



HESTIA

ART RESIDENCY &
EXHIBITIONS BUREAU

THE PAST IN THE PRESENT

Michael Pappas &
Mihailo Vasiljević

20.06.2023 - 17.09.2023

Utorak - Nedelja 12h - 18h
Tuesday - Sunday 12pm - 6pm

Topličin Venac 14/9
Beograd - Srbija
Belgrade - Serbia

Izložba *The past in the present* prepliće dela dvojice umetnika koji pripadaju srodnom civilizacijskom i verskom krugu – Grčkoj i Srbiji. Ono što ih povezuje jeste interesovanje za tradiciju koja se ispoljava kroz mešavinu običaja paganskog i pravoslavnog porekla i naklonost prema dugoročnim istraživačkim projektima koji uključuju putovanja raznim krajevima Grčke ili Srbije. Svaki umetnik temi pristupa kroz različiti način fotografisanja, a njihove poetike funkcionišu kao suprotni polovi srodne priče, iako je polazište iz jednog i drugog u dokumentovanju vidnog ili nepredanog.

Projekti *Ethos* i *Mitos* grčkog fotografa **Majke Pappasa** (Michael Pappas) donose repozitivan način fotografisanja koja se bavi folklornom tradicijom Grčke unutar savremenog konteksta, a usredsređena je na ljudski lik. *Projekat Ethos – druga strana Grčke* između ostalog prikazuje razne obrede poput venčanja, procesija, proslava, hodočašća, itd. Neke fotografije odnose se na paganske običaje vezane uz uskršnje ili božićno vreme. Jedan od njih, na primer, održava se na 27. decembar. Purpuris je lik koji pripada tračkoj tradiciji. Njegova maska je napravljena od bundeve a sastoji se od tri roga, od kojih jedan predstavlja nos, a iznad kojega su na masku uslikani brkovi. Purpuris takođe ima dugu sedu brađu, kao Deda Mraz. U severistočnom grčkom gradu Didimotihu (Didymoteicho), samo dva kilometra udaljenom od grčko-turske granice, on posećuje kuće suseda na taj dan, igra po njihovim dvorištima, želi prosperitet i plodnost

sledećoj godini. Vlasnici kuće ga moraju počastiti hranom i pićem. Hrana je važan elemenat u pravoslavlju i grčkoj kulturi. Na izložbi je izložena fotografija koja prikazuje tradicionalnu tehniku kuvanja mesa na Kritu – „antikristo.“ Mlado jagnje se iseče i stavi na velike drvene reznjave koji se poredaju oko vatre u kružnom obliku. Naziv „antikristo“ znači „preko vatre“, te opisuje uo jedinstvenu tehniku.

Projekat *Mitos – nit Grčke* nastao je nakon odlaska na vašare u okviru pomenutog projekta *Ethos*. U vreme pandemije umetnik je počeo da istražuje narodne kostime i kostime, kako se oni čuvaju i kako se tradicija prenosi sa kolena na koleno. Tražio je porodice koje čuvaju nošnje i kostime koje koriste na vašarima, ritualima, itd. Tako je nastala inscenirana fotografija na kojoj Pappas razne generacije (muškarce, žene i decu) smešta u specifično okruženje kao što je vlastiti dom ili pejzaž, što doprinosi kreiranju kulturnog konteksta i identiteta. Iako je reč o režiranoj fotografiji, Pappas koristi isključivo prirodno osvetljenje. Izabrane likove i ljude fotografiše i sa atributima intimne i simbolične vrednosti kao što su stare fotografije, ogledalo, hleb, itd, a ponekad stvara u potpunosti nove ambijente, svojevrsne instalacije, poput one gde je devojčica, kao da je jedna od ikona, postavljena u pejzaž u koji su rasporedene ikone svetaca. Ove ambijente često karakteriše svojevrsni *horror vacui*, bilo da je reč o zgusnutosti kaktusa u pejzažu ili prostoru restorana natrpanog raznim predmetima.

Za razliku od Pappasovih fotografija jarkog kolorita i gotovo pozorišnih, dionizijskih obeležja, *Srpska mitologija Mihaila Vasiljevića* išena je ljudskog lika, a srpskoj mitologiji i tradiciji se pristupa kroz utišaniji kolorit koji ne trpi dekor i inscenaciju. Sadržaj je ogoljen i sveden na svakodnevne predmete, pejzaže i prirodne fenomene

