

# MARS





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**M'ARS**

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## Newton Harrison Helen Mayer Harrison

*There is a possibility, as you said, that you get a chance to build a purification swamp. I hope this possibility will come true. But — do you consider such a swamp to be a work of art?*

Newton Harrison: Of course! I mean — it's certainly a better work of art than Duchamp's urinal, no one could argue that! And they have exactly the same intention — the act of purification of the mind and the act of purification of art itself from old ideas... Also if you start to think of the urinal in a more literal sense, it is the beginning of the need for the swamp.

Helen Mayer Harrison: And if the urinal can become a fountain, then a swamp can become a work of art.

N: Yes, of course.

*Is there an essential difference between a purification swamp as a work of art and as an ecological device?*

N: Well, in a sense that... when we design it, it would look different from the way an ecologist would design it although it would behave the same.

H: Although probably... I would like to pose the possibility that the work of art is the swamp but it is also what we say about the swamp. It is not just the swamp itself but the literature that accumulates, that is, the images we make of it, the text we write about it, the way in which it is treated — because it will have a text with it.

N: It is another thing that we will probably do... The swamp has certainly the elements of the found object that has moved forward from cubism one way and from dada another, it is a part of a long and honourable tradition of artists finding things, but it has one other element, and that is we'll probably design it so that it's a marker and you will know what it does — if we are able to — and therefore, if you have a swamp system running through the Sava, that kind of a marker would have the same value as a specs on. So it's like all of our work — extremely complex, open-ended, doesn't stop, it starts, you know, it starts...

H: And would explain itself, not just with a marker, but with a sign system of some kind that would have some reference to what it is about. The other thing is that over a period of time, any work of art that would deal with the land becomes anonymous. It begins as a process work, as a work of art, but over time it becomes itself, it's like the meadow in Artpark.

N: You wouldn't go to this little swamp we hope to make in Lonjsko polje and say, "Aha, we have arrived at the Harrisons' work of art", but you would go there and it would be the swamp and it would be doing the job. If you are knowledgeable and used to making pilgrimages to works of art and would part of the rumor mill that is art you would know that it is the Harrison swamp.

H: In the same sense that you go to Nancy Holt's sun tunnels and they are these pieces of concrete with holes in them to walk through and also to reflect both the sunlight and starlight, the solstices...

N: To know the work, it is not Nancy Holt's signature on it — it's not like Serra, you know, it's not like Heizer, it's not like De Maria, it's not like any of that. You can know

*Obstaja možnost, kot ste rekli, da dobite priložnost za izgradnjo očiščevalnega močvirja. Upam, da se bo ta možnost uresničila. Toda — ali menite, da je takšno močvirje umetniško delo?*

Newton Harrison: Seveda! Menim, da je to zagotovo boljša umetnina od Duchampovega pisoarja, temu ne bi mogel nihče oporekati! Imata pa točno isti namen — dejanje očiščenja mišljenja in dejanje očiščenja same umetnosti od starih idej... Tudi če začnete misliti o pisoarju v bolj dobesednem pomenu, je to začetek potrebe po močvirju.

Helen Mayer Harrison: In če lahko pisoar postane vodnjak, tedaj lahko močvirje postane umetnina.

N: Da, prav gotovo.

*Ali obstaja neka bistvena razlika med očiščevalnim močvirjem kot umetnino in kot ekološko napravo?*

N: No, v smislu, da... ko ga zasnujeva, bo videti drugače od tistega, ki bi ga zasnoval ekolog, čeprav bo deloval enako.

H: Rada bi opozorila na možnost, da je umetnina po eni strani močvirje, toda je tudi tisto, kar pravimo o močvirju. Ni le močvirje samo, pač pa literatura, ki se zbira, torej podobe, ki jih delava o tem, tekst, ki ga piševa o tem, način, kako ga tu obravnavava — ker ga bo spremljalo besedilo.

N: Verjetno bova storila še nekaj drugega. Močvirje ima zagotovo elemente najdenega objekta, ki je izšel od kubizma po eni strani in od dade po drugi, je del dolge in častne tradicije umetnikov, ki so našli stvari, ima pa še neki drug element, in ta je, da ga bova najbrž zasnovala tako, da bo znamenje in vedeli boste, kaj dela — če bova zmogla — in zatorej, če imate močvirni sistem, ki teče skozi Savo, bi imela ta vrsta znamenja isto vrednost kot razmislek o njej. Tako je to podobno vsemu najinemu delu — izredno zamotano, brezkončno, se ne neha, začenja se, veste, začenja...

H: In se samo pojasnjuje, ne zgolj z znamenjem, pač pa z neke vrste znakovnim sistemom, ki se nekako nanaša na to, za kar gre. Druga stvar je, da po nekem časovnem razdobju postane anonimna vsaka umetnina, ki obravnava zemljo. Začenja se kot procesno delo, umetniško delo, toda čez čas postane samostojno, je kot travnik v Umetniškem parku.

N: Ne bi prišli na to majhno močvirje, ki ga nameravava narediti na Lonjskem polju, in rekli: »Aha, prišli smo na umetnino Harrisonovih,« pač pa bi šli tja in bilo bi močvirje in opravljalo bi svoj posel. Če ste izobraženi in navaženi romati do umetnin in ločite v mlinu govorice, ki je umetnost, bi vedeli, da je to Harrisonovo močvirje.

