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**art always has its consequences**

BUDAPEST ★ ŁÓDŹ ★ NOVI SAD ★ ZAGREB | 2008-2010

## art always has its consequences

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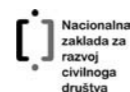
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[www.artalways.org](http://www.artalways.org)



## TEKST NOGOM

Tema mog rada je jezik politike odnosno prelamanje tog jezika u svakodnevici. Ovi radovi nisu izmišljeni. Volio bih slikati. Slikam, ali slika me izdaje. Pišem, ali napisano me izdaje. Slike i riječi pretvaraju se u ne moje slike, ne moje riječi i to je ono za što se želim izboriti ovim radom — za ne moju sliku. Ako je jezik (boja, slika itd.) vlasništvo ideologije, želim i ja postati vlasnikom takvog jezika, želim ga misliti s konsekvencama. Tu se ne radi ni o kritici ni o dvosmislenosti. Ono što mi se nameće, nameće se kao pitanje, kao iskustvo, kao posljedica. Ako boje, riječi, materijali imaju više značenja, koje je ono što se nameće, što ono znači i da li znači ili je prazan hod, varka. Pitanje je kako manipulirati onim što te manipulira, tako očigledno, tako drsko, ali ja nisam nedužan — ne postoji umjetnost bez posljedica.

Mladen Stilinović

### FOOTWRITING

The subject of my work is the language of politics, i.e., its reflections on everyday life. I should like to paint. I paint, but the painting betrays me. I write, but the written word betrays me. The pictures and the words become not-my-pictures, not-my-words and this is what I want to achieve with this work – not-my-painting. If the language (the colour, the image, etc.) is the property of ideology, I too want to become the owner of such a language. I want to think it with consequences. This is neither criticism nor ambiguity. What is imposed on me is imposed as a question, as an experience, as a consequence. If colours, words and materials have several meanings, what is the one that is most imposed, what does it mean and does it mean anything – or is it just a dry run, a delusion? The question is how to manipulate that which manipulates you, so obviously, so shamelessly, but I am not innocent – there is no art without consequences.

MLADEN STILINOVIĆ

ORIGINALLY PUBLISHED IN THE CATALOGUE FOR MLADEN STILINOVIĆ'S EXHIBITION  
IN THE STUDIO OF THE GALLERY OF CONTEMPORARY ART, ZAGREB, 1984

*Art Always Has Its Consequences* was a two-year collaborative platform (2008-2010) organised by **new media center\_kuda.org** (Novi Sad), **tranzit.hu** (Budapest), **Muzeum Sztuki** (Łódź) and **What, How & for Whom/WHW** (Zagreb).

The project explored practices through which art reaches its audience and their significance for broader relations between art and society, focusing on four thematic strands: the history of exhibitions, artists' texts, conceptual design, typography, and institutional archives.

The title, taken from a text by artist **Mladen Stilinović** entitled *Footwriting* (1984), suggests investigation in terms of the consequences for art in relation to reality, but also in terms of intrinsic artistic procedures by which art always 'limits' itself to being art.



**NEW MEDIA CENTER\_KUDA.ORG ★ NOVI SAD**  
[www.kuda.org](http://www.kuda.org)

New Media Center\_kuda.org, founded in 2001, is an independent cultural organisation based in Novi Sad, Serbia. It brings together artists, theoreticians, media activists, researchers and the wider public to research into new cultural relations, contemporary artistic practice, new technologies and social issues. Together with several other independent organisations, **kuda.org** established the youth cultural centre **CK13** in 2007 in Novi Sad. It also participates in the activities of the city network of independent cultural organisations **For Cultural Policies – Politics of Culture**.

As well as organising lectures, conferences and workshops, **kuda.org** (co-)curates exhibitions, and edits the publishing project **kuda.read**, thereby collaborating with many international cultural organisations and publishing houses. An important part of **kuda.org**'s work is the analysis of the social, cultural and intellectual heritage of the former Yugoslavia, Vojvodina and Novi Sad, which is realised through cooperation with different regional collectives. ✖



**MUZEUM SZTUKI ★ ŁÓDŹ**  
<http://www.msl.org.pl>

Muzeum Sztuki in Łódź has one of the most remarkable collections of twentieth and twenty-first century art in Europe. At the heart of this is the 'a.r.' group's *International Collection of Modern Art*, from 1931, created by Jan Brzękowski, Władysław Strzemiński, Katarzyna Kobro, Julian Przyboś and Henryk Stażewski. This is internationally significant since it was initiated by the artists themselves, and results from a joint effort to act beyond and against artistic and other boundaries. The Muzeum's collection includes works by major avant-garde and neo-avant-garde artists such as: Theo van Doesburg, Sonia and Robert Delaunay, Hans Arp and Kurt Schwitters. Since 1945, some of the most important elements of the collection have been: the creation of the 'neoplastic room' by Strzemiński; major gifts of avant-garde works in the 1950s and British art in the 1970s; *Polentransport* 1981 by Joseph Beuys; the collection of works by artists connected to *Construction in Process* (1981) and a collection of American art donated in 1983 by the artists involved in the fiftieth anniversary project *Echange entre artistes 1931-1982*. In 2008 Muzeum Sztuki opened a new space – **ms<sup>2</sup>** – located in the grounds of *Manufaktura* where the collection is now displayed. ✖



