

ONE NIGHT

Marc-Olivier Wahler

When I was little, I dreamed of getting myself locked in a big sporting goods store. I dreamed of having an entire night on my own, trying on all the sports shoes, kicking about the footballs, the rugby, tennis and basketballs, zigzagging at top speed between the shelves with the latest rollerblades, going to sleep under a layer of fifty mountaineering sleeping bags and waking up in an inflatable swimming pool.

Dreams evolve and increase in number but basically do not change. I imagined spending the night in the Metropolitan Museum, but hey, I'm down to earth. I know for sure though that it is now possible to spend the night in the Palais de Tokyo. OK, it's not the Prado or the Hermitage but try to picture it! It is not about a sleepless nocturnal ramble with a flashlight and dozing off on a wooden bench. It is a unique experience in which you would be comfortably accommodated with the Eiffel Tower on Cinemascope right before you and the Palais de Tokyo and all of Paris at your feet. And you can sleep there, comfortably and soundly.

You will argue that one doesn't really sleep inside the Palais de Tokyo, in the centre of contemporary art, among the artworks, in the unique atmosphere of an exhibition. But today art is showing off, it is „getting transfigured“, it is exhibited in places that elude the museums, the art galleries or art centres. Duchamp has brought the ordinary object into the sanctuary of the museum and has hence laid bare the ontological conditions that actually make up an artwork; others have simultaneously made it their task to bring the artworks out of the museum. We shall not retrace here the long history, starting from the Dada exhibition in the urinals of the brasserie Winter to the artworks in zero gravity in a space lab. The fact is that what is called a „place of art“ has become a vague notion: it flourishes in a kitchen, on a beach, in a crater, in a train, on a farm, in a space lab, on an answering machine, on a football field, on a seabed, in a hotel... Hotel Everland is a schizophrenic object by being a hotel and an artwork at the same time.

Stated in such a way, it seems to have nothing in particular. However, it is interesting to note that subsequently it participates in a logic that is defended by contemporary artists. It abandons the traditional selective logic (something is this or that) in favour of an additional logic (something is this and that). If two actions are simultaneously possible, it means for the person experiencing them that reality acquires elastic properties and that he can add additional layers to it, stretch it to the maximum and hence, revealing a tear-proof substance, which can be extended and folded at will. It can transmit data from one zone to another, feel this elasticity and thus elaborate a veritable schizophrenia of reality. Olivier Mosset once said that if you could see art as art, reality could stay as it is. The two entities do not coalesce to form a unique body; each keeps its autonomy. It is no more time for Utopian schemes to federate the different levels of knowledge into one great unifying principle. It is no more time for a Utopian scheme to draw up an ecumenical theory that dispenses us guidelines to understand our everyday life more serenely. Artists do not deliver any response, they offer transitive objects whose value lies in the energy

they develop to oscillate simultaneously between different domains, different temporalities. A hotel and an artwork at the same time, Everland evades any temptation of categorisation and offers a night to reflect on the impact of contemporary art on our abstract thinking.

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