



MATIJA DEBELJUH

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Galerija-Galleria Rigo

Muzej-Museo Lapidarium, Novigrad-Cittanova

Sluga - studija za glumu

The Servant - Study for Acting

O ciklusu 12 fotografija Matije Debeljuha

Čudesan je, taktilan, zagonetan ciklus od 12 fotografija Matije Debeljuha koje su pred nama. Treba im se prepustiti u vlastitoj jednostavnosti – u točki lišenoj prosuđivanja, jer samo tako osjetit ćemo nevinost, čistoću i blistavost trenutaka koji su ostali zabilježeni u kadrovima fotoaparata ovog umjetnika. To će jamčiti užitek doživljaja. Pred nama izranja neobično, androgino vilinsko biće, šumska pojava, satir, pan – svaka pomisao, svaka paralela, otvara široko polje asocijacija, naročito onih znanih iz širokog polja povijesti umjetnosti, glazbe, filma, fotografije, književnosti ili teatra.

Moje su asocijacije krenule, prvim pogledom na Matijine fotografije, smjesta ka počecima stoljeća koje brzim, velikim promjenama sve bezdušnije ostavljamo za sobom – ka modernizmu, avangardi, glazbi s početka dvadesetog stoljeća, ka Stravinskom, Debussyju prvenstveno... Vidjela sam u ovome fotografskom radu pokušaj oživotvorenja jednog osjećanja, unutaršnjeg doživljaja *fin de sieclea* u njegovim visokim estetskim artikulacijama, koje nisu ostale živjeti na mjestu, u jednom vremenu svoga nastanka, već su služile i služe kao vrst opetovanog nadahnuća umjetnicima koji su se kasnije javljali kroz vrijeme.

Možda i Matiji Debeljuhu, danas, ovdje na istarskom poluotoku, gdje povijesni biljezi, vremenski dokumenti, arhitektura i konkretni ljudski dodiri i isprepletenosti isijavaju dodire što ih ovaj prostor nosi s jakim događanjima u kulturnim zbivanjima Europe s početka 20. stoljeća, kao posljedica važne uloge što ju je Istra nosila za Austrougarsku Monarhiju, naročito njen od tada najjači urbani centar, Pula. U ovim njegovim radovima osjećam kako mu je uspelo izravnije, spontanije pružiti ruku ondje, dotaknuti ono za čime traga u svom stvaralačkom rukopisu, koji, moj je osobni dojam, podrazumijeva u sebi i ovo povijesno srednjoevropsko naslijeđe, koje je pak obilježeno ne samo estetskim, već uvelike i onim

About the cycle of twelve photographs by Matija Debeljuh

Before us is a wonderful, tactile, enigmatic cycle of twelve photographs by Matija Debeljuh. We should surrender to them in their own simplicity - at a point devoid of judgement, because only in this way will we feel the innocence, purity and brilliance of the moments that remain recorded in the frames of the artist's camera. This will guarantee the pleasure of experience. An unusual, androgynous fairy being emerges before us, a forest phenomenon, a satyr, a pan – every thought, every parallel opens up a wide field of associations, especially those known from the wide field of art history, music, film, photography, literature or theatre.

From the very first glance at Matija's photographs, my associations took off immediately towards the beginning of the century which, with all the rapid, huge changes, we are leaving behind more and more heartlessly, towards modernism, the avant-garde, music from the beginning of the twentieth century, primarily towards Stravinsky and Debussy... I saw in this photographic work an attempt to bring to life a feeling, an inner experience of the *fin de siècle* in its high aesthetic articulations, which did not remain in place or in the time of their creation, but served and still serve as a kind of repeated inspiration for the artists who came after.

Perhaps this was the case for Matija Debeljuh as well, here on the Istrian peninsula, where historical records, time documents, architecture and true human touches and intertwinings reflect powerful European cultural events from the beginning of the 20th century, which were organised as a consequence of the important role that Istria played for the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, especially its Pula, since then the most important urban centre. In these works of his, I feel that he managed to reach out more directly, more sponta-

znanjima i iskustvima koje je u tome periodu početka, uvoda u, kasnije ćemo se uvjeriti – mračno i monstrozno zbog onoga što se je izrodilo i događalo upravo na tlu Europe – donijelo znanje i iskustvo psihoanalize, radikalni interes za upoznavanje – otvaranje čovjekovog podsvjesnog, interes za svijest, njen utjecaj na oblikovanje stvarnosti.

