
MAGIA NATURALIS

by Boyan Manchev and Vesselina Sarieva

Phase I

Bignia Wehrli, Marta Djourina, L

Texts: Boyan Manchev, Vesselina Sarieva

June 26 – August 28, 2020

Opening: June 26, 2020, 17:00 – 20:00, SARIEV gallery, Plovdiv

SARIEV gallery, Plovdiv is pleased to present *Magia Naturalis* – an ambience of artworks, texts, situations. *Magia Naturalis* will take place as an exhibition in the gallery space at Otets Paisiy Str. in Plovdiv between June 26 and August 28, 2020. The parallel dimension of *Magia Naturalis* will present a series of philosophical and poetic interventions that will expand its experimental and investigative stakes. Its first phase will take place as a philosophical laboratory on www.boyanmanchev.net/blog, starting on June 26, 2020, 20:20.

Is nature an artist? Is creation peculiar to stars, metals, fire? What does the stone imagine? What does the cloud want?

Moving away from poeticising that has been divested of its creative power, *Magia Naturalis* will take on these questions, in all seriousness and on the level of their eccentricity, in order to elevate them to an experimental dimension: a dimension of the possibility of (creative) subjectivity beyond the bounds of the human. *Magia Naturalis* will therefore open up an experimental space of reflection where simulated possibilities of the unimaginable (forthcoming) nature and the unimaginable (forthcoming) art will be investigated. It is not a question about nature conceived as an ungraspable origin duly furnished as a museum herbarium – it is about nature as an ever forthcoming unimaginable force, as an art of what is yet to come.

The concept of *magia naturalis*, natural magic, has been developed by Renaissance humanists and expresses the heretic notion of creative acts produced by natural forces and of nature itself as a creator. This concept is at the very heart of alchemy and astrology, while giving impetus to the development of natural sciences. The magical power of nature: uncanny figures, unimaginable forces, non-human desires.

Magia Naturalis, a meeting ground of complicities, coincidences and clashes, explores nature as force by way of fantastic philosophical acts and unexpected transformations of artistic media. It operates not so much with objects, acts or relations, as with a scope of intensities where ephemeral constellations and stark powerful lines flash forth. In this respect, the exhibition raises the question of cooperation: the agents, the subjects, the forces. The forces that animate concepts and (art)works.

Natural magic: an experimental possibility for creative intervention into the space-time coordinates of a singular system of relations, which sustains it on the level of a delicate, yet intensive meta-stability.

Phase I of *Magia Naturalis* will be presenting artworks by Bignia Wehrli, Marta Djourina and L, sharing the space of Boyan Manchev's philosophical laboratory, along with a poem in progress by Vesselina Sarieva. The works exhibited will act both autonomously and heteronomously: as autonomous agents, yet also as *symptoms* in a process of multifold stimulation of the reflexive domain of creation along the line of experiment and investigation.

The common space of this encounter is founded on the shared desire for transformation of forms and the invention of new forms; of new techniques for their emergence. Suspended in time, it is a space that looks forward to the future: a trace of light of a matter yet to be.

Boyan Manchev and Vesselina Sarieva

/

Bignia Wehrli's work imagines hyper-space, poetic relationships between hypothetical subjects by inventing new techniques and processes for their visualisation. 'My own artistic practice deals with processes of visualisation and methods of capturing ephemeral actions. [...] I am fascinated with the processes of translation and transformation and I treat them as doorways between signification and reality. Through such processes there is something – an act, a space, an idea – that is transferred into an uncharted territory and into imagination. Time and again, the artwork seems like nothing more than a collection of remnants of something else – a cryptic clue, a sign or a hint of a reality concealed within it.' (Bignia Wehrli)

'*Sternenschrift* "injects" an autonomous agency and therefore an autonomous *will* into an inanimate agent (or *patient*), thus opening a possibility for non-human actors to enter the stage of (aesthetic) production of meaning. In this operation, however, the substance of the human body—the subjective consistency—is not erased. It becomes a thing *among* things: a force in the maelstrom of cosmic forces, the maelstrom of blind elements mixed with the all-seeing power of the affect, which penetrates the darkness of the galaxies.' (Boyan Manchev)

/

In the obscure space of her laboratory, Marta Djourina plunges into an exploration of light as a guiding point to another type of liminality and the hidden power of biological bodies and organisms. The purity of the process and the unpremeditated results give rise to a symptomatic vocabulary based on color and visual analogies. Developing her investigations, Djourina transforms the photosensitive paper into a constructed body by creating photographic objects that explore the light's possibility of overcoming space.

'With each of my projects I put into question the ability of photography of revealing the hidden reality and fixing the ephemeral in the form of an image. [...] With its peculiar property of absorbing the light, paper becomes a vector of picturesque traces. By means of accurate light sources like lasers or color diodes, I leave directional traces on the photo paper from a distance. The device and the instruments of the working process become active agents of artistry.' (Marta Djourina)

/

L's material practice functions, in their own terms, simultaneously as a set of magic incantations, spells, totemic objects, everyday architectural and functional technologies, gateways to other dimensions, and sometimes as art. It is aimed at creating rituals involving active participants. This ritual process is also the basis of the open source spiritual community A.S.T.R.A.L.O.R.A.C.L.E.S., which acts "as an intermediary in the output of divinations and esoteric experiences". "A.S.T.R.A.L.O.R.A.C.L.E.S. is an exploration of the individual and the collective and the boundaries we place between those designations. In a philosophical perspective the current yet constantly evolving A.O algorithm privileges *we* over *me*, in an effort to achieve greater balance towards collective consciousness while also accepting the importance of our individual experiences and worldviews." (L)