

Movie Break  
Lida Bach

Dr. Frank Ochberg is a psychiatrist and trauma specialist in New York. His specialty is posttraumatic stress disorders and Stockholm syndrome. The famous Cuban artist Tania Bruguera, after having been a prisoner of conscience in Cuba for eight months, is accused of treason for the preparation of a government-critical performance. In a conversation with the therapist, she analyzes the revolutionary potential of art and a censorship authority that intervenes before the actual genesis of the work. Performance art, with its short-term, spontaneous and ephemeral elements, is a way to criticize the Cuban state. Bruguera can not be discouraged; six months after her release, she invites artists from all over the world to Cuba.

Oevres of Lynn Hershman-Leeson, whose work systematically breaks the visual art understanding through the integration of new media and concepts. A further constant is the collaboration with Tilda Swinton, which is also present in the director's latest work. Her striking voice quoted at the beginning from the "Manifesto on Artists' Rights" the title figure: "Art is not a luxury. Art is a fundamental societal need that everyone is entitled to." The author of these words was already the focus of Hershman-Leeson's latest documentary, Tania Bruguera - A State of Vulnerability.

In it the filmmaker examined the psychological and personal aftershocks of Bruguera's imprisonment. Their release in early 2015 was the result of a worldwide protest against the persecution of artists. For the Cuban born and daughter of a diplomat and minister of the Castro regime, whose family background is persistently held, the persecution is at the same time bitter irony and real fright. In order to cope with the experience, she chooses a path that can perfectly be channeled into the indomitable impetus of her work: it makes it a public discourse. With the psychiatrist and co-founder of the modern traumatology Dr. Frank Ochberg, the protagonist discusses her contradictory emotions.

Their conversation is not concerned solely with the immediate fright of incarceration, but with the mechanisms of state censorship and propaganda. Politics becomes a performance in front of the audience, whose staging was more complex than any stage show. Art is an invitation to the question: it is the social positioning of the doubt, of the will to understand and change reality, recognizes Bruguera's manifesto. It is not just a statement about the present, but a call for a different future, a better future. For the nations in which the central figure has grown largely, the path is infinitely wide.

The naturalistic format directs the attention fully to the fascinating personality of the woman, whose commitment to expression and freedom of expression suddenly moved into the international focus. The intimate discussion highlights the consolidation of family and cultural oppression into an ideological prison as dangerous as a real one.