koji se izdvajanjem naglašava njihov simbolički aspekt te se posmatraču ukazuje na važnost poznavanja tradicije i istorije sopstvenog naroda. Iako je reč o fotografiji nastaloj u dokumentarnom stilu, stavljanjem fokusa na „bosiljak“, „vunu“ ili „jabuke“, ona dobija pomalo mističan prizvuk, a akcenat je isključivo na atributu, a ne na osobi koja ga nosi ili se njime bavi. Sam umetnik ovu seriju naziva *obnutom etnografijom* jer ovde on na subtilan način pristupa veri i mitologiji starih Srba (a posredno i južnih Slovena), i pritom izbegava bilo kakvu ilustrativnost. Usredsređuje se na zaboravljene simbole i njihovu slojevitost čije je značenje za današnjeg savremenog, gradskog čoveka izgubljeno ako ne zaviri u pripadajuću literaturu. Otvorimo li *Srpski mitološki rečnik* (Nolit, Beograd, 1970.) koji je umetniku bio jedna od važnih referenci, saznaćemo koliko je vrsta vetra i njima pripisanih značenja postojalo za stare Slovene; o plodotvornoj i apotropijskoj moći bosiljaka; o štapu od tisovine ili glogovine koji je imao zaštitnu ulogu od demona, pa se zato nosio uza se kao amajlija; o simbolima sunca koji uključuju kolo, jabuke, petla, konja, vola; o bunarima koji vode u „podzemni svet“, a na kojima se,

Neki stari rituali i običaji sačuvani su kroz jezik. Na primer, izrazi i pojmovi poput „vrzino kolo“, „bauk“ ili „drekvavac“ nose mitološku osnovu iz davnina, a pripadnik jezičke grupe ih prihvata bez promišljanja njihovog istorijskog značenja. Savremeni anksiozni čovek je otuđen od magijskog Velikog vremena, svetog vremena u koje je čovek mitološki zajednica ulazio kroz ritual i tako se odvajao od profanog vremena (Eliade). **Papas i Vasiljević**

Projekat *Mitos* premijerno je prikazan u muzeju Fragonard u svetskoj prestonici parfema Grasu, u Francuskoj i predstavlja varijaciju izložbe *Ethos*, koja je uspešno prikazana u Muzeju grčke kulture Benaki. Objavljivao je fotografije širom sveta, uključujući Njujork Tajms, Gardijan, National Geographic, VICE US i druge. Saradnik je novina Kathimerini i časopisa Gastronomos.

pappasmichael.com

Mihailo Vasiljević diplomirao je 2005. godine na Katedri za fotografiju, Akademija umetnosti BK, Beograd. Master studije Teorije umetnosti i medija završio 2009. godine na Univerzitetu umetnosti u Beogradu. Od 2019. godine na doktorskim studijama Istorije umetnosti, Filozofski fakultet u Beogradu. Od 2001. godine, njegovi radovi izlagani su na brojnim izložbama. Dobitnik je nagrade Different Worlds: Young Contemporary Photography, Ljubljana, 2015; bio je finalista nagrade Dimitrije Bašičević Mangelos (2015, 2016). Radio je kao predavač na Akademiji umetnosti BK (2005-2009) i kao docent na Novoj akademiji umetnosti (2009-2016) u Beogradu. Bio je koosnivač je i kourednik nezavisnog udruženja Centar za fotografiju (2011-2019). Njegov umetnički i teorijski rad vezan je za fotografiju kao društveni fenomen i usmeren je na istraživanje ideoloških obrazaca i kulturnih procesa.

mihailovasiljevic.com



The exhibition *The past in the present* intertwines the works of two artists belonging to a related civilisational and religious circle – Greece and Serbia. What connects them is the interest in tradition, shown through a mixture of pagan and orthodox origins as well as a fondness for long-term research projects which include trips to various parts of Greece and Serbia. Each artist approaches the topic through a different way of photographing and their poetics function as the opposite poles of a related story, although the starting point for both is documenting the motives which are seen or found.

The *Ethos* and *Mitos* projects of the Greek photographer **Michael Pappas** convey reportage photography that deals with the Greek folklore tradition within a contemporary context and is centered on the human figure. The project *Ethos - the other side of Greece* shows, among other things, various ceremonies such as weddings, processions, celebrations, pilgrimages etc... Some photos refer to the pagan customs related to Easter or Christmas. One of them, held on December 27th, is Purpuris and it is a figure of Thracian tradition. His mask is made of a pumpkin and consists of three horns, one of them representing the nose, above which a moustache is painted on the mask. Purpuris also has a long gray beard, like Santa Claus. In the northeastern Greek city of Didymoteicho, just two kilometres away from the Greek-Turkish border, he visits his neighbours' houses on that day, dances in their yards, and wishes prosperity and fertility in the coming year. The house owners must treat him with food and drinks. Food is an important element in both the Orthodox and the Greek culture. Another

photography represents the traditional technique of cooking meat in Crete – “antikristo.” A young lamb is cut and placed on large wooden logs that are arranged around the fire in a circular shape. The name “antikristo” means “over fire” and describes this unique technique.

