

The Best Personal Exhibition of 2008

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The most scandalous exhibition of 2008 year was the representation of the new series of artworks of Gela Zautashvili in art gallery “Kopala” that was opened in November. Its controversy is particularly interesting, as far as Gela Zautashvili, neither with the status nor with internal appeal did not need the scandal and shocking behavior.

The first abstract exhibitions and formation of nonfigurative art group in the second half of the eighties, is connected with the name of Gela Zautashvili, that was followed by sensational exhibitions in Tbilisi and Moscow – sensational not because of empty challenge, but because of novelty and originality.

After the years, on the exhibition arranged in 2008 in “Kopala” artist shows us that he seems bored with abstractionism and as everyone, he returns back to histories. But in different from well known tendency of our time, where returning to histories perceived as returning to mythologized fabulous stories or remains as obvious kitsch and hopeless entertainment, in new opuses of Gela Zautashvili there is researched the history of sexuality in a literary way. It begins with simple and happy kitsch reality and goes towards to possible solutions – dictatorial, imperative interpretations of libido or illumination.

There is possibility that the crossroad of these two possibilities, as fateful choice, on the one hand, was giving even psychoanalytical coloring to the exhibition; but, on the other hand, was creating the guarantee of insurance to oneself from kitsch with fabulous plot in our simple, figurative time. Such kind of signs in the present context of contemporary painting may be most clearly is shown by Matthew Barney, when he with the language understandable to him, is talking to the modern beholder excited with popular mythos – talks to it, actually, about Dadaism, only with classical or people’s, Harry Potter’s mythos picture-icons. But if aesthetics of Barney doesn’t seem to be as literary, however, their followers can very easily turn into the sort of Paolo Coelho fan-club, where witchcraft is the most pioneering and dreamy achievement.

In Gela Zautashvili artworks, in spite of literary descriptive character of his exhibition, the choice is truly tough, but efficient. Here exactly choice is the main component, as deep moral and aesthetic value.

Sometimes, as it is seen with empirical material, scandal is always connected with sexual themes, even when this sexuality is only mannered surface and shocking behavior. Essentially, superficial and narcissistic sexuality, even if it is indecent, is more tolerable for

public opinion and social cliché treats it with more tolerant approach. And often, sounds paradoxical, but treats it as ally.

With indexes collected on this exhibition, that were indicating on tantric depths of sexuality, Gela Zautashvili seems was showing the way that perfectly was described by Wilhelm Reich in his researches – the way that can be expressed with beautiful films of Pier Paolo Pasolini or modernized theological searching of Helena Blavatsky or neuro-illumination of Timothy Leary. Briefly, here there are represented controversial figures, that are perceived as leftist not only in sociology of modern culture, but even in antique India would be considered as tantrists of the left way. This is the way that was perceived by Wilhelm Reich as single solution from emotional plague that is equally widely spread in rich or poor countries of the world and that by short definition is called taboo of sexual energy.

Also the structure of the paintings were created with the type of mandala, with symmetrical, mirror reflections, with two dimensional space, harshness of ritual working sketch and texture of herbal dye on Indian or Tibetan thangka fabric. The portraits of famous thinkers were represented on the background of pictures of Kamasutra and visionary sexual magic, as on ornamental matrix. On the forehead everyone had divine loka or heaven, where dream like god was talking with his own goddess, let's say under the tree or near riverside, as Rama and Sita.

It was literary, that behind heights of western thinking here was seen the mysterious commencement of east. Also there was seen all the great achievements connected with alchemic secret that makes human body, libido and subconscious strange ally for us.

What caused the breaking into the exhibition of Protestants, raid and terrorizing of exhibits, we don't know and is not really very interesting. More true is the fact that Gela Zautashvili with this exhibition, like Wilhelm Reich or Pier Paolo Pasolini found the real bacillus of this emotional plague. This exhibition was held in the frame of "Artisterium", on the background of loaded art events and personally I had big chance not to reach there, because I met 2-3 people who strongly advised me not to see the exhibition. When I asked why, they couldn't answer, "not very good, kitsch," they used to respond. So according to their answer and tone I guessed that I had to see exhibition and I was right. However, one of the exhibits, victim of the raid, already was not there – collection of modern or old famous public figure women and their vaginas. And really, to put it mildly, the modern world revolves around woman, more precisely – around this piquant fear.