H: V istem smislu, kot greste do sončnih tunelov Nancy Holtove in to so ti betonski kosi z luknjami v sebi, da lahko hodite skozi in obenem odsevajo tako sončno kot zvezdno svetlobo, solsticije...

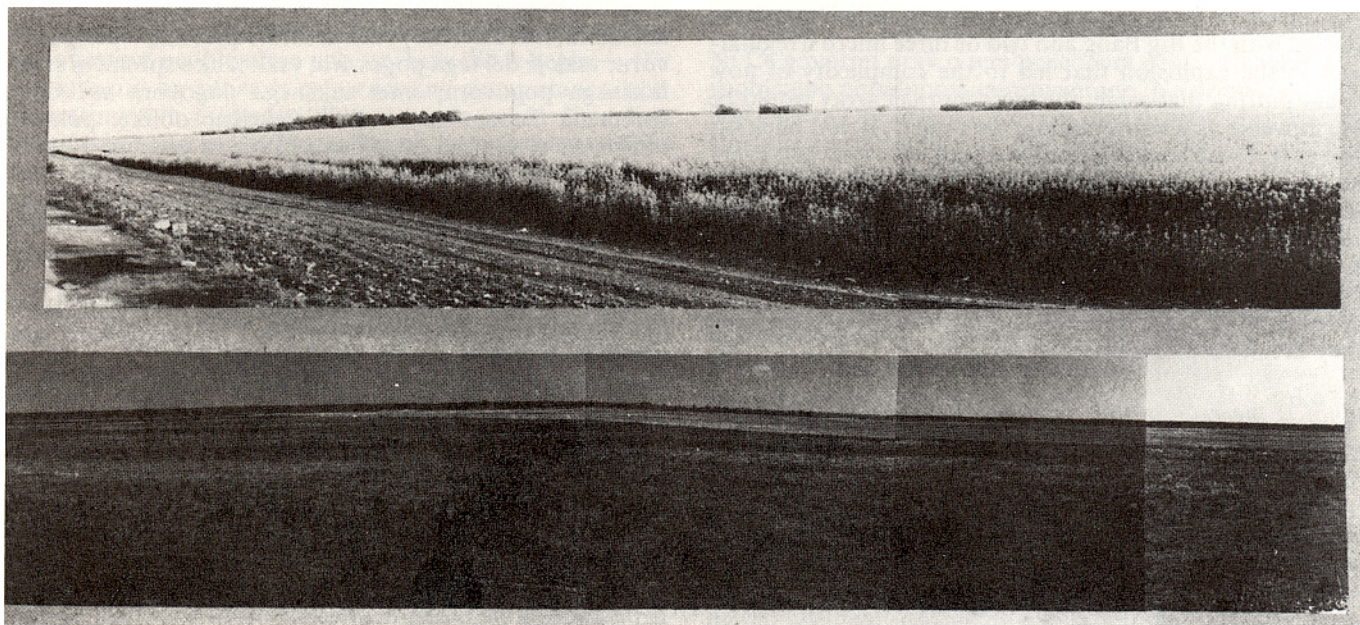
N: Poznati delo, to ni podpis Nancy Holtove na njem — ni kot Serra, veste, ni kot Heizer, ni kot De Maria, ni nič takega. Lahko poznate delo, ne da bi poznali umetnika, tvorca. Razen tega bi bilo močvirje rezultat sodelovanja





Newton Harrison, Helen Mayer Harrison  
Predah za reko Savo

Newton Harrison, Helen Mayer Harrison  
Predah za reko Savo





the work without knowing the artist, the maker. Also, the swamps would be a collaboration between ourselves, Mr. Brown who commits, Mr. Martin Schneider, the Heritage Trust, the ecologist Radenko Deželić, who would also participate in the making of it. As a matter of fact, we wouldn't defend the swamp if they hadn't driven us around; so at the certain moment, this little thing becomes the outcome of an intention of ours, but beyond our intention, the input is guest.

*Would you say that the work of art of the kind that you make implies a different relationship between art and reality as the traditional work of art that is supposed to be illusionary, non-objective, distant from reality and so on?*

N: I don't think so that this is a traditional work of art. I consider the tradition you are talking about as a 50-years aberration in a 10.000-year tradition of narration and storytelling...

H: ... and of art that is part of the everyday life, or the sacred life, or the special life, but very much a part of life. For example, the design of the city walls — you go to look at what is left in the Pergamon museum of the walls of the city of Babylon, the Ishtar gate, that is a gate to the city, but it is also a work of art.

*You say that discussion, conversation is one of the most important aspects, even one of the basic principles of your work.*

H: We believe that the universe is discourse.

N: That it is a giant conversation.

H: ... a giant conversation that is carried on, not necessarily verbally, but is carried on, biochemically, chemically, physically and in interactions between the elements, in all kinds of ways, of which, of course, man is a part, and often a very disruptive part of conversation now, but nevertheless a part of it.

N: The metaphorical array — once, as Helen has said, you grasp the complexity of the conversation, which may have started with the Big Bang and two or three micro irregularities in the explosion that led to the complexity of now — but putting that aside, the metaphorical array would be the universe as a conversation; we're in it; if you back off one part of the conversation you back into another; every place is the story of its own becoming, metaphorically; anyone may join that conversation; anyone is part of that conversation; anyone may change the direction of such a conversation; anyone is changed by the direction of such a conversation. That breaks one free of dialectical form, polarity form, they are not necessary an existential condition, they are special conditions.

