

«The crisis consists precisely in the fact that the old is dying and the new can not be born. In this interregnum, a great variety of morbid symptoms appears»

Antonio Gramsci

#### Temo Javakhishvili Art

Two red splashes are already marking the wall on which Temo Javakhishvili is desperately trying to throw a third one. The fearless revolutionary act is trapped since a simple video art if act brings the ball back to the hand of its source in a two shot loop and the third stain disappears, endlessly. If compared with the act of the revolutionary who, as described by Walter Benjamin, were shooting on "public" clocks to stop the old political order, the video is showing a dysfunctional timepiece that never stops but goes backward, forward and backward again. A symbolic gesture against the authority becomes a Sisyphus burden where a symbolic act of political transformation remains in an interregnum as Gramsci stated. The "morbid symptom" resides in the stuttering effect of historical/hysterical repetition where coercion is always provided by another old or new order. This nightmarish uncanny experience is one of powerlessness. The repetition where the ball of painting is coming back to its emissary has to do paradoxically with dispossession. The owner is constantly separating himself from the object and is therefore withdrawn from his ability to be satisfied by the remaining consequences of his act. The action does not belong to its author anymore, he is not playing anymore he is played by the recipient. This suspended time is having to do with a central issue in Temo Javakhishvili's work: the dialectical notion of transformation and process.

With the series of pictures entitled *R*, it is a letter that transforms the living body into a static figure. The artist stands in front of the gaze of the viewer with a Cyrillic posture of and I. "Я" in Cyrillic means the person pronoun "I", the self. The letter is formed by the body: closed left fist, the other hand on the hip drawing a curve with his right arm, legs steadily apart on the floor and head down. The self-portrait is a text written with the Cyrillic idiomatic power that configures the submitted body. Some years before, the American artist Robert Morris did a small wooden box with a tiny door formed by the letter "I". If one opens the box she/he discovers a naked self-portrait of the artists staring at the viewer. The narcissistic drive claiming for its emancipatory letter is turned into a coercive idiom.

Sometimes, the work demonstrates how power can reduce movement and sometimes the work shows the ability to generate transformation.

*Trans*<sup>1</sup> is a performance first organized in Tbilisi in 1997. It happened in reaction to an exhibition entitled "Transcaucasia" whose aim was to promote Georgian artists in France. Temo Javakhishvili was first invited to show his work in this context but his proposal was later rejected. As an ironical response to this unfriendly gesture, he decided to organize *Trans* in the "Old Gallery" in Tbilisi the same evening as the opening of the "Transcaucasian" exhibition in France. He materialized the first half of the title "Trans" written with glasses of red wine installed on a table. Nothing else was there except the work that consisted in the evolving sculpture/situation. While people were taking glasses, drinking and randomly leaving the empty glass back to the table, the word was reconfigured as well as people's mind. As the work/opening went on, the work was trans-formed as well as their recipients Shifting the sculptural object to the use value of a process, the

<sup>1</sup> The work *Trans* was later showed in the exhibition *A Translation From One Language to Another* in France, 2011, CNEAI, Paris, curator Sébastien Pluot. *A Letter Always Arrive At Its Destinations*, ESBA TALM Angers and at parnter's exhibition spaces via Internet, Murray Guy Gallery, New York, Galerie Leonard & Bina Ellen, University of Concordia, Montréal, Quebec, GB agency Gallery, Paris.

work was literally and conceptually deconstructing a word whose signifier was suspended to its adjunction that might reflect at the same time trans-mission from one person to another, trans-lation from one meaning to another and trans-ition from one place to another. Its reiteration enables to endlessly envisage its trans-formation from one context and one period to another.

Considered through the theories of translation, the work of Temo Javakhishvili shows its ability to identify how the use of language - its relation with the body and the other - is revealing crucial political issues.

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Sébastien Pluot