

Natalia Wiśniewska. Non breaking space | 18.04-31.05.2015

The space of Natalia Wiśniewska's exhibition is filled with figures that used to be called artistic objects or ideas once. Now they remain dead. The set of figures can raise question of the relationship between the idea, object and its acceptance. This seemingly formal question intersects the artistic intuition with a dim territory inhabited by ghosts, which presence and language are endowed with inconsistent voices.

This hauntology approach - referring to Jacques Derrida - points out that the reality is not coherent as if we would have hoped. The present exists only regarding to the past. The deceased spectrum stubbornly returns, so do the phantoms in the forms of ideas, words, images, sounds, traces of memories, or even in the sense of mystery. Whether our words are our thoughts? Or are the images our Iconosphere? The structure of human visuality, which becomes a victim of its own nature, is based on memories. It is a mirage inhabited by the phantoms. What remains is a convergence of the public and intimate space. To get there, the exhibition becomes a machine for invoking ghosts.

Exorcism of this kind requires to establish a specific code based on the concept of non breaking space/hard space. This command is used for forming texts created in computer text editors. It is used where it is necessary to maintain a single line of two or more words and usually applied to force a single preposition or conjunction not to remain alone at the end of the line, which may occur as a typographical awkwardness.

Natalia undertakes the case, which aims to convert various meanings and assent them into the field of art. Reaching for her own experience, voyeurism, visual anthropology, the gallerie's impossible figure & manipulation, she adopts the optic of noticing the connection between economics of life and the symbol of the absence. Natalia looks into the issue of marking and fetishization of the manufactured forms & ideas in visual culture. Simultaneously she plays a part in that process. Hard [non breaking] space is an entanglement into the body. The continuance which not only splits, but also connects. The exhibition questions the status quo and the borders of visuality, fetishization and adoration of the object and its institutional framing. It asks about the life of what is dead.

curator: Piotr Lisowski



Figure No. 1

[The Book, 2015, paper, leather, 20 x 14 x 5 cm]



A book, in its standard form, consists of pages bound by a binding spine. Here, this structure has been shaken by adding a second one, which makes the interior of book not available. This deprivation is compensated by the precision of bookbinding. It is too hard to reject the habit of thumbing through. But the book that is not a book, returns to its origin – thoughts and words. Its content is determined by a sense of kinship and intuition.

Figure No. 2

[Long live the Museum, 2015, video 3'10"]



The Adam Mickiewicz Museum in Śmiełów, a branch of the National Museum in Poznań. A static camera shot captures the neoclassical façade of the late eighteenth century palace where the museum is located. All its windows are illuminated. Dusk is falling. We are waiting as if for "the decisive moment" that would sober our presence up, would authorise things and concepts. But the moment takes too long. Suddenly, in the background one can hear a whispered singing of a traditional birthday song "Happy Birthday". It is followed by the puff. The museum dies out.

Figure No. 5

[The surgical exercises, 2015, lightbox, 32 x 45 cm]



The vanitas lightbox-photo refers to the classical painting genre – still life. The photographed fruits have earlier undergone a surgical suturing. Soft and fleshy, they remain an ideal phantom for surgeons to exercise. In this case, the artist combines them with a knot, which is going to irreversibly disintegrate after a moment. The tear remains. Recalls the failure. The desire to preserve this image and this body is too strong to give them up.

Figure No. 3

[The Shovel, 2015, shovel, leather]



A shovel as a tool allows digging or moving. A shovel as an art object allows looking at it and touching it. A thing covered with leather loses its usefulness in favour of aesthetic fetish. It remains exposed in order to be adored.

Figure No. 4

[The Cannibalism of the eye, 2014, video 8'34"]



The video is a part of documented exhumation of family's remains. The record emerged in the spring of 2013 in Toruń. The narration of this work is built on the juxtaposition of the dominant image, showing the process of exhumation, and the recording of conversation on sport. The film's title is taken from the book by Louis-Vincent Thomas *Le Cadavre: De la biologie à l'anthropologie* [The corpse: From biology to anthropology]. The recorded material, the situation, is an example on which I'm analysing my own, private "cannibalism of the eye". Referring to "the cannibalism of the eye", Natalia is studying areas of the fetishisation of notions and scenes, which are evoked by her, as well as the limits of acceptability of an image, which is her responsibility. This concept is closely related to the process of transforming the meanings and legitimising them in the field of art. In a broader spectrum of culture, I'm interested in mechanisms, which are produced by us to protect ourselves against contagion of insignificance and death. She is interested in the relationships between directness and voyeurism in an image and meaning manipulation.

Figure No. 6

[The Warmth, 2015, video loop, object/chair, heating cable]



The projection of heat on the wall is a hypothesis about the efficacy of art. Undulating masses of air, recorded by the camera and displayed by the projector, reveal awkwardness between artistic intentions and technical conditions of reproduction. An integral part of the projection is the chair with warm seat. The work raises the issues of meanings placement in temporary representations, things, objects of art in relation to the real need for nearness and presence. A warmth "after someone" – a "warmed up" chair in front of a cold image projection. In this case, the proposed "chairing" is a mystification. A thing always remains a thing. What matters is the presence and its mark.