**TRANZIT. HU ★ BUDAPEST**  
<http://hu.tranzit.org/>

Hungarian organisation **tranzit.hu** is an independent association initiating projects in different formats and fields such as education, research, publishing and exhibitions. As both theory and practice are different aspects of a specific way of thinking – artistic thinking – **tranzit.hu** represents the idea that art produces an excess of knowledge, which can be recycled and used in broader social discourse. This belief defines the organisation's activities. The association **tranzit.hu** belongs to a network of **tranzit** offices active in Austria, the Czech Republic, Hungary and Slovakia since 2002. **Dóra Hegyi** is a member of the **tranzit.org** curatorial team for *Manifesta 8*. ✖



**WHAT, HOW & FOR WHOM/WHW ★ ZAGREB**

**What, How & for Whom/WHW** is a curatorial collective formed in 1999 and based in Zagreb, Croatia. Its members are **Ivet Ćurlin**, **Ana Dević**, **Nataša Ilić** and **Sabina Sabolović**, and designer and publicist **Dejan Kršić**. **WHW** organises a range of production, exhibition and publishing projects and has been running **Gallery Nova** in Zagreb since 2003. *What, how* and *for whom*, the three basic questions of every economic organisation, concerns the planning, concept and realisation of exhibitions as well as the production and distribution of artworks and the artist's position in the labour market. These questions formed the title of **WHW**'s first project dedicated to the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the *Communist Manifesto*, held in 2000 in Zagreb, and became the motto of **WHW**'s work, and the title of the collective. In 2009 **WHW** curated the 11<sup>th</sup> **Istanbul Biennial** entitled *What Keeps Mankind Alive?* ✖

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▲  
NEP, *Empty Spaces, fake polaroids of the former building of the Museum of Contemporary Art, Zagreb, 2010*



- KUDA.ORG
- + MUZEUM SZTUKI
- TRANZIT. HU
- ▶ WHW

EXHIBITION VIEW:  
*ID: Ideology of Design*,  
Museum of Contemporary  
Art of Vojvodina,  
Novi Sad, 2009



Kad bi se pravio nekakav film  
umetnosti prošlog veka to  
ment on to izgledalo kao da  
drugačije nego bilo kakav  
ishodni umetnički. Ali kad  
da navedemo ono što je bilo  
nebitno u toj umetnosti  
XX veka, to počinje od toga  
da to u svakom slučaju nije  
slikarstvo već su to fotografije,  
arhitekture, delimično film i  
grafički dizajn.

If we would make some kind of  
balance sheet of the last  
century, according to me it  
would look completely different  
than it is in the art history. If we  
want to state what was most  
important in the art of the  
XX century, I would start by  
saying that it wasn't painting,  
but photography, architecture,  
partly film and graphic design.

Branko Vučićević

Na tim žiriranjima [zvaničnih konkursu za politički plakat] se  
moglo jako puno naučiti: ta žiriranja su presto bili jedna  
dodatna edukacija onima koji su tek počinjali, men naravno u  
to vreme s početka 1970-ih godina.

During those jury sessions [official competitions for political  
poster] one could learn a lot, those sessions were simply  
additional education to those who were at the beginning of  
their professional career, to me especially in the beginning of  
seventies.

Branislav Došanowski

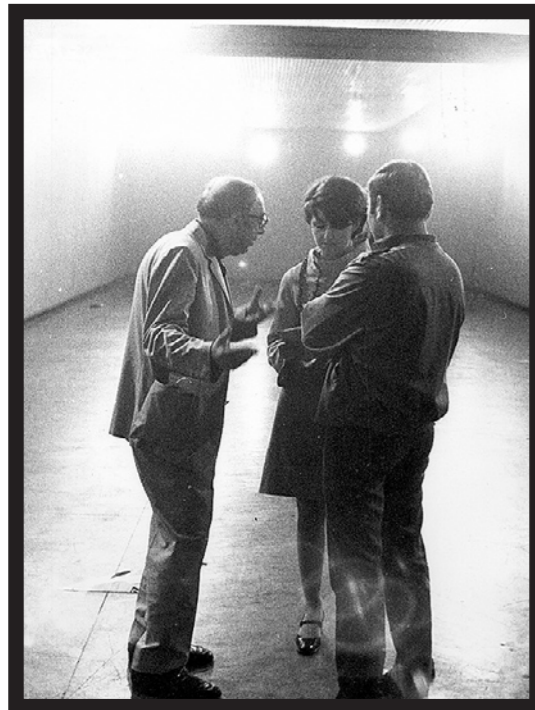
Dizajn - to nije samo  
umetnost, nego je i  
zadatak. To je nešto  
što mora biti jasno  
i razumljivo. To je  
nešto što mora biti  
korisno. To je nešto  
što mora biti  
efikasno. To je nešto  
što mora biti  
inovativno. To je  
nešto što mora  
biti originalno.