The *Mytos - thread of Greece* project was created after visiting popular fairs in villages while making the aforementioned *Ethos* project. During the pandemic, the artist began his research into national and folk costumes, how they have been preserved and how traditions are passed on from generation to generation. He was looking for families who have kept folk costumes and costumes used at fairs, rituals, etc... This is how staged photography was created in which Pappas places various generations (men, women and children) in a specific environments such as their own homes or a landscape, contributing to the creation of a cultural context and identity. Although it is staged photography, Pappas uses only natural lighting. He photographs selected characters and people with attributes of intimate and symbolic value, such as old photographs, a mirror, bread, etc., and sometimes creates completely new environments, types of installations, such as the one where a girl, as if she were one of them, is placed in the landscape with the positioned icons of the saints. These environments are often characterised by *horror vacui*, whether it is the density of cacti in the landscape or the space of a restaurant overloaded with various objects.

In contrast to Pappas' photographs with very vivid

colours and almost theatrical, Dionysian features, **Mihailo Vasiljević's** *Serbian Mythology* is devoid of a human figure. Serbian mythology and tradition are approached through a quieter colour that does not tolerate decor and staging. The content is stripped to the bone and reduced to everyday objects, landscapes and natural phenomena, highlighting their symbolic aspect and pointing out to the viewer the importance of knowing the traditions and history of one's own people. Although it is a photograph created in a documentary style, by focusing on “basil”, “wool” or “apples”, it acquires a somewhat mystical tone, and the accent is exclusively on the attribute, and not on the person who wears it or deals with it. The artist himself calls this series a reverse ethnography because in it he approaches the religion and mythology of the old Serbs (and indirectly also the southern Slavs) in a subtle way, while avoiding any illustrativeness. It focuses on forgotten symbols and their layers, which meaning for today's modern urban man is lost, if he does not look into the relevant literature. If we open the *Serbian Mythological Dictionary* (Nolit, Belgrade, 1970), which was one of the important references for the artist, we will find out how many types of wind and the meanings attributed to them existed for the ancient Slavs; about the fruitful and apotropaic power of basil; about a stick made of yew or hawthorn that had a protective role against demons and thus was carried around as a charm; about sun symbols that include a wheel, apples, a rooster, a horse, an ox; about

the wells that lead to the “underworld”, and where, like in barns, demons gather at night; about the black horse, a demon that helps in the discovery and digging of hidden treasures; and finally we will find out what “zapis” is (a record) - a cult place in the middle of the settlement with a consecrated tree near which prayers are held about the covenant days, and the sign of the cross is “written” on it, replacing the role of the idol.

Some old rituals and customs have been preserved through the language. For example, expressions and concepts like “vrzino kolo”(fairies dancing in a circle, modern meaning – a chaos) “bauk” (specter, modern meaning- something frightening) or “drekvavac” (mythological figure) have a mythological basis from ancient times, and the member of the language group accepts them without thinking about their historical meaning. The modern anxious man is alienated from the magical Great Time, the sacred time into which the man of mythological communities entered through ritual and thus separated himself from the profane time (Eliade). **Pappas** and **Vasiljević** plunge into the sacred time and invite the observer to jump out of profane time, to search for unconscious psychological forces, Jungian archetypes, common to all human beings.

Neva Lukić

Greek photographer **Michael Pappas** explores faith and community of the extraordinary folk culture of Greece. In 2022-2023 he was designated as a Spotlight photographer by Vogue for the *Mitos* Project. This work focuses on female traditional costumes from all over Greece. The *Mitos* project premiered at the Fragonard Museum in the world's perfume capital Grasse, France, and is a variation of the 'Ethos' exhibition, which was successfully completed at the Benaki Museum of Greek Culture. His images are being published internationally, including New York Times, The Guardian, National Geographic, Vice Us and more. He is a contributor to Kathimerini newspaper and Gastronomos magazine.

pappasmichael.com

Mihailo Vasiljevic (Belgrade, 1981) got his BFA in 2005, from Photography department at the Academy of Arts BK, Belgrade. He graduated in Art and Media Theory, MA, in 2009 at the University of Arts in Belgrade. Since 2019, he is enrolled in PhD program in Art History, Faculty of Philosophy, Belgrade. Since 2001, his works have been exhibited in numerous solo and group shows. In 2015, he was awarded "Different Worlds Award: Young contemporary photography" (Ljubljana) and the finalist of the Dimitrije Bašičević Mangelos Award (2015, 2016). He was lecturer at the Academy of Arts BK (2005-2009) and assistant professor at the New Academy of Arts (2009-2016) in Belgrade. He was the co-founder and co-editor of the independent Center for Photography, Belgrade (2011-2019). His artistic and theoretical practice is related to photography as a social phenomenon and focused on the research of ideological models and cultural processes.

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