism; on the other, an inverse acceleration that preserves its meaning, acting as a form of pure violence. Surplus values that do not distinguish any differences and are not dialectically consumed, but only aggravate the position of their spot. Autistic obsessions that objectify the language and strip it of all temptation, originatory or teleological. The forms thus emerge as stagnant, stereotypical, insecure. A setting of non-historical objects of the highest immanence, on which one does not trace an angst of the Real, as it was lately articulated by modernism, but only the false promise of its realisation. The nerveless politics of our time, and an unthinkable terrorism whose poisonous action gets diffused throughout the planet, attest to new forms of the Political but also of the Aesthetic. The system in crisis internalises its power and exacerbates the absolute nature of its character. Even the reactions it triggers end up inscribed in the fold of its own metaphysics. We are in the aesthetic of the ‘same’, of the enclosed spot. The Outside exists but no one has access to it, or no one is completely Outside. We are all caught in the trajectory of a systemic sequence in progress, even in its crises—indeed, especially in them.

The exhibition of Manolis Baboussis is a critical reaction upon the environment

of the crisis and is structured around two beleaguered elds. On the one hand, the autistic stagnation of authority and its institutions—administrative, academic, artistic—as shown in a series of drawings of museums and academic facilities in his imaginary city; on the other, an over-accumulation of objects-signs which, despite their pluralism, cannot hide their dead-end multiplicity and multiplication capacity in their cosmic sphere. Objects placed here in their atopia, their non-availability, their spherical enclosure. The spheres of Baboussis are this dramaturgy of the same, of delineation and exclusion, of the exclusion of the Other, of his exile. A sculptural reference to the island of exile before a photograph of the parliament. This scene establishes—always inadvertently—a new symbolic order, the faint trace of its objects' difference. A suspended narrative which ultimately alludes to no origin, to no hereafter.

The artistic gesture of Baboussis shifts things into the version of a materiality which Giorgio Agamben calls a “parodic object”. A distortive function that presents the object at its noblest but also at its humblest form. The parodic object is an inaccessible object, an object that becomes true at its unfulfilled verbal expression and hence an impossible object, an object never objectified but constantly subjectified. It is not offered but rendered, and the more it is rendered the more it eludes, the more it continues on its distant trajectory. In the context of this distancing, the object of reference—some authority, a building, a decorative or utility object, even an aesthetic language—is translated into the peculiar, non-representable object of the poetic function. A divisive function that also takes over the linguistic core of Baboussis' work—photographic, visual, poetic—to expose language as a weakness, as a eld for applying the inapplicable, the unspoken, what constantly changes course and remains elusive at all its moments of exposure. What escapes from the object is also what preserves it, what imprints it onto the sphere of the intelligible. It is upon this fundamental reversal of the form, its dramatised side, that Baboussis elaborates his critical discourse—to be precise, his dis-enchantment with the state of things.

A language thus succours the language, but not also a para-linguistic phenomenon that exacerbates the duplications of things and renders the perceptible possible only in its aesthetic experience. There is a mourning here; a mourning that does not animate the latent object but the experience of its metonymies. For language names things, but only with the impossible name of its unique reformatory experience. Thus while the objects in the scene of Baboussis are recognised in their signs and referential roots, it is nevertheless his playful script that dictates them in the horizon of their loss, the horizon of an untenable

topography, the topography of zero.