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**"Escape" by Natalia Zaloznaya**

The symbolic vocabulary of Natalia Zaloznaya's "Escape" project contains several metaphors, which can't be avoided when one gets to interact with them. Of course, there is a great temptation to focus on the aesthetic form of the "Escape," but its ontological context seems to be equally interesting. What does it mean?

A definitive statement about the creativity of art may be found in Gilles Deleuze's works: "Art is not communicative, art is not reflexive. Art, science, philosophy are neither contemplative, neither reflexive, nor communicative. They are creative, that's all." He thereby takes art beyond the sphere of communication, reflection and contemplation: that is, the practices driven by the question "What does it mean?" Deleuze asserts the superiority of the act of creation in art over the acts of its meaningful functioning in specific socio-historical contexts. Perhaps, the Deleuze's statement has already been partially historicized in relation to what is happening with the images of art in the contemporary media environment. Nevertheless, it retains that energy of questioning the intention of art "to be in this world" which can't be ignored.

Reality.

If we consider the "Escape" of Natalia Zaloznaya from this perspective, we can come to the understanding that the visual images of the project must and can be viewed not only in terms of what they tell us, but also in terms of what kind of reality they create by means of this message.

This reality is designed with a certain interconnection, about the author informs us: part of the works was created on the basis of documentary photographs. This is an important correlation of the project with what we define as a reality of facts (of what has happened), on the one hand, and it is the challenge to this reality by raising the questions, such as "what has happened? what is happening?" It must be clarified at this point that we are speaking of the reality asserted by documentary photographs to the extent to which they claim to be its ultimate visual representation. We know that there are numerous claimants to represent Reality in our symbolic world. But in the art world every claimant is unique and alone in their attempt to establish a connection with the reality by means of the creation thereof. (A working artist is not so much looking for allies in art, as is captured by the passion of creating new connections.)

The sleeping.

When we look at a sleeping person, we may experience some confusion and excitement due to the fact that we find ourselves in a situation where we do not know exactly where the sleeping person is. They are present to us in his realistic visual substantiality, and at the same time they are absent as we are not there for them at the moment. The question is how the ability of being visible at the time of sleeping alters the very structure of reality? The sleeping person is included in the world through the unconscious isolation from it. This person becomes a symbol of the abandonment of the world, its absolute forlornness and

transformation into a dream, which belongs to no one. After all, the metaphor of sleeping is the metaphor of the otherworldly.

Perhaps, it would be appropriate in this case to view the sleeping as a person who "lost" their consciousness, suddenly dropped out of the forced circulation of their social and historical place. The works of Natalia Zaloznaya give one a feeling that the sleep took her characters by surprise; at the moment of this experience, we discover how helpless they are in the face of its sudden influence. This may be a clue to the fact that some radical event may have taken place, which cancelled the reality in the aspect of its perception. This proto-event can only be deduced from these "unconscious" visual sculptures that experienced the mysterious eventful shift which placed them at the border between "the living and the dead."

The escape.

To be successful in this reality, any *real* Escape must cross the border between "the living and the dead," the point where the connection between illusory and the real falls apart, the connection which is the basis of our "sleep," of our semi-conscious existence. The movement of the project images occurs in the direction of this border, although the movement itself is the visually perceived stillness. *Motionless motion*. How is this possible? And why is this possible?

Maybe because it's the only real escape scenario in the conditions "dictated by reality, when a person, regardless of their beliefs, is forced to act according to the laws of this reality?" (N. Zaloznaya). Therefore the motionless motion is the only possible movement in the conditions of the impossibility of escape. One should point to one important insight, with which the author is working, apparently: escapes are possible, the Escape is impossible. In general, the escape story is one of the most popular cultural subjects, precisely because it formulates the question about the reality of what is happening (what does it mean?), and at the same time poses a question to this reality (what is *really* happening?).

Playing cards.

We know that, among other things, playing cards are a representation of impersonal forces. They refer to such a level of reality where our personal self is put at the intersection of the fatal and the accidental. The visual structure of cards is itself a message about the splitting of Self, or more precisely – about the need of such splitting in order for the fatal and accidental to produce the effect of the impersonal. The impersonal already exists in portraying of the sleeping: they are significantly deindividuated by the painting technique, which creates the effect of the light face-spot. The law of the impersonal is the action without the consent, the action that cannot be ignored, it surrounds you and reflects you in itself. However you may turn the "map" of the Self, you will always discover the ambivalent splitting of the self within this impersonal action. What kind of action? – For example, the war.

The action of art.

These disturbing scenes implicitly contain some question that is constructed, groped for by the author of the project. But to hear the question, one needs to formulate their own: how does the author *act* in the process of researching the "escape?" The answer may be as follows: the author brings back the scenes, so that they *repeat* themselves. Once they were created in the specific social and historical reality of the war and photographically documented. Now they are reincarnated in the present through artistic and symbolic transformation, which exempts them from the historically documented time and place. But for what? It is possible that through the symbolic doubling of sleeping scenes in the trenches, on the platform of the subway used as an air raid shelter, and so on, the fragments of reality are being transformed into visual material emblems, consolidating in themselves the logic of the origin and decay of this reality. The repetition here builds a trap for the possibility of our perception of fleeting events; the problem of this awareness must be continually reproduced in the form of a question about it and addressing it. In other words, the author of the project is occupied not so much with finding the exact answer, but concerned with the revival of the question and its relentless repetition. The question about the possibility of the awareness of what is happening in a fatal situation, and at the same time about the possibility of a free volitional action in the situation of fatality. In fact, the activity of Natalia Zaloznaya as an artist in this project is an attempt to manifest the possibility of such an action.