

THE AESTHETICS OF CURIOSITY IN KATRINA NEIBURGA'S WORKS *TOPOLOGY No 29*, *WHAT'S IN A GIRL'S HANDBAG?* AND *THE T-SHROOM*

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Katrina Neiburga is a contemporary, versatile and productive artist from Latvia, who has received numerous awards and her works have been exhibited all over the world. The article investigates the aesthetics of curiosity apparent in three video installations of Neiburga – *Topology No 29*, *What's in a Girl's Handbag?* and *The T-Shroom*. Whether they are household objects of an abandoned apartment, or the contents of girls' handbags, or a weird mushroom – Neiburga's works are built around objects. Moreover, the artist seems to be intrigued by closed, hidden spaces and driven to know whether behind the closed door there is a possibility of a new dimension opened up. Although in all three works the myth of Pandora – as an epitome of feminine curiosity – can be traced, the artist's curiosity as 'looking in' can be described as the desire to know rather than the desire to see, an epistemophilia. Parallels can also be drawn between Neiburga's filmmaking and archaeology. The artist, too, perceives the objects not as detached artefacts, but as parts of a comprehensible whole. Each object in her journey of discovery becomes a readable sign and a decipherable enigma, providing rich material for cultural and social analysis.

KEYWORDS: video installations, ethnographic research, objects, Neiburga, Latvia.

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sibility of a new dimension opened up. Although in all three works the myth of Pandora¹ – as an epitome of

¹ In Greek mythology, Pandora was created by gods to be sent to the Earth to visit the mankind. She was given a jar (also known as Pandora's box), which contained all the evils of the mankind – diseases, catastrophes, etc. Even though she was told not

stereotyped patterns incapable of arousing active, intelligent responses. Neiburga's works do not offer a de-based sentimentality. Instead, they activate the spectators' imagination and encourage asking questions or drawing conclusions.

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SMALSUMO ESTETIKA KATRINOS NEIBURGOS DARBUOSE TOPOLOGIJA NR. 29, KAS MERGAITĒS RANKINĒJE? IR T-GRYBAS

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REIKŠMINIAI ŽODŽIAI: video instaliacijos, etnografinis tyrimas, objektai, Neiburga, Latvija.

Katrina Neiburga yra įvairiapusiška ir produktyvi šiuolaikinė Latvijos menininkė, pelnusi daugybę apdovanojimų, jos darbai ne kartą buvo eksponuojami visame pasaulyje. Straipsnyje analizuojama smalsumo estetika, kuri atsiskleidžia trijuose Neiburgos video instaliacijose: *Topologija Nr. 29 (Topology No 29)*, *Kas mergaitės rankinėje? (What's in a Girl's Handbag?)* ir *T-grybas (The T-Shroom)*. Neiburgos darbai kuriami aplink objektus – ar tai būtų namų apyvokos daiktai apleistame bute, ar mergaitės rankinės turinys, ar keistas grybas. Menininkę intriguoja uždarnos, slaptos erdvės bei noras sužinoti, ar už uždarytų durų jos laukia galimybė atverti naują dimensiją. Nors visuose trijuose darbuose aptinkamos Pandoros mito – moteriškojo smalsumo išsikūnijimo – užuominos, menininkės smalsumą, arba „žiūrėjimą į“, galima būtų apibūdinti labiau kaip troškimą žinoti, nei norą matyti, kaip tam tikrą epistemofiliją. Paraleles galima nubrėžti ir tarp Neiburgos filmų kūrybos ir archeologijos. Menininkė suvokia objektus ne kaip pavienius artefaktus, bet kaip visumos dalis. Kiekvienas objektas jos atradimų kelionėje tampa perskaitomu ženklu ir iššifruojama paslaptimi ir, tuo pačiu, suteikia gausios medžiagos kultūrinei ir socialinei analizei.