*What is the relationship between metaphor and reality in your work? Is it possible to make a clear difference between them at all?*

N: I believe the metaphor in certain sense is the reality. I can not make a thought in the absence of the metaphor. I do not believe that the use of metaphor has ... , oh, it's commonly thought that it is a secondary linguistic device

med nami: g. Brownom, ki se ukvarja s tem, g. Martinom Schneiderjem, organizacijo Heritage Trust, ekologom Radenkom Deželićem, ki bi tudi sodeloval pri tem. Pravzaprav se ne bi zavzemala za močvirje, če naju oni ne bi vozili okrog. Tako lahko v nekem trenutku ta stvarca postane rezultat najinega namena, toda razen namena samega prispevajo vsebino drugi.

*Ali bi rekli, da takšne vrste umetnina, kakršno delate, vsebuje drugačen odnos med umetnostjo in realnostjo kot tradicionalna umetnina, ki naj bi bila iluzorna, ne-objektivna, oddaljena od realnosti, itd.?*

N: Ne mislim, da je to tradicionalna umetnina. Smatram, da je tradicija, o kateri govorite, 50-letno odstopanje v 10.000-letni tradiciji opisovanja in pripovedovanja zgodb...

H: ... in umetnosti, ki je del vsakdanjega življenja, ali svetega življenja, ali posebnega življenja, toda kakorkoli del življenja. Na primer zasnova mestnega obzidja — pojdite si pogledat, kar je ostalo v Pergamonskem muzeju od obzidja mesta Babilon; Ištarina vrata, to so mestna vrata, toda to je tudi umetnina.

*Pravite, da je govorica, pogovor eden najvažnejših vidikov, celo eden glavnih principov vašega dela.*

H: Verjameva, da je vesoljstvo govorica.

N: Da je velikanski pogovor.

H: ... velikanski pogovor, ki ne poteka nujno besedno, pač pa tudi biokemično, kemično, fizikalno in z medsebojnim delovanjem elementov, na vse vrste načinov, katerega del je seveda človek, sedaj čisto zelo razdiralen del pogovora, vseeno pa njegov del.

N: Metaforično rečeno — ko, kot je rekla Helen, doumeš zapletenost pogovora, ki se je lahko začel z Velikim pokom in dvema ali tremi mikro nepravilnostmi v izbruhu, ki je vodil do sedanje zapletenosti — toda, če pustimo to ob strani, bi bilo metaforično področje vesoljstvo kot pogovor; smo v njem; če se umakneš enemu delu pogovora, stopiš v drugega; vsak prostor je zgodba svojega lastnega nastanka, metaforično; vsak se lahko pridruži temu pogovoru; vsak je del tega pogovora; vsak lahko spremeni smer takšnega pogovora; smer takšnega pogovora vsakogar spremeni. To nas osvobodi dialektične oblike, polarne oblike, to niso nujni pogoji za obstoj, so posebni pogoji.

*Kakšen je odnos med metaforo in realnostjo v vašem delu? Ali je sploh možno jasno razločevati med njima?*

N: Menim, da metafora v določenem smislu je realnost. Ne morem izraziti misli brez metafore. Ne verjamem, da ima uporaba metafore ... , oh, na splošno se meni, da je metafora pravzaprav le drugotno jezikovno sredstvo. Metafora izhaja iz pojma ljubezni...

H: Ne, metafora izhaja iz pojma mišljenja; to se pravi, da je edini način, da lahko misliš, v terminih nečesa drugega. Lahko ustvariš misli, vendar ne moreš ustvariti razumevanja brez metaforičnega načina identifikacije; to se pravi, da postaneš nekdo drug, čeprav ne popolnoma drugi — in to je osnova metafore.



what metaphor is about at all. Metaphor comes out of the notion of love ...

H: No, metaphor comes out of the notion of thinking; that is, the only way that you can think is in terms of something else. You can make thoughts, but you cannot make understandings in the absence of a metaphorical kind of identification; that is, you become the other, although not completely the other — and this is the basis for metaphor.

N: But also... I mean, way down deep, metaphor is experiential and one of the fundamental experiences is love, when you are the other, but not completely the other.

H: I would use the word empathy rather than the word love which I feel is well overused.

N: OK, I agree with you.

But if you subtract empathy from existence, you would subtract trust, you would subtract much of communication, you would subtract a basis for community...

H: ... you would subtract the basis for understanding.

N: So, we would hold that the empathy is a metaphorical state and that the basement of metaphor by modern thinking is part of how we have changed our whole world into a world of accounting as opposed to the world of storytelling.

H: We have turned into a world where you communicate by measurements and by factual information which of course is not necessarily valid but valid within limited terms, because any fact is only valid within the framework in which it operates. Newtonian physics is valid within ...

N: ... itself.

*Could you describe the process of your work more precisely? How do you begin a project, how do you develop it?*

H: If you read the text on Sava river, in the introduction you will get a very clear idea of the process of our work. It explains discourse, how we got into it and how we began the work. The discourses with the other people give you some idea of other processes. As to who did what, which is the question people often ask, or, how did it begin — the work begins by either of us, under any circumstances and it continues in discourse. For example, when Herr Ern asked that we come to Yugoslavia it was me who said we must go, and Newton said, »but the Venice Biennale...« and I said, »forget it, this will be more important«. It was. On the other hand Newton took over a good deal of work, spent a good deal of time in Yugoslavia, and I didn't go. However, the artist is both of us. The discourse model holds and the artist exists in the space between us, between the common mind, the common information and the common discourse that we have.