Design - it's not just  
art, it's also a  
task. It's something  
that has to be clear  
and understandable.  
It's something that  
has to be useful.  
It's something that  
has to be efficient.  
It's something that  
has to be innovative.  
It's something that  
has to be original.

Friderik Križevac

**timeline**





► 15.09.2008 ★ Gallery Nova, Zagreb

### Exhibition of Women & Men

CONCEPT BY What, How & for Whom/WHW & Želimir Koščević

The *Exhibition of Women and Men* was held in 1968, in the influential *Gallery of the Student Centre* in Zagreb, which was one of the main protagonists in the development of conceptual art and of the dematerialisation of the artwork in Croatia. The recreation of the project was done as a collaboration between the former *SC gallery* curator **Želimir Koščević** and **WHW**. The same invitation for the audience to be the exhibition was sent out. ✖

“In the season that is now behind us, there were eight exhibition openings at our Gallery, and they were all quite different. On the occasion of this ninth opening, we have come together in order to mark its end, undisturbed by art and its confusing forms.

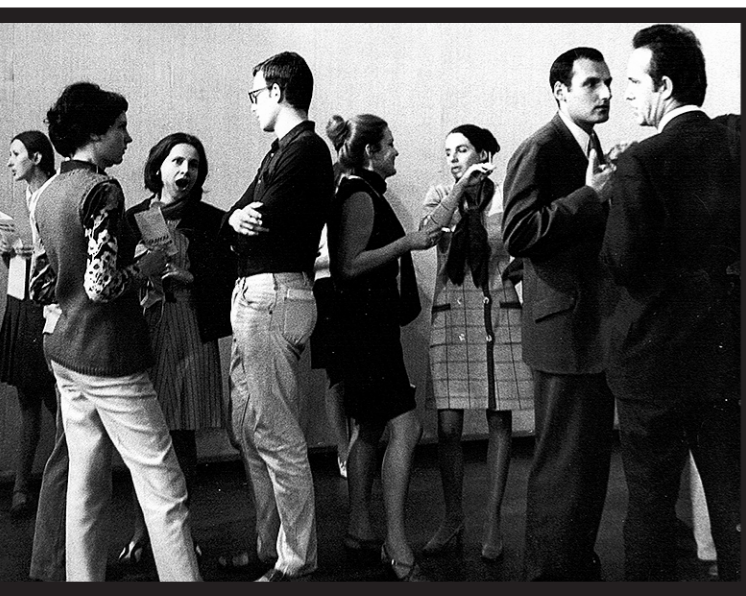
Our openings are usually attended by cultural and manual workers, painters, sculptors, models, graphic artists, art historians and history historians, television people, writers (rarely), actors from the theatre across the street, ballet dancers male and female, photographers and photographs, philosophers of Marxist orientation and Marxists of no orientation, cyberneticists and fans, managers and secretaries, unemployed architects and jobless urban planners and, of course, many foreign guests. We are also sometimes visited by art critics. Others just write intuitively.

We have tried to reach as many people as possible with our invitation – as your visit is your own success.

Today, we are opening an exhibition about the intimate encounter between our exhibits.

Each gallery and each cultural institution generally seeks to increase belief in the poetic significance of human work. Knowing that you all comprise that work in some way, we have gathered you here to give you an opportunity to convince each other, once again, of your significance.

Since we are certain of it, we have decided that we should allow you to experience pure presence in this moment, presence without obligation: you should just be that silent passion that commonly drives you to have your conversations and to gossip, to have your lunches, naps, work, and dreams. You should just live here intimately with your ideas, even if you don't have any. Feel what you wish, according to your own sense of social order.



▲ EXHIBITION VIEWS: The *Exhibition of Women & Men*, Gallery of the Student Centre, Zagreb, 1968



◀ Opening of the *Exhibition of Women & Men*, Gallery Nova, Zagreb, 2008

Be an exhibition, for god's sake.

At this exhibition, it is you who is art and figuration, you are the social realism.

Beware, your eyes are resting upon you.

You are the body in space, the moving body, you are the kinetic sculpture and spatio-dynamism.

Art is not outside of you. Either there is no art, or that art is you.

Hypocrites, prowlers, bogiemen, false prophets, perverts, and missionaries of various kinds probably expected that they would see all sorts of things at our ninth exhibition, even the naked flesh of both sexes. Forget it!

Chastity is a virtue that we have not forgotten.

In this time of collective indulgence in nudity, be it playboyish, hustlerish, penthouseish, escortish, privateish, barely-legalish, or any other type of nudity that we have imported from rotten capitalism, our lust keeps increasing, while our birth rate keeps decreasing.

