

Michael Haldrup, Friday, May 10, 2019

## Queering the Museum, Glyptoteket CPH, August 15<sup>th</sup> 2019

I et samarbejde mellem dansetruppen *Disturbing Business* omdanner vi denne aften de antikke udstillinger til et laboratorium, en spekulativ scenografi, for at frisætte forestillinger om seksualitet, køn og kroppe. Museumsgenstande bliver ofte taget for at være faste udtryk for hvem vi er. Gennem dans og dialog bydes gæster og statuer op til en leg med alternative fremtider.

Michael Haldrup, Denis Maksimov & Linh Le Tuyet

In a cooperation between dance troop *Disturbing Business* we transform the classic exhibitions to a laboratory, a speculative scenography, for releasing conceptions of sexuality, gender and bodies. Museum objects are often perceived as subjects of the past. Through dance and dialogue guests and statues are invited into a play with alternative futures.

Michael Haldrup, Denis Maksimov & Linh Le Tuyet

### Program:

17:00: Bar opens

17.30: Dance performance, Disturbing Business

17.45: Dialogues on queering museum objects as tools for potential futures

18: 15: Queering tour in the museum



1. Map showing Central Hall (18) as well as suggested stops for guided tour (I, II, III)



## 2. *Central Hall with chairs & stage*

**17:00: Bar opens in the Café outside the Central hall (see map).**

**17.30: Dance performance, Disturbing Business in the Central Hall (see map)**

Linh will be on the floor in the room doing Budo inspired gestures citing statues  
 Denis and Michael will sand (somewhere) in the room waiting



## 3. *Covered Mosaic, Central Hall*

#### 17.45: Dialogues on queering museum objects as tools for potential futures

The objects in the room are a mixture of mythological figures and (mostly) roman nobilities, emperors, wives etc. and behind them are multiple sarcophagi (roman) often depicting Dionysian scenes). The objects have been put there for purely decorative reasons and the groupings (and often the statues themselves) is a mixture of different body parts found in different places.

The largest piece of art in the room -a mosaic depicting Zeus abduction of Europa- will be covered underneath the chairs during the event (3). Just mentioning because I both found the rather patriarchal motive as well as the fact that it is being covered or is 'withdrawn' an ironic comment to both the queering theme as well as triple-O ideas about – withdrawn objects.

I was speculating whether this could be a kind of prop for kicking off our conversation?

Zeus also appears next to the stage (left side) with a selection of giant theater masks above him.



4. Zeus + giant (women) mask

Diagonal to Zeus (back of the Hall to the right) is a rather well-preserved version of Apollo posing as leader of the muses.



5. *Apollo, leader of the muses*

And – of course – Antinoos posing as Dionysis (6. the main object in the room, and at last years pride event the only object referred to in the event). I am mentioning this because the antique curator that guided me suggested that the fact that Antinoos in the 19<sup>th</sup> century emerged as a homosexual icon could be destabilized through the history and by using the discussion of ‘dinonyasian’ feastes (as a social and cultural fully integrated part of everyday life hinting at a radically different coding of sexuality, bender etc.. than the two thousands years of ‘cultural filter’ (her words) through which we ‘see’ it. She suggested the saqme in relation to the accidentally coupling of Dionysis scenes on the Sarcophagus’ to modern conceptions of the afyterlife as well as the various exchanges/translations between Dionysis, Christ and Mithras on the figure of ‘the Saviour’. Just mentioning this as I think this partly resonates with some of your thinking as well.

Behind this statue you see a sarchaphagus with a Dionysscene. On top of it is palced an unrelated roman nobility lying (as Dionysis, but otherwise with no relation).



#### 6. *Antinoos posing as Dionysis*

Finally, regarding Linh's performance, I pitched the idea about her ending her performance with using paint on her body. They were excited (provided that it was in small amounts, that they could check the composition and she would not touch anything etc. etc....i. e.). They suggested that we/she used "the wounded amazon" as model. This statue (7) has been part of an ongoing project on "sensing antiquity" and it has (residues of) red paint illuding blood running from a neck-wood, silver-painted leather sandals and the scarf have still visible traces of indigo-blue. Lips and eyes have probably also had paint t/markings). The statue is placed in the same room as (II) in the guided tour (see below). They also suggested that she could end the performance by covering in blue cotton) to allude to another finding in the project – that several of the statues had been dressed with leather and textiles, but this might go too far....



#### 7. *The wounded amazon*



## 18: 15: Queering tour in the museum

We have promised to write app. Half a page to be used by three museum custodians for doing a 'queer' reading of objects in three different halls (see map (1)). Part due to logistics and acoustics, I suggest three tableaux in the museum. We can talk to the custodians in august, but their manager wants texts before July 1<sup>st</sup> so that she can pitch ideas to them.

(!)

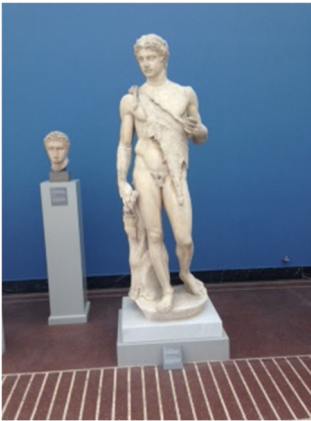
The Cavali Sarcophagus is the most well-preserved Sarcophagus in the museum. It also depicts a Dionysis scene (as the ones in the main hall). It is very beautiful with regards to materials, though it is not as vivid as those in the main hall - often depicting festive "orgues" including various animals, satyres, women, men and children). Something that the curator thought might be a good motive to talk about how practices/relations that today are regarded as anything from spectacular to outrageous in another context were perfectly normal (she had kind of the same point regarding Athene: that the androgynous look of Athene in antiquity was not a deviation from a normative beauty like, say Aphrodite, as the body culture was not normatively coded as in the much later modern era. An optional solution could be to let the first group stay in the central hall and inspect the smaller sarcophagus' here. BUT the Cavali Sarcophagus is beautiful and in a nice and otherwise interesting room.



8. *The Cavali Sarcophagus, hall 15*

(II)

Hall 8 is stuffed with interesting objects to play with apart from Pan facing various versions of Aphrodite which I suggest could be used. There is a very well preserved standing 'Resting Satyre' and this is where we have the wounded amazon, who is standing in the middle of a group of Athene's (one headless, and a lot of heads without bodies).



(right side)



left side)

*9. Pan facing various versions of Aphrodite when entering hall 8*

Regarding logistics: both group (!) and (II) will pass over the stage to a room that is modelled over the step pyramid in Halikarnassos). I do not know if we can find any relevance in that, but having read our brief note the curator mentioned this as an indicator of that "all of this museum is one big speculative scenography"! There is even a (not fully finished) tomb underneath the room!

(III)

Just outside the café is a dramatic depiction of Perseus killing Medusa. It is not antique – it is what they term '19<sup>th</sup> century french salon art' – but our idea was that this actually could give some interesting reflection of how and why Medusa became such a horrible and dangerous woman.



*10. Perseus killing Medusa, hall 36*