N: To be specific about this particular work... Our work is generally improvised altogether. For instance, from a piece of Documenta which dealt with the stork as a bioindicator, among other things, the Garden of Extreme Measures and all, we were invited to be a part of the DAAD, we go to Berlin on the DAAD, and it's expected that we would do projects. We asked the head of the DAAD, Achim Sartorius, does he know a powerful ecologist. He

N: Pa tudi... Menim, da je v globini metafora izkustvena in ena osnovnih izkušenj je ljubezen, ko si drugi, a ne popolnoma drugi.

H: Raje bi uporabila besedo empatija kot besedo ljubezen, za katero smatram, da se mnogo preveč uporablja.

N: V redu, strinjam se s tabo.

Toda če odvzameš empatijo od bivanja, bi odvzel zaupanje, odvzel bi precej komunikacije, odvzel bi osnovo za skupnost...

H: ... odvzel bi osnovo za razumevanje.

N: Tako misliva, da je empatija metaforično stanje in da je potlačitev metafore s strani modernega mišljenja del tega, kako smo spremenili naš celoten svet v svet računanja kot nasprotje sveta pripovedovanja.

H: Prešli smo v svet, kjer občujemo z meritvami in dejanskimi podatki, ki seveda niso nujno veljavni, razen v okviru omejenih določil, ker je vsako dejstvo veljavno le v mejah, v katerih deluje. Newtonska fizika velja v okviru...

N: ... same sebe.

*Ali bi lahko natančneje opisali postopek vašega dela? Kako začnete s projektom, kako ga razvijate?*

H: Če berete besedilo o reki Savi, boste v uvodu dobili zelo jasno idejo o postopku najinega dela. Razlaga razgovor, kako sva prišla do tega in kako sva začela z delom. Razgovor z drugimi ljudmi vam daje nekaj idej o drugih postopkih. Kar se tiče tega, kdo je kaj naredil, kar je vprašanje, ki ga ljudje često zastavljajo, ali, kako se je to začelo — delo začne katerikoli od naju, pod kakršnimikoli pogoji in se nadaljuje v razgovoru. Na primer, ko naju je gospod Ern prosil, da prideva v Jugoslavijo, sem rekla, da morava iti, a Newton je rekel: »Pa Beneški bienale...« in rekla sem: »Pozabi nanj, to bo važneje.« In bilo je. Po drugi strani je Newton prevzel veliko dela, prebil mnogo časa v Jugoslaviji, jaz pa nisem šla. Vendar sva umetnika oba. Model razgovora drži in umetnik obstaja v prostoru med nama, med skupnim duhom, skupno informacijo in skupnim razgovorom med nama.

N: Če govorim prav o tem posebnem delu... Najino delo je običajno popolnoma improvizirano. Na primer: na podlagi dela za Documenta, kjer sva med drugim obravnavala štokrlo kot bioindikator, Vrt skrajnih mer ipd., sva bila objavljena, naj sodelujeva pri DAAD, greva v Berlin na DAAD in od naju pričakujejo, da bova naredila projekte. Vprašala sva vodjo DAAD, Achima Sartoriusa, ali pozna močnega ekologa. Pokliče botanični vrt, priporočijo nam, naj govorimo z botanikom, precej nenavadnim ekologom po imenu g. Hartmut Ern. Greva in se pogovoriva s Hartmutom Ernom in sprašujeva ga o podzemskih vodah v Berlinu. Gleda najina dela o razvodjih in najina pasadenška dela in vse to ter pravi: »Berlin ni zanimiv.« Tako rečem: »Rad bi vedel o Berlinu,« in on odvrne: »Ne, ne bom vam pravil o Berlinu, govoril vam bom o Jugoslaviji.« Če sem natančen, govori naprej o Jugoslaviji nekaj časa in postajam razdražen, zato ga ponovno vprašam o Berlinu. Noče govoriti o Berlinu. Začne govoriti zopet o Jugoslaviji. Začenjam posvečati majhno pozornost in Helen me brčne pod mizo — s tem hoče reči, naj posvečam veliko pozornost. Tako začenjam zelo paziti in nenadoma se za-



calls up the botanical garden, they recommend that we speak to a botanist, a rather extraordinary ecologist named Mr. Hartmut Ern. We go and talk to Hartmut Ern and we ask him questions about the underground water supply in Berlin. He looks at our watershed works and our Pasadena works and all that and he says, "Berlin is not interesting". So I say, "I want to know about Berlin", and he says, "No, I am not going to tell you about Berlin, I am going to tell you about Yugoslavia". To be very precise, he tells on about Yugoslavia for a while and I am getting irritated, so I ask him again about Berlin. He won't talk about Berlin. He begins to talk some more about Yugoslavia. I am starting to pay a little attention and Helen kicks me under the table — the idea is to pay a lot of attention. So I begin to pay a lot of attention and suddenly I realize this man is telling the most remarkable story about a translation and a degradation and a possibility. And so he says, "I insist that you go to Yugoslavia" — more gently —, so I say, "Helen, I want to go to the Venice Biennale", and Helen says, "Go to Yugoslavia".

