



Olena Blank, Untitled, 2015, ceramics, chamotte, enamel, author technique

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Baroque supper

Olena Blank

Works to the project Baroque Supper, 2015, ceramics, chamotte, enamel, author technique

4 years after the "The Logs" exhibition, Olena Blank's new project, invites the viewer to the supper where pumpkins, squashes and cabbages in a form of obelisks, pylons and stalagmites, are prepared at one thousand degrees. Supper is generally and anticipated event. And in this case, following the artist, the choice of her new work object could be named "expected". From the elements of homely home: plates, wine glasses and pillows, to bricks and logs, as materials of life, the ceramics finally receive some air. Blank creates fruits.

In the field of art pumpkins and squashes are trying to become "significant" and "readable" symbols, just like still-life harvests tent to symbolize all human harvest of inevitability, aspiration and desire. Whatever generous the table might be (Blank herself recollects the feast from the Peter Greenaway movie "The Cook, the Thief, His Wife & Her Lover"), each separate vegetable wants to reveal something about ourselves. But so far, as in her previous projects, Blank offers us something new, an experience of "pure aesthetics". She offers us such presence where the object attracts and has an impact on us all by itself, regardless of any conceptual undertones. Indeed, a lot of ideas can be obscured in a pumpkin from monkey's traps and birds cages to the splendor of primitive Venus forms, the goddess of fertility. On contrast, the form of an artwork visually resembles autumn pumpkins on the market stall. But this time the artist describes her own mood of project as "ironic, splendid, absurd and gastronomical", and the project itself is made of "senseless vegetables" into "senseless sculptures" in baroque style.

Basic difference between culture of definition and culture of presence could be explained within contrast, offered by Boris Vipper: "The Italian likes "The Last Supper", "The Wedding at Cana", "Feast in the House of Simon the Pharisee", because there is satisfying thirst, serving and creating a miracle. Fleming prefers fairs and markets, where nothing is happening, where things and life are enjoyed, where anyone could find happiness, smiles and dances"*. According to the pure aesthetic, walking around the market is the presence instead of explanation. However the act of enjoying the complicated (naturally baroque) form, far from the ideal, doesn't deny but carries the presence to the level of accomplishment, making a specific creation – vegetables which couldn't be eaten, just like before there were logs which couldn't have been burnt.

Boris Filonenko

* Vipper, Boris. The problem and development of still life. – SPB.: «Azbuka-klassika», 2005. – p. 330

Olena Blank was born in Birska (Bashkortostan, Russia) in 1963.

She graduated from Kyiv Institute of Esthetics and Design in 1986, and from 1984 to 1986 studied at Yulia Ukader's sculpture studio. Olena Blank's personal exhibition Beauty is Beautiful was the first one to open Ya Gallery Art Center in Kyiv in 2007. Since then Ya Gallery held four more personal projects of the artist. Exhibition The Four Rooms looked into the archaeological and spatial concepts in art. Projects Sleep and The Logs explored materialization of the culture of presence, while The Dominant summarized artist's previous achievements. All works of Olena Blank refer to the idea of spatial ceramics, and involve both aesthetic and conceptual categories. The central concept of her work is beauty and it is continuously explored through the diversity of forms and materials. Artist lives and works in Kyiv.