Imaginacija i san nikada nisu bili zbliženiji, nikada toliko zvanično prisutniji u umjetnosti, koliko upravo u prvim desetljećima toga stoljeća koje se sve brže i brže udaljava za nama, ploveći na nekoj Noinoj barci koju samo još naša vlastita sjećanja, uplivi u prošlost kroz doticaje s bogatim i važnim djelima, mogu na čas vratiti nazad, prije negoli nas ponovno ostave nedoumicama, brigama i strahotama našega doba.

U toj združenosti sna i imaginacije autorove vidim ova šumska uprizorenja, dolazak tajnovita bića, koje u sebi – ipak – sadrži toliko toga što prepoznajemo i kao naše, ljudsko, obično, tjelesno, propadljivo... Pa unatoč tomu, i nadalje, istodobno i ljepota i elegancija, senzibilnost i čulnost, inteligencija i zagonetnost nečega za što osjećamo da je plod discipline, posvećenosti, postavljeni su ovdje na visoki pijedestal – ondje gdje i trebaju biti kako ih ne bi samljela magma našega doba, halapljivost bučne destrukcije kojom smo okruženi i čiji smo plod, a koja nikome ne obećava mnogo.

Je li to pokušaj bijega kroz vrijeme, pokušaj da se sagradi sigurna koliba u nevremenu koje garantira nagovještaj sigurne propasti? Ne, jer nema konkretnog vremena, niti prostora, u koje bi se moglo ući, osim povremenih stvaralačkih putovanja što ih izvjesnost nečijeg rada obećava. Osim toga, i ovdje se, putem naših asocijacija, sve nadovezuje – i elegantna, veoma suptilna igra svjetla i sjene, što je poznajemo s platna velikih, starih majstora, i putenost fizičke pojave, i plišano baršunasto sjajna tkanina – sve to može nas podsjetiti i na nešto određeno, doživljeno u likovnosti, također i u povijesti fotografije – jednako kao i pastoralnost ukazanja u prirodi, i potom, ljudska ruka, kao veliki motiv povijesti umjetnosti,

neously, and touch what he was looking for in his creative masterwork. My impression is that this also includes the historical Central European heritage, which is marked not only by an aesthetic, but largely also by the knowledge and experiences of that period (confronting, as we will see later, the dark and the monstrous because of what emerged and what happened precisely on European soil) brought in by psychoanalysis, a radical interest in getting to know and open our subconscious, an interest in consciousness, its influence in shaping reality.

Imagination and dream have never been closer, never more officially present in art than in the first decades of that century. It is, however, moving faster and faster away from us, sailing on a Noah's ark that only our own memories, tiny flights into the past triggered by a contact with rich and important works, can bring back for a moment, before they leave us again to the doubts, worries and horrors of our age.

It is in this union of the author's dream and imagination that I see these forest scenes, the arrival of a mysterious being, which – after all – contains so much that we recognise as our own, human, ordinary, corporeal, perishable... And despite that, at the same time, I see beauty, elegance and sensibility, intelligence and mystery of something that we feel is the fruit of discipline and dedication, which are placed here on a high pedestal – where they should be so that they are not crushed by the magma of our age, the voraciousness of the noisy destruction that we are surrounded by and whose fruit we are, and which does not promise very much.

Is it an attempt to escape through time, an attempt to build a safe cabin in a storm that hints at a certain doom? No, because there is no concrete time or space to enter, except for occasional creative journeys that the certainty of one's work promises. In addition, here too, through our associations, everything is connected – both the elegant, very subtle play

koji postojano putuje kroz vrijeme, uvijek iznova, budi asocijacije na velike umjetnike, djela kao što su Michelangelov David, iz prikaza Stvaranja Adama, freske sa svoda Sikstinske kapele, Leonardovih ili Dürerovih studija ruku ili ruku koje mole, ili Caravaggiova Davidova ruka s Golijatovom glavom, fascinirajući svojom izražajnosti – kao da je govor ljudskih dlanova (a ovdje su dlanovima pridružena još i stopala) još izravniji, još nedvosmisleniji, od govora, izražajnosti ljudskoga lica.