So we all get tickets and we go there, we go to a little hotel near the Polje, Lonjsko polje, I think, and begin. Herr Ern talks for three days, Helen and I take turns listening. By the time he is finished telling and interlocking himself in stories that take something like 36 hours of talking...

H: More.

N: ... or 40 hours of talking, Helen and I have gotten what would normally be a 10-week seminar. So, there we were, educated, the ground prepared, and he wanted us to do a work. You see, people have programs for us. Herr Ern wanted us to do a work to save the nature reserve or to empower it in some matter, like we did in Pasadena.

H: The nature reserve was not in existence then, but it was a proposal, and he was afraid that the proposal would not succeed unless there was some more pressure for it.

N: So you can see how entirely serendipitous it is. We begin a work in Kassel and we end up in Yugoslavia because of the series of conversations and telephone calls. We obey the occurrence. An occurrence, when that happens, we are obedient to it and we don't speculate on it and we don't manipulate it. We pay attention. Then one thing leads into another and the work explains itself. The last thing to be said about this piece was that finally we did not follow the Herr Ern's program for us, we did not follow Martin Schneider's program for us. We coursed our own agenda. The river...

H: ... is the central figure in the work, rather than the nature reserve, although the nature reserve is part of it.

N: Now why? Because the nature reserve itself is a dangerous metaphor, since it reserves nature in a small place — 300 km<sup>2</sup> isn't that small, but relatively small — and...

H: ... presupposes an island metaphor. That is, an island life simplifies always. Only a certain number of things can successfully reproduce and continue to breed on an island.

N: Therefore we proposed to take the whole river, from above Ljubljana down to Belgrade and let the morphology of the river bespeak itself and tell us how to behave. So fi-

vem, da ta mož pripoveduje najbolj presenetljivo zgodbo o pretvorbi in degradaciji ter možnosti. In tako reče: »Vztrajam na tem, da greste v Jugoslavijo« — bolj ljubeznivo —, zato rečem: »Helen, rad bi šel na Beneški bienale« in Helen pravi: »Pojdi v Jugoslavijo.«

Tako si nabavimo karte in gremo tja, pridemo do hotelčka blizu Polja, Lonjskega polja, mislim, in začnemo. Gospod Ern govori tri dni, Helen in jaz se izmenjujemo pri poslušanju. Ko je končal s pripovedovanjem in zapletanjem v zgodbe, kar je trajalo približno 36 ur govorjenja...

H: Več.

N: ... ali 40 ur govorjenja, sva Helen in jaz dobila tisto, kar bi bil običajno 10-tedenski seminar. Tako sva bila tam, podučena, zemljišče pripravljeno in hotel je, da bi opravila delo. Veste, ljudje imajo za naju programe. Gospod Ern je želel, da bi midva opravila delo, da bi rešila naravni rezervat, ali da bi mu nekako pomagala, kot sva storila v Pasadeni.

H: Tedaj naravni rezervat ni obstajal, pač pa je bil to predlog, in bal se je, da predlog ne bi uspel, če ne bi bilo zanj malo več pritiska.

N: Tako lahko vidite, kako je to popolnoma naključno. Delo sva začela v Kasslu, končala pa sva v Jugoslaviji zaradi vrste razgovorov in telefonskih pogovorov. Ubogava pripetljaj. Če do njega pride, sva mu pokorna, o njem ne spekulirava in z njim ne manipulirava. Pozorna sva. Paziva. Nato vodi ena stvar v drugo in delo se samo pojasnjuje. Zadnja stvar, ki naj se reče o tem delu, je bila, da končno nisva sledila programu gospoda Erna za naju, niti nisva sledila programu Martina Schneiderja za naju. Zasedovala sva svoje lastno poslovanje. Reka...

H: ... je osrednji lik v delu, ne toliko naravni rezervat, čeprav je naravni rezervat njegov del.

N: In zakaj? Ker je naravni rezervat sam nevarna metafora, ker ohranja naravo na majhnem kraju — 300 km<sup>2</sup> ni tako malo, vendar relativno malo — in...

H: ... predpostavlja metaforo otoka. Namreč, otoško življenje vedno poenostavlja. Samo določeno število stvari se lahko uspešno reproducira in nadaljuje s ploditvijo na otoku.

N: Zato sva predlagala, da vzamemo celotno reko, od iznad Ljubljane pa doli do Beograda, in pustimo, da se morfologija reke sama razodeva in nama pove, kako naj se vede. Tako je končno v tej razpravi končni razpravljalca reka sama.

H: Pri tem sva predlagala, naj sledimo reki, da se tako naredi naravni koridor, ki je vzporeden koridorju človeške dejavnosti in teče skozi brezkončno kmetijo. In rada bi rekla, da je v skladu z naključnostjo še ena nepreračunljivost — Newton je omenil, kakšna — na katero sva naletela. Nisva šla na Documenta, da bi obravnavala štokljo, pač pa naju je presenetila odsotnost štoklje, šlo je za obravnavanje odsotnosti štoklje, praznega štokljinega gnezda, nagačene štoklje, to je pritegnilo gospoda Erna in naju vpletlo. Tako obstaja neprestano naključje...

N: Gre tudi za neprestano eliptičnost, bi lahko rekel, ko se



nally, the final discussant in this discussion is the river itself.