So, this is our ninth exhibition and we are closing the season with it.

Yet we may indeed say that we are not only coming to the end of the season in our gallery work, but also the working season of an entire sector of cultural activities at the *Student Centre* of Zagreb University. As in previous years, our work here has been received with enthusiasm. We haven't noticed anyone who viewed our shows with scepticism and we were always received with applause and respect, while those who were our superiors at work showed lots of friendly understanding.

We have always believed that a friendly atmosphere and full cooperation are absolutely necessary in this type of work.

And we received what we asked for.

So today we are opening an exhibition that has no exhibits – it is us who are here to exhibit ourselves.

So just be men and be women. Exchange opinions and sexes. Some among you have already done this.

Forget that you were once officials, forget that you were artists, forget that you were scientists, forget that you were married, abroad, in church, on a ship, on an island, and especially in a meadow, forget that you were treading upon the grass that someone else had been eating, forget that you were eating each other, forget your daily stew, forget all the strange faces and be welcomed by Snow White, Sleeping Beauty, Little Red Riding Hood, Hansel and Gretel, for you are the most beautiful fable in the world: it is said that you existed and that you will exist, but only children believe it before going to sleep, before they start dreaming.

We are sure that this exhibition, our ninth exhibition, will make you believe in art once again.

Hegelian scepticism and all that talk about the end of art – it will be defeated here, *hic et nunc*.

And the victims will be equal to the victors.

Look at yourself as you would do from the street, and then forget where it is taking you.

Look at yourself as you do in the mirror, and never forget whose face it is.

Look at the people you know, as you would look at yourself, and love will once again conquer the world. From this exhibition, from this hall, from this Gallery, from this Centre, the World itself should emerge, rejuvenated in the face of art.

That is our modest wish.” ✖

— GALLERY SC NEWSPAPERS, № 8, 1968

► 18.09-12.10.2008 ★ Gallery Nova, Zagreb

### The Case of the SKC in the 1970s

EXHIBITION CURATED BY Prelom kolektiv (Belgrade)

► 18.09.2008 ★ Gallery Nova, Zagreb

### The Case of the SKC in the 1970s

LECTURE BY Dušan Grlja & Jelena Vesić (Belgrade)

gies, new expressions, new forms of political activism and self-organisation.

In the present cultural-political situation, the SKC is being both fetishised and marginalised. On the one hand, it is seen as a space of unlimited freedom and individual creative expression in the midst of an oppressive, totalitarian state. This romantic and nostalgic view is usually followed by reactionary fascination with the formalist return of language and symbolism of the (neo-)avant-garde, characteristic of our post-socialist condition. On the other hand, within the new conservative trend of re-constituting

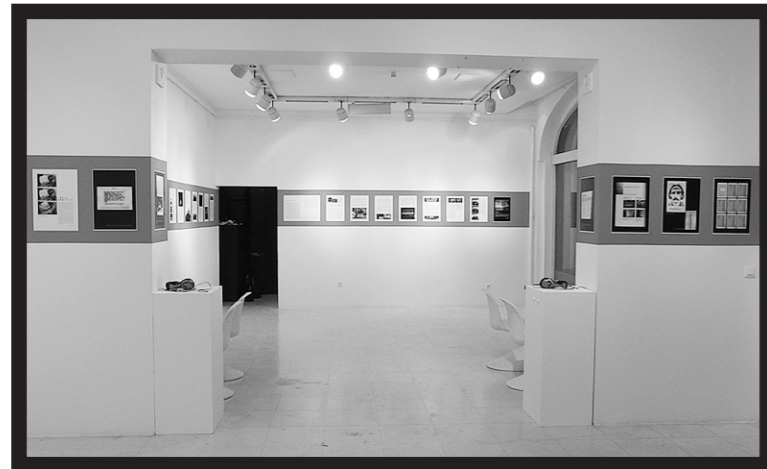
**T**he *Case of the SKC in the 1970s* is an exhibition of research materials: documents, images, texts, films, testimonies, researchers' notes. This exhibition, in the form of 'a notebook in the space', offers an insight into the present stage of one part of the ongoing collective research project – *Political Practices of (Post-)Yugoslav Art*, initiated by WHW (Zagreb), *kuda.org* (Novi Sad), *SCCA/pro.ba* (Sarajevo) and *Prelom kolektiv* (Belgrade), in 2006. The project traces, problematises and articulates the interrelationships of visual art, intellectual production and socio-political practices in the former Yugoslav context. It tries to give back to art the political voice that has been taken from it, both actively (through the domination of the 'cultural industries' approach) and retroactively (through the way it is historicised).

