the Bavcar method

Evgen Bavcar ("E-oo-gen Ba-oo-char"), a Slovenian photographer, was blinded at the age of 12. His strikingly original success as a photographer comes from his ability to re-frame the act and reception of the photograph in entirely new ways that bring into question the phenomenology of looking. Bavcar does not rely on the homily of 'inner sight' that compensates the loss of vision. Rather, he admits that the loss comes without compensation. His idea of the photograph is that of a 'messenger between two worlds which precisely reminds us that they are one and the same'.

1. Bavcar’s photographic technique

The photographs of Evgen Bavcar are haunting, to say the least. Setting up his subjects usually in the dark, using tactile controls of lighting, camera focus and exposure, and other technical details of the shot, the subjects — whether human models or, we could imagine, the inanimate objects — do not suspect what he has in mind. Because of this concealment, which is an extension of Bavcar’s blindness, the principle that ‘privation converts to prohibition’ works yet again to construct an ‘inside frame’ within the photograph that, based on a theft of a temporal section from the sequence that ‘normalizes’ appearance through a sequence of potential views.

Even the inanimate objects seem surprised by the photograph, which seems to have captured them in a ‘moment within moments’, a view not intended to have been exposed but ‘should have remained concealed’ within the sequence of normal perceptual views.

2. A temporal model

Several ‘components’ can be extracted from Bavcar’s general set-ups. First, the case of his blindness means that he operates in a space independent from the normal dimension of production and consumption of photographs, where the conventional idea is to ‘see what the photographer sees’ by means of the photograph, which serves as a visual archive. In fact, no audience member sees anything that Bavcar sees. Instead, Bavcar facilitates the visual experience from an ‘independent position’. Compare this to the psychoanalytical goal of facilitating the analysand’s ‘pass’, the end of treatment. Just as there is no explanation that the analysand must guess or pry from the analyst, the Bavcar photograph has no ‘original’ in the sense of an artist acting as authoritative source. The successful viewer accomplishes something that the artist has arranged but not himself experienced.

This postpones the moment of the ‘original’ experience, which resides entirely with the viewer, a hapax (unique) phenomenon that takes place in a form of temporality that lies outside of the time of the ‘symbolic exchange’ between artist and audience. This relates somewhat to the argument made about the beta-phi function, the intercalation of the artifact within the ‘leaves’ or sections of the representational function of consciousness. This is sometimes spatialized as the ‘fourth dimension’, a parallel site allowing concealed movements and views.

3. The Bavcar method

What would be a ‘Bavcar method’? Following the hint that the discourse of the hysteric offers an expandable context for the ‘angelic’ communication between the visible and the invisible, the sighted and the blind, The worker must conceive of a ‘blind technique’ where chance (the aleatory), narrative, fragment (aposiopisis), correction (anacoluthon), apotrope, automaton, antipode, or proprioception creates a ‘hopscotch’ condition where design authorship is fictionalized through various narrative strategies.

The discourse of the hysteric places pleasure (a) in the position of truth, the subject ($) in the position of the agent, the master signifier in the position of the Other, and knowledge in the position of production, where it is a surplus (mystery). This is the artistic ‘perversion’ of the scientific model of projective/instrumental knowledge, where ‘truth is beauty’ in a Lacanian as well as a Keatsian sense. If not always beauty, truth at least is based on the angelic transposition of the vanishing point to a place within the work.

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of art, just as Bavcar relocates vision by means of his motif of the hand (stereognosis), which is metonymically dislocated from his body by means of the photograph (propriocept). Interestingly, Bavcar credits the origin of his idea of photography in wanting to ‘have’ a photograph of his girlfriend when he was young. The camera made it possible for him to ‘have without having’, a version of ‘knowing without knowing’. The resulting strategy by which his photography developed in difference to replicating an imaginary photographer’s viewpoint (‘subject supposed to know’ — i.e. the master signifier in the position of the Other) is subverted/perverted by the antipodal position of desire in the position of truth.

The layer of representation is constituted by the subject and knowledge (here, concealed knowledge, or ‘mystery’, discourse fragmented by anacolouthon, aposiopoiesis, and other devices). The subject-knowledge axis has a traditional form: the mystery story. Here we can borrow from the model of the ‘hot detective’ (who knows without knowing) or ‘cold detective’ who uses distance as a system of interpolating the visible/invisible relationship.

The Bavcar (‘ba-oo-char’) method is also known as ‘fictim design’ — the continual re-location of the point of view and coordinated manipulation of the vanishing point through narrative layering that reframes the project through serial creations of marginal conditions and ‘suture’, the re-ordering of serial sequences through manipulations of scale and time sequences.