Naposljetku – palica – taj čarobni element, koji podrazumijeva moć, snagu preobražaja, materijalizacije, kohezije, događanja svojevrsnog čuda – bilo to čudo glazbe, melodije, harmonije, čudo pokreta i plesa, čudo koje prevazilazi stvarnost i prelazi u vrst naročite onostranosti, ili naprosto u onaj međuprostor zbivanja kojim se čovjek uspijeva othrvati od utega zemaljskoga, koji opterećuju njegovu krhku – i sklonu nepostojanosti – fizičku i duhovnu građu.

A kada je riječ o čudu, tada znamo da njegovo događanje – ma kako ono neznatno bilo, nije moguće bez vjere, vjere koja je za umjetnika višestruko bitna – i kao predio njegovih unutarnjih iskušenja i izazova, traganja za onom pozicijom unutar koje će tišina samotnih razgovora nadjačati šutnju ili buku prijema, izvanjskog odjeka njegova djela, potom vjere u djelo i smisao njegova vlastita puta, vjere u moć preobrazbi ili barem povremenih, malih katarzi čovjekovog duha što ih ono, možda i katkada, može jamčiti.

I nadalje promatramo – jer ove su fotografije lijepe, majstorski izvedene, i nisu vrijedne samo jednog, ovlašnog pogleda, već zovu da se ka njima vraća, da se ponovno vrati u to ne-vrijeme događanja, zabilježenih na njima. Promatramo i pitamo se – tko je taj Pan, to čudesno biće, odakle je došlo to byronovski romantično, buntovno stvorenje koje vjeruje u nešto, i što traži ondje, što nam želi kazati? I, ne znamo zašto, u njemu prepoznamo komadić čudesnosti atmosfere, puta, enigmatičnost i posljedičnost povijesti, vremena i

of light and shadow, which we know from the canvases of the Old Masters, and the softness of the physical appearance together with the plush velvety sheen of the fabric. All of this can remind us of something specific, experienced in the visual arts, and in the history of photography – just like the pastorality of apparitions in nature, and then, the human hand, as a grand motif in the history of art, which constantly travels through time, again and again, and evokes associations of great artists, works such as Michelangelo's David, the depiction of the Creation of Adam, frescoes from the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel, Leonardo's or Dürer's studies of hands or praying hands, or David's hand with the head of Goliath by Caravaggio, fascinating with its expressiveness – as if the speech of human palms (and here feet are also added to the palms) were even more direct, even more unequivocal than speech and the expressiveness of the human face.

Finally – the stick – that magical element, which implies power, the power of transformation, materialisation, cohesion, the occurrence of a kind of miracle – be it the miracle of music, melody, harmony, the miracle of movement and dance, a miracle that transcends reality and passes into a kind of special beyondness, or simply into that intermediate space of events through which one manages to cast off the weight of the earthly, which burdens the fragile physical and spiritual structure prone to instability.

And when it comes to a miracle, then we know that no matter how small it may be, it cannot be possible without faith – faith which is manifoldly essential for the artist; as part of his inner trials and challenges, his search for that space within which the silence of solitary conversations will outvoice the silence or the noise of reception, of the external echo of his work, then faith in the work and the meaning of his own path, faith in the power of transformations or at least of the occasional, small catharses of the human spirit that it can, perhaps, sometimes guarantee.

traganja nekog junaka Sebaldova romana, možda baš Austerlitz, tog kraljevića bez krune i prijestolja, svrgnutog i iščezlog kroz vihore vremena.

Taj stvor izbjegava gledati nas u oči – možda nismo toga vrijedni, a možda njegove ruke, vrat, ili stopala daruju intimniji susret, jer su toliko ljudski u svojoj razgolićenosti i krotkoj odanosti, u predavanju našem pogledu da nas ponovno vraćaju ka shvaćanju da su bol, trpljenje, žrtva, patnja, prolaznost i propadanje neizbježni, čak i u postojanju jednog bića koje možda nadraستا okvire ljudskoga, koje je možda bliže od nas tajni?