H: Proposing thereby to follow river to make a nature corridor that is parallel to the corridor of the human activity and runs through the endless farm. And I would like to say that there is also, in terms of serendipity, another figuring-less — Newton mentioned what — that came to us. We didn't go to Documenta to deal with the stork, but it was the absence of the stork that struck us, it was dealing with the absence of the stork, with the empty stork nest, the stuffed stork, that caught Herr Ern and got us involved. So, there is constant serendipity...

N: It's also constant ellipticity, one might say, when something that is happening now happens because somebody saw something two years ago.

H: Or a major figure in one work becomes a minor figure in the next. It is like the stork is the major figure at the Documenta but becomes a minor figure at the Sava river, just as the salted sea is a major figure in the Fifth Lagoon but becomes a minor figure in the Sixth Lagoon.

N: Shifting still to a larger context: the Sava river becomes a minor figure when you start to think about the watershed and the Danube, because if we are able to purify Sava — Sava gives the lower Danube one third of its waters; and thereafter purification will ramify. Now, there are alchemical implications of what we do, both in terms of purification of the water, and earth and air, and its feedback into ourselves. I am not prepared to go further in my statements about alchemy, so don't chase me.

But, going back to notion of conversation, certainly the value of the dialogue is that we witness each other. First of all, we go to a place as a stranger, so the stranger sees all this new stuff that everybody else has been looking at their whole lives. So the stranger doesn't take it for granted at all. Which is why we didn't take the Sava for granted. We couldn't. But the witnessing of each other is quite interesting, because, going back to Herr Ern problem, if I was there alone, I might have walked away. If Helen was there alone, she might not have seen the Sava. So each of us as witness to the other pokes each other to pay attention when attention flags. It is almost impossible to pay continuous attention. But two people can pay continuous attention within a context of discontinuity.

*You use a lot of means that essentially involve distance — you work with photographs, even satellite photographs, with maps and so on. Wouldn't that mean the lack of hapticness in your work? What is the role of the haptic in it?*

N: First of all, I don't think it lacks hapticness at all. It is haptic on the wall, it has rhythm, it rimes, it has pressure and tension, it pushes the wall and moves forward off the wall.

H: And also, it pushes the eye and moves forward from the human eye. It is the level on which the work is placed, the distances between, all of these are thought about carefully in terms of the viewer.

N: Well, it does not have people in it. It does have haptic properties. We don't do a work that does not have haptic properties. However, the absence of people in this work is intentional.

nekaj, kar se dogaja sedaj, dogodi zato, ker je nekdo nekaj videl pred dvema letoma.

H: Ali pa glavni lik v enem delu postane stranski lik v naslednjem. Podobno je s štokrklo, ki je glavni lik na Documenta, a postane stranski lik pri reki Savi, prav kakor je šlano morje glavni lik v Peti laguni, a postane stranski lik v Šesti laguni.

N: Če to preidemo še na širši kontekst: reka Sava postane stranski lik, kadar začnete premišljevat o razvodu in Donavi, ker če bi mogli očistiti Savo — Sava daje spodnji Donavi eno tretjino njenih voda in potem se bo očiščenje razvezalo. Sedaj so tu alkimistične implikacije tega, kar delava, in sicer tako v smislu očiščenja vode, zemlje in zraka kot tudi odziva le-tega na nas. Nisem pripravljen iti dlje v svojih izjavah o alkimiji, zato me ne preganjajte.

Toda če se povrnemo nazaj na pojem pogovora, je prav gotovo vrednost dialoga to, da smo drug drugemu priče. Najprej gremo na nek kraj kot tujec, tako tujec vidi vse te nove stvari, ki jih vsi drugi gledajo vsa življenja. Tako tujec tega ne jemlje za gotovo. Kar je vzrok, da Sava nisva vzela za nekaj gotovega. Nisva mogla. Toda biti drug drugemu priča je zelo zanimivo, ker, če se povrnem na problem gospoda Erna, če bi bil tam sam, bi morda odšel proč. Če bi bila Helena tam sama, morda ne bi videla Save. Torej vsak od naju kot priča drugega spodbuja, naj pazi, ko mu pozornost popušča. Skoraj nemogoče je stalno paziti. Toda dva človeka lahko neprestano pazita v kontekstu diskontinuitete.

*Uporabljate mnogo sredstev, ki v bistvu rabijo razdaljo — delate s fotografijami, celo satelitskimi fotografijami, z zemljevidi itd. Ali ne bi to pomenilo pomanjkanje haptičnosti v vašem delu? Kakšna je vloga haptičnega v njem?*

N: Najprej, ne mislim, da mu sploh manjka haptičnosti. Je otipljivo na steni, ima ritem, se rima, ima pritisk in napestost, potiska steno in se odziva od nje.

H: Poleg tega poriva oko in se odziva od človeškega očesa. Nivo, na katerem je delo nameščeno, vmesne razdalje, vse to je skrbno premišljeno z vidika opazovalca.

N: V njem pač ni ljudi. Res vsebuje otipljive lastnosti. Ne ustvarjava del, ki nimajo otipljivih lastnosti. Vendar je odsotnost ljudi v tem delu namenska.

H: In prisotnost živali, ki je zelo močna v delih projekta in bo še močnejša v drugih, je zelo bistvena.

N: Tako je haptičnost bivajočega v tem delu reka, so rastline, so živali, je štokrkla, je morski orel, so ribe, je čapljažličarka; in tisti, ki nudi takšno kritiko, očitno meni, da so otipljive lastnosti rezervat za človeško bivanje, in to govori o antropocentrični zavesti, ne pa arhaični, če lahko tako rečem.

