

As it sometimes happens, an event or series of coincidences appear to be decisive while thinking about something and make you turn or come back to the ideas or discussions that had taken place before and were abandoned or put aside later. That was a case of...

Something like that happened with me when I came across a catalogue of the exhibition *Beyond Green: Towards a Sustainable Art* that took place in Smart Museum of Art in Chicago in 2005 and was curated by Stephanie Smith. The exhibition was devoted to sustainable ideas that affect life around us in an environmentally and socially responsible way. Among different wonderful works presented in the frame of the exhibition there was one realized by artists from the collective Free Soil. It was a project that, as it seems, might have been initiated by a most simple and daily question "what do we eat?". Coming to a supermarket and making our usual round of selection - an action as banal and routine that we perform it automatically - we don't really ask ourselves where all this food come from and how it was made. And that was exactly the question that the artists asked themselves. The precise points of their interest were an orange and the miles it overtakes to be eaten by people in Italy. The project took a form of a research, which revealed and followed the whole chain of transformation and transportation of a citrus fruit: local farmers, distributors, supermarkets... What is incredible after all is that behind a simple fruit, like through a bull's-eye, opens up a map of local-global transactions and then, the whole constellation of global economical, social and political relations of the contemporary supermarket world.

Local farmers vs global supermarket. That makes me recollect the discussions we had in the beginning of the scholar year thinking about the manifestation of resistance in a simple daily life. Food was the first axe of our research; the focus was on its social dimension. The local Armenian shop that we visited had all the edible treasures of distant countries like a melting pot - cultural centre as well as a grocery shop. The economical dimension came later. And then, I've seen a film *Sans valeur marchande* (*Without a market value*, 2005) by Doris Buttignol at the ATTAC cinema festival in Grenoble that was devoted to the artistic action, which proclaimed the city of Valence a GATS free zone. This film contained a remarkable episode with a local farmer, who has been talking about his small business and the relation it has with a global system of economy. As a son of a farmer that took the business of his father, he had been recollecting the time of the 1950's when a system of supermarkets came to stay and to reign. People were seduced by an attractive image of shiny packages with glossy fruits of equal size in the supermarket "kingdom of abundance". They preferred the symbol of modern society to the traditional one, not really asking for what they pay. The artist Valérie Mréjen showed in her video *Manufrance* (2005) the images of ideal beautiful life coming from the consumer catalogues of the 1960's that seduced modern people - smiling men and women in modern apartments living a standard life of comfort and success. In 1978, in the film *In girum imus nocte et consumimur igni*, Guy Debord said, that this is for the first time in human history when a civilization feeds its elite so badly... Local farmers, caring about the image of their food the least, couldn't pit themselves against the supermarkets with their norms of calibration and a limitation of sorts imposed as standards. They've been caring less about transportation and didn't have to fill their fruits with pesticides to prepare them for a long way. Growing food for them means to be a farmer, and not a businessman, to sell food to people in the markets and to talk to them, and not to big machines for an impersonal consumer. But the last word says the price:

paradoxically, food coming from far away is cheaper than local products, that help to understand the perversion of contemporary economics build on cultivated inequalities and making profits of it. An example here is the documentary blockbuster by Hubert Sauper *Darwin's Nightmare* (2004) showing how the eco-system of the whole country was changed for the sake of economical interest, and how local people gather fish they couldn't let themselves to buy. Another example is the activity of the American company Monsanto that sells genetically modified seeds, which make to grow sterile plants that could not give their own seeds, involving the consumer into the merry-go-around purchases.

Local farmers vs global supermarket. The opposition of local and global here gives the series of consequences: "good" food vs unhealthy one, "human" approach vs "impersonal" attitude, personal vs mass and standard, ecologically-friendly vs ecologically-unfriendly...

The border between the consciousness and paranoiac obsession here is quite fragile. The logos "bio", "eco" or "organic food" became the top brands in supermarkets justifying high prices by "good" quality, and "eco" is becoming another lifestyle. Art is not aimed to give answers or recipes. It generates ideas that occupy the space between utopias and possibilities and makes think about what is possible and what is not. The question "why" here is the most interesting. Edible parks, urban gardens or home gardens proposed by Free Soil are the ideas that provoke the "alternative" vision. Finally, "vs" doesn't have sense; a refusal of dual oppositions opens up other dimensions. There is no need to leave one schema in order to enter into another... It is about a kind of a sensitive intelligence or a sensibility that make a match with inventive capacities. It is like to choose clothes, mixing second-hand things with mass production clothes, high brands and do-it-yourself stuff. Art shows another vision, an inventive way to live a life, a step aside from the automatic one... It tells that every gesture, even the most daily and banal, could be conscious.

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