

Bodyscope, 2012, Kibla – multimedia center, Maribor, Slovenia

Žiga Dobnikar: Bodyscope

A great deal of Uršula Berlot's opus is marked by the exploration of intersections between science – mostly medicine, and art. Her works are often based on a recontextualization of visual results from medical diagnostic techniques, which are torn out of the medical context and often computer processed and transferred into the context of art. In her works, the author establishes a particular poetics, which spans across a highly estheticized technologism, stressed by an often monochromic impression and a typical tendency towards orderly symmetry, and a transparent, nearly ephemeral character of the works, whose materiality is often soothed by the play of light. Images of the body and the fragility of their incarnation in the gallery are an allusion to some of the elementary dichotomies that have decisively marked the history of art – the visual and the non-visual, the material and the spiritual, the transient and the eternal. But a new esthetic value and a connotation of transience are not the only things brought about by the change of context – it serves also to re- question the meaning of medical imagery in contemporary society.

Bodyscope is a spatial installation produced in a time when the technological eye of advanced display technologies in medicine has almost entirely replaced the direct sensual perception. Ever since the renaissance, looking inside the body has been a medical imperative – but to see means to understand, and understanding is seemingly only a step away from mastering and random design. The ideal of the western medicine took the form of a transparent, entirely cognitive body that cannot hide anything from the panoptic clinical eye. The tendency to comprehend and master human physiology is of course understandable and, in the context of isolated medical research, benign.

However, new technologies, which reach further inside the body and see more and more, are not just neutral tools closed behind hospital walls – by revealing ever new secrets about human physiology they actively form a public image of the body. It is thus a consequence of medicine's tendency for an increasingly accurate and explicit documentation of procedures, as well as the media's wish to portray body-related contents – these are appealing because of the voyeuristic connotations inherent to the sight of somebody else's body; and at the same time health and health-care are always hot political-economic issues. The voyeuristic appeal and a general fascination with health and healing, joined with extremely advanced technologies of "looking inside the body", form a fascinating spectacle that launched the imagery of medicine deep into the public sphere.

Bodyscope therefore addresses issues of the body, technology and identity at a time, when the inside of the body is everything but hidden, but it also questions the chase for a transparent body ideal: looking, whether in terms of eye-sight or tractography, will always miss something.

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Velik del opusa Uršule Berlot zaznamuje raziskovanje stičnih točk med znanostjo, predvsem medicino, in umetnostjo. Njena dela pogosto temeljijo na rekontekstualizaciji vizualnih rezultatov medicinskih diagnostičnih tehnik – ti so iztrgani iz bolnišničnega konteksta, včasih tudi računalniško obdelani in preneseni v kontekst umetnosti. Avtorica v svojih postavitvah vzpostavi specifično poetiko, ki se pne med visoko estetizirano tehnološkostjo, ki jo poudarita velikokrat monokromen vtis ter značilna tendenca k urejeni simetriji, in prosojnim, skoraj efemernim značajem del, katerih materialnost pogosto rahlja igra svetlobe. Podobe telesa in krhkost njihove inkarnacije v galeriji aludirajo na nekatere temeljne dihotomije, ki so močno zaznamovale zgodovino umetnosti – vidno in nevidno, materialno in duhovno, minljivo in večno. Toda sprememba konteksta ne prinaša le nove estetske vrednosti in konotacij minljivosti, temveč predvsem preizprašuje pomen medicinskega podobja v sodobni družbi.

Bodyscope je prostorska instalacija, nastala v času, ko je v medicini tehnološko oko naprednih tehnologij prikazovanja skoraj povsem nadomestilo neposredno čutno zaznavo. Pogled v telo je vse od renesanse imperativ medicine – videti,

pomeni razumeti, razumevanje pa je navidezno le korak proč od obvladovanja in poljubnega oblikovanja. Ideal zahodne medicine je postalo transparentno, povsem spoznavno telo, ki pred panoptičnim kliničnim očesom ničesar ne more skriti. Težnja po razumevanju in obvladovanju človeške fiziologije je seveda razumljiva in v kontekstu izoliranih medicinskih raziskav benigna.

Vendar nove tehnologije, ki sežejo globlje v telo in vidijo vse več, niso le nevtralna orodja zaprta za bolnišnične zidove – z razkrivanjem vedno novih skrivnosti človeške fiziologije aktivno oblikujejo javno predstavo o telesu. To je tako posledica težnje medicine po tem bolj natančni in nazorni dokumentaciji posegov kot tudi želje medijev po prikazovanju vsebin vezanih na telo – te so privlačne zaradi voajerističnih konotacij, ki jih pogled na telo drugega inherentno nosi, hkrati pa sta zdravstvo in zdravje vedno aktualni politično-ekonomski temi. Voajeristični privlak in obča fascinacija z zdravjem ter zdravljenjem združena z izjemno naprednimi tehnologijami "gledanja v telo" tvorijo fascinanten spektakel, ki je medicinsko podobje zasidral globoko v javno sfero.

Bodyscope tako odpira vprašanja telesa, tehnologije in identitete v času, ko je notranjost telesa vse prej kot skrita, hkrati pa pod dvom postavi lovljenje ideala transparentnega telesa – pogledu, pa naj gre za pogled oči ali za traktografijo, vedno nekaj uide.