

MARTA SEREDYŃSKA

<http://teatrmaat.pl/maat-festival/aktualnosci/seredynska-pisze-o-festiwalu-relacje-kantor-now>

100 Toasts for the Dead Artist

At first glance, the title led me to think I was going to see a pompous, mythical and presumptuous piece. Nothing further from the truth. Anita Wach is way too creative to limit herself to extolling the virtues of the Master and grieving his loss. The stage was decorated with plastic cups filled with colorful liquids and paper trays with cupcakes on them, creating a superbly proportional and geometric mosaic.

Fantastic set design to say the least. I do have a feeling this will not remain unaltered throughout the piece, these are not merely props. No doubt this will make its way into the performance. On entering the white cube, we are being handed plastic cups and little sheets of paper with numbers and sentences written on them. Each person gets a different one. It is already possible to tell the audience will be involved in what was about to happen and the idea turned out to be spot on. We raise the toast for the Master, for the artists, for ourselves. For the art we wish to embrace, engage in, soak in, allow to resonate, argue against. To one of the walls, Wach sticks a minuscule image of Tadeusz Kantor (later on she turns it backwards, leaving only a blank sheet of paper to be seen). This is dedicated to you Master, we raise the empty bottoms up, it is you we wish to pay tribute to.

It is not uncommon for artists to gain recognition only after they have passed away. We honor them, pay tribute to them, celebrate their death anniversaries. And so we will celebrate. With each toast (and there literally will be a hundred of them) Wach will engage in a different action, she will change her outfit, rearrange the cups, pour the liquid from one cup to the other, spill it onto herself, splash it onto the stage. She will eventually consume the cupcake, after all every celebration culminates with a dessert, only to start stepping over the remaining ones, deconstructing the magnificent banquet set design. The choreographer directs us in the same way Kantor used to direct his theatre ensemble. She herself is extremely committed, her body is becoming increasingly more subjected to interaction with the surrounding objects. Finally, she places a small table in front of us on which she assembles the food and beverages. The celebration is nearing the end. Wach settles on the table in a fetal position amidst the leftovers from the reception. The body of the artist as the greatest offering, a sanctifying act, expression of its most tangible presence, body - object, juxtaposed with other objects. A dead corpse? Never to return again? Kantor as a ready-made?