The 'case' of the Students' Cultural Centre (SKC) in Belgrade reveals important characteristics of a general constellation of art and politics in the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY). It is a characteristic of strategies after 1968 to contain, pacify and institutionalise student or youth culture as an 'organised alternative'. Like many other students' cultural centres throughout the SFRY, the SKC was an official state-constituted cultural institution offering young artists and cultural workers 'a roof over their heads'. At the same time, it was a place of avant-garde experimentation – for the introduction of new technolo-

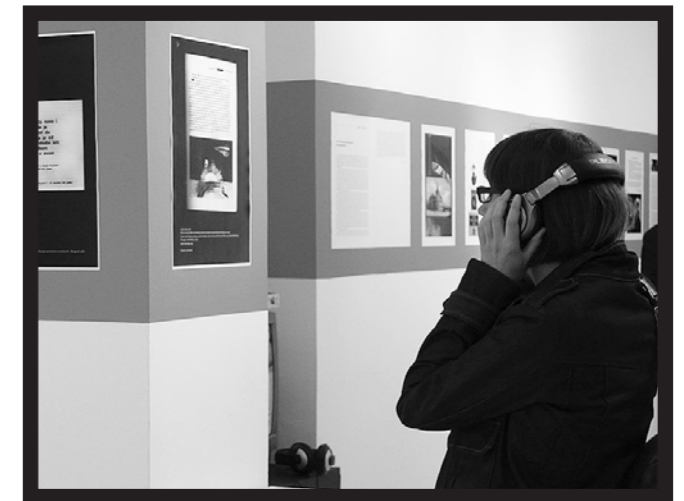
national cultures, its historical contributions remain excluded from the contemporary system of evaluation. The symptomatic exclusion of the experience of the SKC's artist, activist and organisational practices shows the erasure of strategies for contemporary regional cultural institutions that remain potentially viable. The research for *The Case of the Students' Cultural Centre in the 1970s* aims to extricate the concrete relationships and transactions between artists and the institution, in order to reveal the political genealogy of contemporary art practices.

Our aim, therefore, is not to 'discover' and historicise what are nowadays seen as the underground art practices of some 'brave' individuals in the face of a totalitarian system. Rather, it is a call for the re-examination, from the contemporary perspective, of artistic and cultural production within the neo-liberal constellation of the post-Yugoslav situation, which could point to the possibilities of reviving progressive and critical experiences, which existed in the cultural, artistic and intellectual scene in the former Yugoslavia, and which are still relevant for artistic and cultural production within the neo-liberal constellation of the post-Yugoslav situation. ✕

- PRELOM KOLEKTIV



▲ EXHIBITION VIEW: *The Case of the SKC in the 1970s*, PHOTO: VLADIMIR JERIĆ



▲ EXHIBITION VIEWS: *The Case of the SKC in the 1970s*, PHOTO: VLADIMIR JERIĆ



✦ 22.11.2008 ★ ms<sup>2</sup>, Muzeum Sztuki, Łódź

### The Builders – Avant-Garde Utopia in the Language of Film

CURATED BY Magdalena Ziółkowska

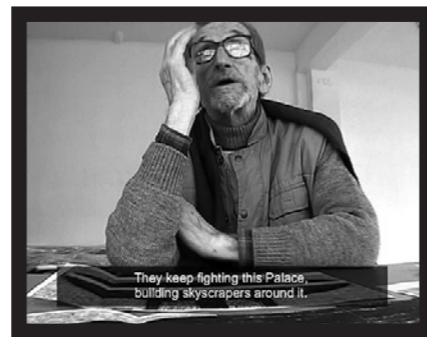
The three-day opening of ms<sup>2</sup>, the new venue of Muzeum Sztuki in Łódź, located in the post-industrial complex of Manufaktura, featured the launch of the international project *Art Always Has Its Consequences*, accompanied by a film programme, *The Builders – Avant-Garde Utopia in the Language of Film*, and a lecture by the Hungarian scholar **Edit András**, *The Future Is Behind Us*.

The avant-garde artists of the 1920s and 1930s saw the contemporary world as a challenge. The trajectory of artistic aspirations of the time is well illustrated by the call for the construction of a new reality, found in the projects of **El Lissitzky**, **Rodchenko** and **Stepanova** that combined laboratory experiments with propaganda works. The process of building a new world, a rapid artistic and utopian effort, was an act of great courage on the part of the artists. The opportunity to shape the new reality went be-

yond the sphere of analysing the form of a work of art and placing it in the social space. The 'new reality' required different organisational principles and a new ideology, in this case identified by the context of **Stalin's** policies. The artist became the Builder of the Great Utopia both literally and metaphorically.

Almost eighty years later, connections between the avant-garde and the ideological construction of utopia and socialism have resurfaced, albeit indirectly. Contemporary artists have either retrieved them from the fissures of memory, or discovered them anew among the ruins of the socialist edifice. Films by **Andreas Fogarasi**, **Deimantas Narkevičius** and **David Maljković** are shot amidst the relics of the former era – Budapest's cultural centres, a power station in the Latvian city of Elektrēnai, the monumental head of **Karl Marx**, and the monument of **Vojin Bakić** in Petrova Gora. Rather than nostal-

▲ Deimantas Narkevičius, *The Head*, 2007



▲ Artur Żmijewski, *Dream of Warsaw*, 2005, COURTESY OF THE FOKSAL GALLERY FOUNDATION

gic gestures that summon up places and artworks once thrown into oblivion, the artists see them as an attempt at understanding and confronting the motives behind the construction of socialism.

