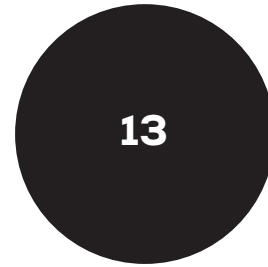




INSTYTUT
KULTURY
POLSKIEJ



View. Theories and Practices of Visual Culture.

title:

Diary of a Photographer's Wife

author:

Tatiana Pavlova

source:

View. Theories and Practices of Visual Culture 13 (2016)

URL:

<http://pismowidok.org/index.php/one/article/view/410/791>

publisher:

Institute of Literary Research of the Polish Academy of Sciences
Institute of Polish Culture, University of Warsaw
View. Foundation for Visual Culture

Tatiana Pavlova

Diary of a Photographer's Wife

Translated by Olga Mikhnovich

from: Evgeniy Pavlov, *Home Life Book* (Kharkov: Grafprom, 2013)

Once I had to sleep with a camera under my head. We were camping in Crimea. One of the nights we were forced to move to a more peaceful place, taking with us only the most precious things. My husband then entrusted me with a camera in a leather case, and I slept on it the rest of night. The rest of the time the camera was always with him. For a photographer it is more of a rule rather than an exception. Therefore, in the pictures there are different times of a year and a day and all the weather conditions, including those that are in a photographer's banned list since the times of Daguerre and Talbot.

The book *Home Life Book* appeared in 2002 as a single-piece structure. However, it is a mix of the actual images and inclusions from an extensive archive, which unexpectedly pop to the surface. Where is the good of putting together all these photos? What unites them? To understand this there is a need of answering the question what the year 2002 actually was? Returning to a normal flow of time after eschatological tension associated with the expectation of the end of the twentieth century. And then, after anxious gazing into the future, we turned back to what had shifted away with the last century. That's why, even though the book dates back to 2002, this particular year is linked to only a few shots. Just like signal flags mark they the time layer, which is retreating, which is buried in the twentieth century. And the further, the slower the scroll is untwisting, the more elaborately the time is evolving. And then all these little things and details seem to be putting a barrier to the avalanche of memory, getting closer and closer to the effect of living through the present.

This fundamentally detailed approach, associated with a heightened sense of time, was noticed by film director Alexander Balahura in his film *Life Span of the Object in Frame* (producer and co-author Svetlana Zinovyeva), a big part of which is built on

Pavlov's works from this series. Of its own accord the plot shaped, bringing along a continuous chain of successive frames and photographs. "Here is a dog approaching a house. It looks into a window. Inside there is a table. On the table there are some food leftovers. The dog is hungry. There is a man at the table. On the floor in front of him there is an old rag. Sitting at the table there is a woman. They live in this house. The clock is ticking. There are pots of plants in the house, which means it is winter outside. Here's their yard, a bus stop..." What has caught Balahura's attention in those pictures of clearly unsettled life, which was so typical of those years? And where is the work of a photographer here? May be in the way he made a visual neutralisation of this experience, turning dust into silver, and silver into the dust of time, crystallising its silver particles.

In fact, the casual nature of the series fills all the floors of the home world, and on each of them more levels interconnected with invisible threads can be found. And so on down to the tiniest minutiae of this detailed Home-chronicle. First of all, it is a kitchen and everything that goes through it into the house from the outside world. Everything that turns by itself into still lifes. Bread and bacon, biscuits, roots peeled for soup and left on a windowsill, jars of jam and pickles. Except for bread, all these items are somehow marginal. The jars stay on the table or a window for a long time until they are removed to the pantry, where they wait for the next summer, for a new crop of apricots and cucumbers. Windows are something special. There is something attractive in them: everything looks airier when placed by a window. And, of course, in the photo there are miscellaneous things. Things that are difficult to present in a structured fashion. Miscellaneous – is a mature category for the things, the functions of which are not clear and the use of which is incomprehensible. But it is just what multiplies the forms and the languages of expression.

How many times when I was about to just throw away a pile of strawberry tails or the flowers that faded during the night, I heard the familiar, "Don't touch them!" And I couldn't do this until the entire ceremony was finished with an overruling all the objections and cutting off the moment camera click.