Viktor Misiano

PARTICULAR VALUE OF THE GENERAL REMINDER

Every show has a story behind it. Every choice has its motivation, curatorial choice as well.
The idea of this exhibition – a János Sugár and Yuri Leiderman duet – was born a few years ago in Budapest in an absolutely private context. We were sitting in a cozy restaurant – János Sugár, Katalin Néray and me – and in the course of the conversation, I felt that Yuri Leiderman was missing. I felt that he would be interested in the subject we were discussing and that he would have a lot to add. I felt also that his personality fit perfectly with the intimate, confidential and intellectually tense atmosphere we had established. Motivated by this feeling of absence, I said that János and Yuri should meet, should be in dialogue and should in some way do a show together.
In other words, this show appeared not as a professional project, but as a human fact. Is it wrong? Is it something we have to keep secret, unpronounced? No doubt, it contradicts the general curatorial approach and recognized criterions of the art system's professionalism. An exhibition should promote the name, should cultivate a discourse, and should justify certain institutional structure. The selection of the artists should reinforce certain formal and political logic, for example – a balance between male and female participants, between international and local and so on. Who cares if the participants of the exhibition had pleasure in being together, if they succeeded to establish a friendship? Obviously, it is not a major point nowadays. And that is a pity! Because, personal relations, shared human feelings are an enormous and productive resource. We know it from our common socialist past. We know it from our common present. It's happened to me lots of times when listening to an artist who has come home from some important international event: "The show, frankly, was nothing special, but I met one person!..."
In its depths, I think, this Leiderman-Sugár duet is exactly about that. It is about the value of the particular and not of the general, of the separate and not of the universal. It is not about an art process, but about an artist. Or, to be more precise, about two artists, about their attempt to be in dialogue, to look for the common points in their work. There is no a priori in this show, everything is unpredictable, everything is in becoming. This is the reason why there is no hard statement, no clear message, which can be easily appropriated We have to divide this intimate conversation, we have to come inside it. And what the artists are waiting for from us is not just our comprehension and recognition, "but for us to embrace them and this process in confidence."

Katalin Néray

CONTINUING THE DIALOGUE: THE BACKGROUND OF GENERAL REMINDER

My special dialogue with Russian non-official art goes back to the late 1980's when I organized the exhibition of the *Furman Street Group* in Budapest. Than I had no chance to meet with other Russian artist groups. It was in 1991 at the Hague, Netherlands, that I met the *Medical Hermeneutics* and Yuri Leiderman during a conference dedicated to the cultural-political change in Central and Eastern Europe (plus a big Russian show at the Stedelijk Museum). Viktor Misiano was there also and the Medhermeneutics performed their contribution as a serious lecture about history and politics (e.g. World War II was interpreted as a sexual intercourse between Hitler and Stalin) which left a lasting impression in my memory.
At that time, I had no idea about our future collaboration.
When I took this position at the Ludwig Museum, I was searching for the Russians in the collection and found a very funny and ironic tripyich by Yuri Leiderman where the German words are written in Cyrillic letters. For me, that was evidence of the strong linguistic tendency typical in Moscow Romantic Conceptualism. "We try to build a meta-level of tradition in relation to it" – said the MH member Peppershtein at a discussion with Jury Leiderman and the group.
Some years later, when Viktor Misiano and I worked together on the *Manifesta I* project, one of the so-called "Open House" seminars took place in Budapest with the participation of János Sugár, one of the most important figures in Hungarian post-conceptualism. At that time, the idea that Viktor writes about was born. The real communication of the two artists started in Rotterdam during the Manifesta but it took two years until the first result emerged, the Budapest joint exhibition.
Both artists ask questions of art – its meaning, its position and interpretation. They both like to confront noble and cheap materials and sophisticated and simple techniques.They both try to keep a certain distance from the product. This modest show which travels after Budapest to Gdansk and Zagreb is just one station of their personal correspondance. They are going to develop it for the Jeu de Paume in Paris as part of a bigger series about the region.
The documentation about this process is as important as the exhibition itself.