Two videos are dedicated to the idea of designing an urban utopia. *Dream of Warsaw* by **Artur Żmijewski**, a film-conversation with the architect **Oskar Hansen** (1922–2005), focuses on the dialogue between the architect and the space surrounding Warsaw's Palace of Culture, ironically called a 'gift' from the Eastern Neighbour. *Teheran 1380* by **Solmaz Shahbazi** & **Tirdad Zolghadr**, on the other hand, is a story about the post-war reconstruction of a divided city, in which the flow of history is accelerated.

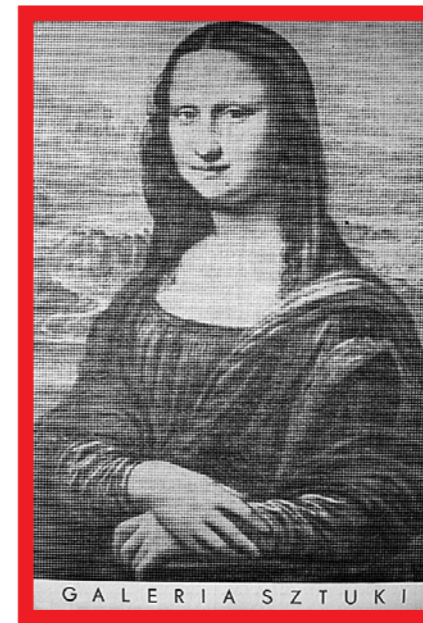
How do the 'relics' of the past find themselves in the contemporary context? And, conversely, how do we find them there? In **Anri Sala's** *Intervista*, we witness a language that fails to name and therefore create a world. Phrases that meant a lot in former regimes ring hollow, resembling linguistic mistakes. The artists from the group **Chto Delat?** revisit fundamental questions by standing on a wall, posing as workers from the painting by **Viktor Popkov** *The Builders of Bratsk*, and saying: "The feeling that we are building something is very important for us. That is why we tried to discover what we were actually building."

The films were accompanied by a lecture delivered by the Hungarian art critic and art historian, Professor **Edit András**, who deals with the issues of political transformation in post-socialist countries. In her presentation *The Future Is Behind Us* **András** spoke about relations between revolutionary utopias from the beginning of the century, their abuses in communist times and the attitudes of contemporary artists. ✕

▶ 02.12.2008 ★ Gallery Nova, Zagreb

### From the museum to the gallery and not the other way around

LECTURE BY Magdalena Ziółkowska



▲ Cover for the section devoted to the *Mona Lisa Gallery* in monthly magazine *Odra* published in Wrocław, COURTESY OF THE PRIVATE ARCHIVE OF JAN CHWALCZYK AND WANDA GOŁKOWSKA

▶ First editorial meeting with representatives of all partners

▣ 04-05.12.2008 ★ Labor, Budapest

### Artists' texts – 1<sup>st</sup> editorial meeting with representatives of all the co-editing partners.

PRESENTATION BY **Kristine Stiles** about her experience of editing the book *Theories and Documents of Contemporary Art* (eds. **Kristine Stiles** & **Peter Selz**, University of California Press, 1996)

The aim of the collective research and editing process of artists' writings, manifestos and documents from post-socialist countries is to create a basis for comparative studies of artists' ideas and artistic movements from Central and Eastern Europe, which for fifty years shared a common history of state socialism. The collection of artists' texts is not only an important source material for further research into the art and cultural history of a country or region, it also represents reflections on social and political changes and new strategies by which art has reacted to them. ✕



► 05.12.2008-31.01.2009 ★ Gallery Nova, Zagreb  
**Invisible History of Exhibitions, 1<sup>st</sup> round**

EXHIBITION BY  
**Mladen Stilinović,**  
*I Wanna Go Home – Artist's Books 1972-2006*

**M**laden Stilinović has been producing artist's books since the early 1970s. The exhibition at Gallery Nova was the artist's first comprehensive public presentation of this work in Croatia. By engaging with materials such as cardboard, newspapers, fabrics, and everyday objects, **Stilinović** has developed a strategy of 'poor' artistic procedure and a sort of autonomy or independence from the system, not only in terms of art production, but also regarding the framework of presentation. He has consistently adhered to that strategy by producing books in small editions. So far, he has presented his books in solo and group exhibitions, in galleries and various other spaces, and with the **Group of Six Authors** in the framework of their exhibitions/actions. ✘