H: V smislu preživetja gre za zelo arhaično zavest.

N: Dejansko nevarno za naš bodoči obstoj.

*Ko delate na projektu, ali ste zadovoljni s samim načrtom, ali pa menite, da projekt ni dovršen, dokler ni realiziran?*

N: To je nepogovorno vprašanje, ker postavlja polarnost 45





Helen Mayer Harrison in Newton Harrison sta rezultate svojega ukvarjanja s Savo pokazala na razstavi Predah za reko Savo. Razstava je bila v Moderni galeriji odprta med 4. in 29. aprilom 1990, na ogled pa je bila še v Berlinu, Zagrebu in več razstaviščih v ZDA. Na sliki: del ljubljanske postavitve razstave.

H: And the presence of the animals which is very strong in parts of the work and will be stronger in others, is very much the point.

N: So the haptic property of being in this work is a river, is plants, is animals, is the stork, is the sea eagle, is fish, is spoonbill; and the person who offers such a criticism evidently thinks that haptic properties are the reserve of the human being and this speaks of a human-centered consciousness, rather than an archaic one, if I may say so.

H: In survival terms, it is a very archaic consciousness.

N: Indeed dangerous for our future existence.

*When you work on a project, are you satisfied with the plan itself or you think that the project is not completed until it is realized?*

N: That is a nonconversational question, because it poses the polarity »either — or«. When we make a project — well, we are not making a project, we are making a conversation. For instance, in the Trümmerflora and the Topography of Terror, the Berlin piece, we got a letter from the then senator of Berlin...

»ali — ali«. Ko narediva projekt — no, ne delava projekta, delava pogovor. Na primer, pri Trümmerflori in Topografiji groze, berlinskem delu, sva dobila pismo od tedanjega berlinskega senatorja...

H: Senatorja za kulturo,

N: ... ki v bistvu pravi, da sva spremenila...

H: ... naravo razgovora v mestu o tem kraju.

N: Torej, ali mi mislite reči, da gre za nerealiziran projekt? Kaj imate povedati o tem? Lahko bi rekla, da naj bi najin projekt spremenil razgovor, toda nisva delala projekta, spreminjala sva razgovor. Kako pa čutiva glede fizičnosti tega dela — rada bi, da bi bilo fizično in prisotno.

H: Vendar pa, ne glede na to, kaj se z najinim delom zgodi, obstoja kot razgovor, in zgodba o tem, kaj se mu nato zgodi, je del razgovora o delu. To se pravi, da delo ni končano, ko je dovršeno; zgodba o tem, kaj se mu zgodi, postane del samega dela.

N: No, pogledite delo v Umetniškem parku, kjer je 3000 kamionskih tovorov zemlje postalo travnik — izginili so.



H: Senator for culture.

N: ... who says in effect we have changed ...

H: ... the nature of the discourse in the city about the place.

N: So, are you to tell me there is an unrealized project? What do you have to say about that? We could say that our project was to change the discourse, but we weren't making a project, we were setting about the change of the discourse. How we feel about the physicality of that work — we would like it to be physical and present.

H: However, regardless of what happens to our work, it has an existence as a discourse, and the story of what happens beyond is part of the discourse on the work. That is, the work is not finished when it is completed, the story of what happens to it again becomes added on and becomes part of the work itself.

N: So, look at the Art Park piece which had 3000 truckloads of earth become a meadow — they disappeared. Nobody knows they make work on our piece. How do we sign a meadow? Is it a realized project?

H: Yes. Or, the City of Baltimore realized our promenade, although we did not design it. They did the design, at that point we wanted them to do, we did not want to do it ourselves. Well, that is also a realized piece. Our aims and proposals for this city, for making promenade, were completed.

N: It's really a piece that the city put about 40 million dollars into, and we have simply drawn a line on a map and said, your city is disconnected from your harbor, therefore you violate the metaphor of promenade and you violate the metaphor of getting into harbors. So therefore we proposed this work. Now, the head of city planning and the head of community development came and said, "Now listen, you can come and claim this work after we've done it, but when we do it, it's our work".

H: "Otherwise it will never get done."

N: "Because they'll not let a couple of strangers from California to tell us how to spend our money." Well, we've shaken hands on that! We shook hands! And disappeared. So our work had an existence in the gallery, and this particular work had an existence as a parade. We asked the Mayor we do a parade on the promenade ...

H: ... and we did, and it had not only the Mayor and many members of the City Council and other officials, but it had marching bands and unicyclists and it had mimes and it had guitars and it stopped and got coffee and donuts at various places and crab soup at the harbor for everybody.

N: The issue was not making a physically 40 million dollars piece but creating an act, enacting a promenade, publicly, powerfully, richly. So the work existed in that section of promenade for 45 minutes. The outcome was a 40 million dollars spent, one might say, a million dollars a minute.

H: A change in the city.

Nihče ne ve, da dela na najinem delu. Kako naj se podpisemo na travnik? Ali je to realiziran projekt?

H: Da. Ali, mesto Baltimore je realiziralo najino promenado, čeprav je nisva midva oblikovala. Sami so opravili zasnovo, na tisti točki sva hotela, da to naredijo, nisva hotela tega opraviti midva sama. No, to je tudi realizirano delo. Najini cilji in predlogi za to mesto, za izvedbo promenade, so bili dovršeni.