I ukoliko je ovo biće samo misao, plod naše imaginacije, ponovno mu udjeljujemo vlastito iskustvo i razumijevanje, i ljudska koža i tijelo, ljudska sudbina kao da izranjaju iz njegova tijela, koje je trebalo biti dovoljno neovisno, da može skočiti više, vidjeti i razumjeti dalje, od proste sputanosti našeg pogleda.

Naša zahvalnost zbog ovih 12 fotografija ne ide stoga samo ka pukoj vizualnoj estetici, već i ka onoj spoznajnoj komponenti, koja se sa tom estetikom složno prožima, jer na taj način djelo ne postoji u udaljenoj i nedohvatljivoj distanci naspram nas, bezuslovno tražeći distancu našeg divljenja, već nas dovodi u stanje istovjetnosti – mi osjećamo, i kao da, približavajući pogled ovim snimcima, postajemo na jedan način, zakratko, dijelom iste pomnosti, iste utišanosti, iste krhke i odlučne geste, iste iskrene, ponizne rastvorenosti, nježne i suptilne, vremenom obilježene patnje, koja ipak sluti odlučnost i zaigranost, obećava nam njihovu nadu. Nije li to najviše što možemo željeti sebi i drugima, ne samo ovdje i sada?

To biće – tko god, i što god ono bilo, nije li ono dio prirode kojom je okruženo, koja mu daje život, tješi ga, nadahnjuje, pokreće, baš kao i sve nas? Specifične, tihe, samozatajne, rafinirane prirode, one koja podučava živeti svoju ljepotu lišena bilo kakve svjesnosti o

We continue to observe because these photos are beautiful, masterfully executed, and are worth more than a tentative look, but call for revisiting, returning to the very time of the events recorded in them. We observe and wonder – who is this Pan, this wonderful being? Where did this Byronically romantic, rebellious creature who believes in something come from, and what is he looking for there, what does he want to tell us? And we don't know why, but in it we recognise a piece of the wonder of the atmosphere, of the path, of the enigma and consequentiality of history, of the time and search for a hero of Sebald's novel, perhaps the very Austerlitz, that prince without a crown and throne, overthrown, who vanished through the whirlwinds of time.

This creature avoids looking us in the eye – perhaps we are not worthy of it, and perhaps its hands, neck, or feet offer a more intimate encounter, because they are so human in their naked and meek devotion, in surrendering to our gaze that they bring us back to understanding that pain, endurance, sacrifice, suffering, transience and decay are inevitable, even in the existence of a being that may exceed the limits of the human and who may be closer to the secret than us.

And if this being is just a thought, a figment of our imagination, we again assign to it our own experience and understanding; human skin and body, human destiny are all as if emerging from this body, which should be free enough to jump higher, see and understand further than what our confined view may offer.

Our gratitude for these twelve photographs therefore goes not only to the mere visual aesthetics, but also to the cognitive component, which harmoniously permeates these aesthetics. In this way, the work does not exist in a remote and unreachable distance in front of us, unconditionally seeking the distance of our admiration, but it rather brings us into a

njoj, htijenja da se njome manipulira? Nisu li njena čistoća, požrtvovnost i predanost životu i svim njegovim emanacijama nešto pred čime zastaje naša svjetovno uhodana oholost, tražeći nas, suptilno nas podučavajući da zbiljski postojimo samo onda kada služimo?

I nije li ta spoznaja ono što predstavlja duboku, duhovnu okosnicu ne samo tajnovite prirode Istre i njenih nadahnjujućih krajolika, a Matija je ovaj ciklus fotografija snimio u prirodi istarske Bujštine, boraveći u sada već pomalo znanom, a ipak dovoljno nepoznatom Kubertonu, već svih prostora i priroda na – astronauti kažu, veoma malenoj, omotanoj veoma tankim omotačem, Zemljinoj kugli?