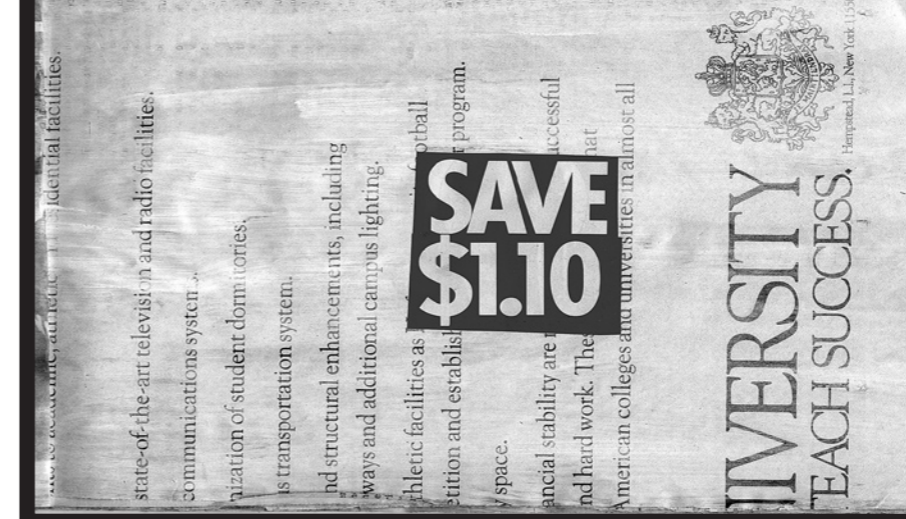
▲ Mladen Stilinović

“I think that in each one of my books there is some reason why it is a book, that the element that interests me in it is repeated or placed in such a context that without being read in book form it would not have the same effect. I don't do sketches. My sketches exist only in written form, I jot down the ideas. When I started to do books, I was spending a lot of time with literature and experimental film. Various kinds of dramaturgy or anti-dramaturgy interested me. There are various ways in which the structure is built; sometimes on the first page everything is already said. Sometimes there is a page-by-page development of the idea, or sometimes there's a catch that comes only at the end.

Today I'm interested, glad even, that I structured some things in a manner that I can no longer discern. My thinking is developing along some other lines today. I know that there is some story in the background. Perhaps someone will be able to reconstruct it. For example, in the book *My Sweet Little Lamb* there are quotes from Wittgenstein's *Tractatus*. But they are not in the right order, following some order of mine instead. Why I changed their order, I just don't know any longer.”

“I'm interested in the city milieu, the streets, the everyday life of the newspapers. Apart from culture, i.e., art, they are my main interest. Rawness comes from me personally and from the street. When I was a kid I would go by myself to the market place, walk around, watch... I was always interested in the way people were writing, how they were expressing themselves in the displays, writing up the prices in the market, at various events, flea markets. The manner they use to express themselves is actually signwriting. This is a concept that is particularly connected with the street. It's close to me, and I always work by hand.”

“The newspaper inspiration partly stemmed from the fact that papers are collages. If you don't look at just the one text, but immediately link it up with the article next to it or something from the previous page then you



▲ EXHIBITION VIEW: Mladen Stilinović, *I Wanna Go Home - Artist's Books*

◀ Mladen Stilinović, *Save*, 1991

get a very different story. I was interested in this newspaper dramaturgy, which was not done deliberately, for if this were a conscious process, it would all look different. In socialism they used to say that the graphics industry people deliberately committed howlers. It would be enough to change one letter and from 'savez komunista' you get 'savez komuništa', thus 'league of socialists' turns into 'nothing is in common'. That would be interesting to read. I was also interested in political clichés and the way in which a personal language was changed because of politics, how normal words are turned into a political phrase through a particular arrangement. That was an awful process to me. I am not thinking here just of the phrases that are worn out by repetition, like socialism or self-management, but of some ordinary words that are constantly repeated and you can't ignore the context from which they stem. So, for example, in normal speech you would never use the phrase 'u tom smislu' – 'in this sense', because you would look an idiot, everyone would think of a party meeting. In studying the newspapers, language as repression interested me. If you want to communicate, you have to keep a constant lookout, or room for misunderstandings opens up."

“When I say that art is nothing – I am thinking of the social role of art. Here art means nothing, and not only today. But this nothing is important because it is a form of freedom that is outside the main system of society. Actually, inside this system, which does not allow voids, this nothing is very important. Everything has some purpose, but art does not. Except for me as an artist. I find this hard to explain. You do some critical art that is a part of society, but you are aware that it has no consequences at all. And this is an absurdity, but I love it, this absurdity, I love this nothing. This is what provokes me to work.” ✖

— EXCERPTS FROM MLADEN STILINOVIĆ INTERVIEWED BY SABINA SABOLOVIĆ, MLADEN STILINOVIĆ – ARTIST'S BOOKS CATALOGUE, PLATFORM GARANTI – CONTEMPORARY ART CENTER, ISTANBUL & VAN ABBEMUSEUM, EINDHOVEN, 2007