N: To je dejansko delo, v katerega je mesto vložilo okoli 40 milijonov dolarjev, a midva sva preprosto narisala črto na zemljevidu in rekla, vaše mesto je ločeno od vašega pristanišča, zato skrunite metaforo promenade in skrunite metaforo dostopa v pristanišče. Zatorej sva predlagala to delo. Tedaj sta prišla vodja mestnega načrtovanja in vodja gradenj in rekla: »Poslušajte no, lahko pridete in terjate to delo, potem ko ga bomo naredili, toda ko ga delamo, je to naše delo.«

H: »Drugače ne bo nikoli dovršeno.«

N: »Ker ne bodo dovolili dvema tujcema iz Kalifornije, da nam govorita, kako naj porabimo naš denar.« No, udarili smo si v roke! In izginila sva! Tako je najino delo obstajalo v galeriji in prav to delo je obstajalo kot parada. Prosila sva župana za parado na promenadi ...

H: ... in storili smo to, in tam ni bil samo župan in mnogo članov Mestnega sveta in drugih uradnikov, pač pa tudi godbe in kolesarji na enem kolesu in pantomimiki in kitare in parada se je ustavljala za kavo in krofe na različnih krajih in rakovo juho za vsakogar v pristanišču.

N: Ni šlo za fizično delo, vredno 40 milijonov dolarjev, pač pa za dejanje, za udejanjenje promenade, jasno, močno, bogato. Tako je delo 45 minut obstajalo na tistem delu promenade. Rezultat je bilo porabljenih 40 milijonov dolarjev, lahko bi rekli, milijon dolarjev na minuto.

H: Sprememba v mestu.

N: S čimer sploh nisva imela nič opraviti, niti ne bi mogla, to je njihovo mesto, njihova promenada, njihov proračun.

H: In obstajalo je ne le kot najin predlog v muzeju in nič več, pač pa kot petnajst ali dvajset kar obsežnih člankov v časopisih. O tem so podolgem in počez razpravljali na radiju in televiziji, tako da je to postalo tema razgovorov v mestu.

*Ali igra ironija kakšno vlogo v vašem delu? Kakšen je vaš odnos do nje?*

N: Kar sem spoznal, je bilo to, da sva Helen in jaz delala z ironijo, dokler nisva odkrila, da je ironija, razen kot glas iz ozadja, prepustitev nemoči v okolici. To se pravi, če ne moreš delovati, si lahko ironičen do nezmožnosti delovanja, do problematike dejanja.

H: Ironija je nastavitvena stopnja aktivnosti, to se pravi, psihološko sprošča nekaj neugodja ali nemira, ki se občutita, če nekdo ne more sprostiti te energije tako, da bi ukrenil nekaj, kar bo spremenilo to, kar ga skrbi.

N: In tako storiva to, da preideva k zelo, zelo direktnemu dejanju precejšnjega obsega in ugotoviva, da je prav tako



N: Of which we had nothing whatsoever to do, nor should we, it's their city, it's their promenade, it's their accountant.

H: And it existed not just as our own proposal in the museum and that's the promenade, but as fifteen or twenty articles of some size in newspapers. It was discussed back and forth on the radio and on the television, where it became a discourse in the city.

*Does the irony play any roll in your work? What is your attitude towards it?*

N: What I found out was that early on, Helen and I did work with irony, until we found out that irony, except as a background voice, was an overadmission of helplessness in the environment. That is, if you can't act, you can be ironic about the inability to act, with the problematics of action.

N: Irony is a setting level of activity, that is, it releases psychologically some of the discomfort or disturbance that is felt when one cannot release that energy by enacting something that will change that which is bothering him.

N: And so what we do is to move to the very, very direct action at quite a large scale and find out it is as easy to do something at that scale as it is to dream up a well-crafted irony.

H: The other irony . . . We were by accident watching part of the Portrait of Dorian Gray, the Oscar Wilde's story, and one of the things that struck me in watching it was the ironic note that Wilde had all through, and the devil, or the embodiment of the devil, George Sanders in the movie, was ironic and witty all the way through, but the wit and the irony was used very negatively to degrade and to destroy.

N: There are ironic elements in our work, but I'm much more interested in play, I'm much more interested in joy and I'm much more interested in being there, being physically present in that swamp, for instance.

H: I am more interested in the swamp's physical presence and its existence.

N: Yes, exactly.

lahko narediti nekaj tako obsežnega, kot je izsanjati dobro izdelano ironijo.

H: Druga ironija . . . Slučajno sva gledala del Portreta Dorian Gray, zgodbo Oscarja Wildea, in ena od stvari, ki me je presenetila pri gledanju tega, je bil ironični ton, ki ga je imel Wilde vseskozi, in hudič oziroma utelešenje hudiča, George Sanders v filmu, je bil vseskozi ironičen in duhovit, toda duhovitost in ironija sta bila uporabljena zelo negativno, za degradiranje in uničevanje.

N: Najino delo vsebuje ironične elemente, toda mnogo bolj me zanima igra, mnogo bolj me zanima veselje in mnogo bolj me zanima, da sem tam, da sem fizično prisoten v tem močvirju, na primer.

H: Mene bolj zanima fizična prisotnost močvirja in njegov obstoj.

N: Da, točno.

Igor Zabel

Ljubljana, april 1990

Prevedla Jelka Žolnir

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