Vilenjak Matije Debeljuha zbog toga je možda još ponajviše za mene simbol stanja svijesti, stanja dohvatljivog običnom čovjeku, uz pomoć jednostavnog života sljubljenog uz prirodu, uz razgovore koji se pri tome vode sa sobom, dakako, i uz poticaje filozofije, glazbe, umjetnosti... I ove fotografije doprinose su tome, vrst dokaza da ta svijest ipak još postoji, tihi autorov nalog da se ona množi i razvija.

Tatjana Gromača Vadanjel

state of equality – as if, by bringing our gaze closer to these photographs, we become in a way, briefly, a part of the same meticulousness, the same silence, the same fragile and determined gestures, the same sincere, humble openness, gentle and subtle, marked by a time of suffering, which nevertheless foreshadows determination and playfulness, promising us hope. Isn't this the most we can wish for ourselves and others, not only here and now?

This being – whoever and whatever it is, isn't it part of the nature surrounding it, which gives it life, comforts it, inspires it, moves it, just like all of us? Of a specific, quiet, self-effacing, refined nature, one that teaches by living its beauty without any awareness of it, without wanting to be manipulated? Isn't its purity, self-sacrifice and commitment to life and all its emanations something that stops our worldly well-established arrogance, looking for us, subtly teaching us that we truly exist only when we serve?

And isn't this realisation what represents the deep, spiritual backbone not only of the mysterious nature of Istria and its inspiring landscapes (and Matija took this series of photographs in the nature of Istrian Bujština, staying in the now somewhat well-known, yet still sufficiently unknown Kuberton) but of all areas and nature on, as astronauts say of Earth, a tiny globe, wrapped in a very thin shell?

For this reason, Matija Debeljuh's elf is perhaps most of all for me a symbol of a state of consciousness, a state accessible to an ordinary person, with the help of a simple life combined with nature, with the conversations conducted with oneself, of course, with the encouragement of philosophy, music, art... And these photographs are a contribution to this, a kind of proof that this awareness still exists, a silent order from the author that it multiply and develop.

Tatjana Gromača Vadanjel

Serija od 12 fotografija, print na papiru, 50x70 cm, 2023.
Series of 12 photography, print on paper, 50x70 cm, 2023



