

Never Odd or Even

video, 13 min. 40 sec.

2011

We used an altered self-bondage technique to bond ourselves together in order to create a palindromic creature - one being characterised by mirrored symmetry. In an attempt to loose personal traits and individual freedom we put ourselves into a situation of discomfort, loss of control and painful interdependency.

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Since twelve years Anetta Mona Chisa and Lucia Tkacova have been engaged in a politics of friendship that requires an ongoing negotiation of their artistic identities as well as the narcissism that this implies. It demands the constant restraint of their otherwise strong individualism (without which the cooperation would not be possible) and a balance in the power relations that inevitably resurface in every collaborative process.

Such cooperation always implies a vacillation between "I-for-myself" and "I-for-another," which they address in the recent work *The Others* (2011), where they appear wearing masks of each other's faces. This *visual* blending of "me" and "you" plays on the common significance of the photographic portrait as a visual sign suggesting an individual's unique identity, but undermine it, since the photographic portrait is itself a mask.

The video *Never Odd or Even* (2011) explores the desire for and fiction of complementarity in a quite different manner. Using the technique of self-bondage, the artists perform the notion of "intercorporeality" (Merleau-Ponty), which is here enabled through the sense of the touch (and not by the authoritative eye, as in photography). In this performance, the symmetry inherent to the number two—two artists, two women, two selves, two touching bodies made immobile and even subjected to physical pain—appears to be tested and even called into question. This testing scenario results in what could be called *the third*, a central idea for Chisa and Tkacova's politics of friendship in general: "The 'third' is a mode of articulation, a way of describing a space of possibility. Three puts in question the idea of one: of identity, self-sufficiency, self-knowledge." (Marjorie Garber)

Text: Bojana Pejić

(excerpted from Bojana Pejić: "La politique de l'amitié: Les amies", 2012)

Anetta Mona Chișă, born in Romania, and **Lucia Tkáčová**, born in Slovakia, have been working in collaboration since 2000. They work across a variety of media including video, photography and sculpture, often employing performance, intervention, language and game tactics in their acts. Their recent exhibitions include Rearview Mirror, The Power Plant - Contemporary Art gallery, Toronto; Either Way, We Lose, Sorry we're closed, Brussels; 3rd Moscow International Biennale for Young Art, Moscow; Body Language, Centre culturel suisse, Paris; and The Global Contemporary, ZKM | Museum fuer Neue Kunst, Karlsruhe. They represented Romania in the 54th Venice Biennale together with Ion Grigorescu (2011). They both graduated at the Academy of Fine Arts and Design in Bratislava. Anetta Mona Chișă and Tkáčová currently live and work in Prague and Berlin.