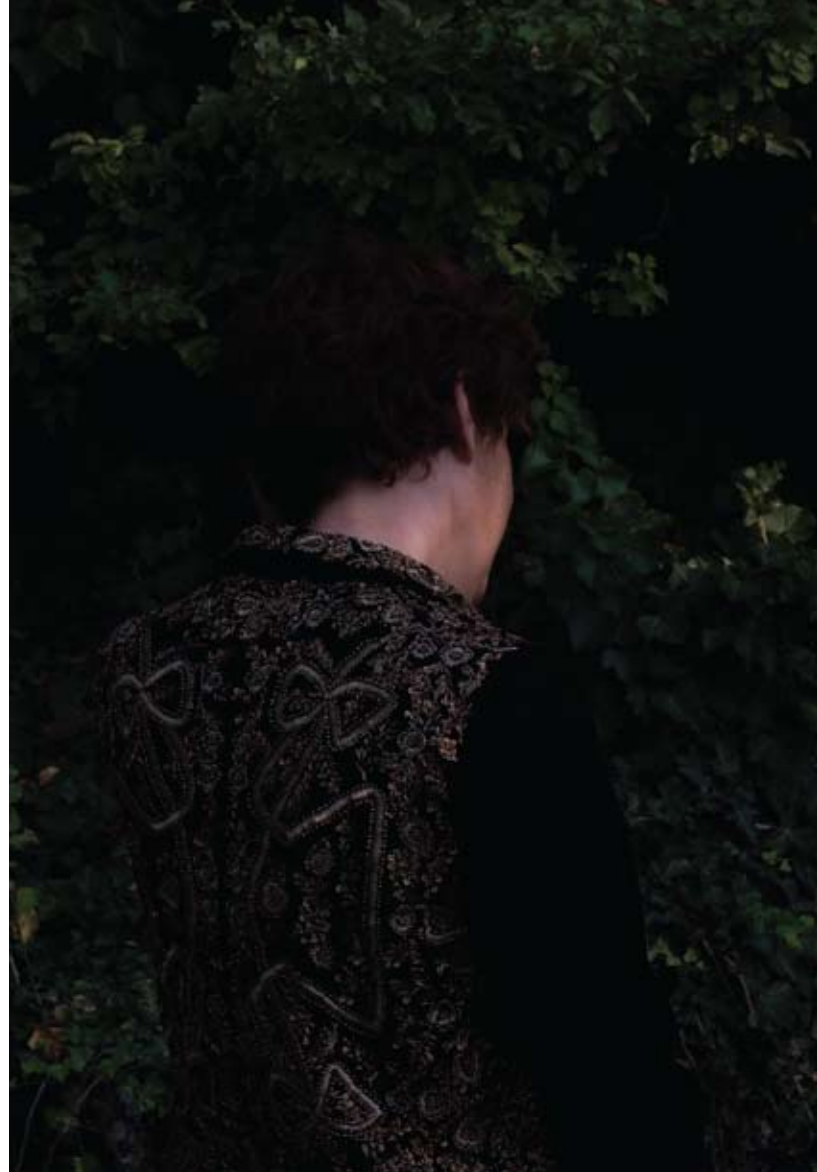






















Matija Debeljuh (Pula, 1980.), diplomirao je na Umjetničkoj Akademiji Dizajn Vizualnih Komunikacija – Video Oblikovanje u Splitu (2004.). Predstavlja hrvatski video na XI. Bijenalu mladih umjetnika Europe i Mediterana (Atena, 2003). Izlagao je na brojnim skupnim i samostalnim izložbama u Puli, Rovinju, Novigradu, Rijeci, Zagrebu, Sarajevu, Skopju, Torinu, Trstu, Ateni, Vilniusu, New Yorku, Briselu... Sudjelovao je na filmskim i video radionicama u Hrvatskoj i inozemstvu, između ostalih na Sarajevo Talent Campus, Sarajevo Grad Filma i Berlinale Talent Campus. Eksperimentalni filmovi i video radovi Matije Debeljuha prikazivani su na međunarodnim festivalima gdje su osvojili i značajne nagrade. U Vodnjanu, zajedno s Brankom Benčić, otvara Apoteku - prostor za suvremenu umjetnost (2013.). Završio je postdiplomski studij MOVIES - Moving Images Arts na Sveučilištu Arhitekture u Veneciji (2020).

Sažeta filmografija:

K51, La cantina di ferro, Opsesija, Contrada, Grad od Čelika, Gubilište, Sluga (post-produkcija).

Matija Debeljuh (Pula, 1980), graduated from the Academy of Fine Arts in Split / section Design of Visual Communications - Video Art (2004). Matija represented Croatian video at the XI. Biennale of Young Artists from Europe and the Mediterranean (Athens, 2003). He has exhibited in numerous group and solo exhibitions in Pula, Rovinj, Novigrad, Rijeka, Zagreb, Sarajevo, Skopje, Turin, Trieste, Athens, Vilnius, New York, and Brussels... Among his several workshops in Croatia and abroad are Sarajevo Talent Campus, Sarajevo Film City and Berlinale Talent Campus. His experimental films and video works were screened at international festivals where they have won significant awards. In Vodnjan he opened, together with Branka Benčić, the Apoteka-space for contemporary art (since 2013). In 2020, he completed his postgraduate studies in MOVIES - Moving Images Arts at the University Iuav in Venice.

Short filmography:

K51, La cantina di Ferro, Obsession, Contrada, Steel City, Scaffold, The Servant (post-production).



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The publications *Matija Debeljuh The Servant - Study for Acting* has been completed in the wake of the exhibiton of the same name presented in the Gallery Rigo of the Museum Lapidarium in Novigrad-Cittanova, held from 30 August to 18 September 2024.

Matija Debeljuh participated in AiR Kuberton, an artist residency in Kuberton (Istria). Since 2016 AiR Kuberton is organized by Ursula Krinzinger and the Museum-Museo Lapidarium. Matija Debeljuh exhibited works from the residency at the exhibition AiR 2022 Vienna /Hungary/Croatia/Sri Lanka held from March 10 to April 29, 2023 at the Krinzinger Schottenfeld Gallery in Vienna.

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