✚ 12.12.2008 ★ Muzeum Sztuki, Łódź

### Dust, Ash and Greyness. The Remnants of the Archive

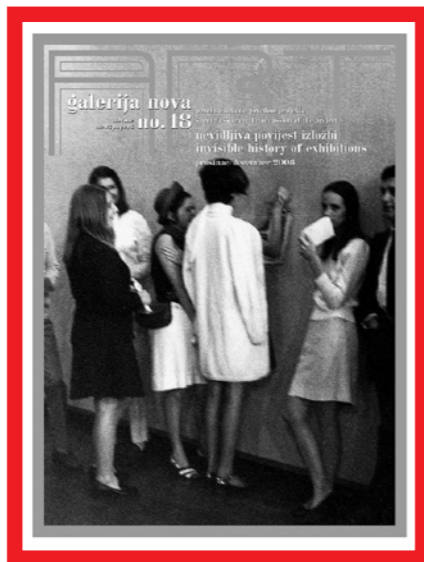
LECTURE BY Andrzej Leśniak

Dust, greyness and ashes are the figures that dominate thinking about archives. They form a set of categories that make the work of the archive possible in relation to material and mental objects. An archive remains just a collection of remnants, relics and scraps that are beyond the reach of analysis unless it calls for psychoanalytical and post-psychoanalytical methods. ✖

► December 2008

### Invisible History of Exhibitions, Gallery Nova Newspapers № 18

EDITED BY WHW



In the first special edition for the *Invisible History of Exhibitions*, Gallery Nova Newspapers explored exhibitions as specific sites, where art is critically presented, and knowledge is produced and disseminated. It included materials closely linked to the programmes realised in the Gallery Nova in Zagreb from September to December 2008, such as the *Exhibition of Women and Men*, *The Case of SKC in the 1970s*, and the exhibition of books by **Mladen Stilinović**. The historical examples shown at Nova were contextualised through

a number of essays and interviews, including interviews with **Ivan Picelj** and **Želimir Koščević**, and were linked to contemporary art practices through a series of new contributions commissioned by **Kuda.org** from Novi Sad. ✖



◀ Lutz Dammbeck,  
*La Sarraz*, 1984

✚ 19.12.2008 ★ ms<sup>2</sup>, Muzeum Sztuki, Łódź

### Screening of films by the German artist Lutz Dammbeck with an introduction by Krzysztof Pijarski

- ★ *Hommage à la Sarraz* (1981)
- ★ *Herakles Höhle* (1989/1990)
- ★ *Zeit der Götter* (1993)
- ★ *Mediencollage Herakles* (1983-1986)

“We are using the past to shed light on the present, first of all for ourselves, at least it was that way in the East or in totalitarian structures where there was a need for a secret language, for the coding of messages – we also moved under cover of that past, we were staging the past as a way to talk about the present. I called that slave language (*Sklavensprache*). This is only one aspect, relevant to a specific historical situation. At the

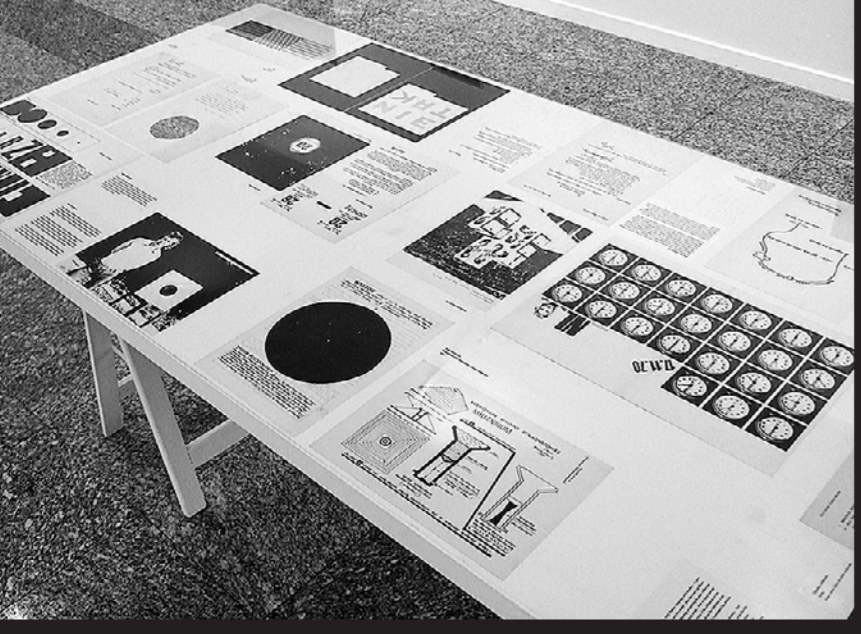
moment I am interested in different problems requiring different methods and tools. In my opinion, the longer you are using documents and archival material, the easier it becomes to notice that it is getting harder and harder to deal with them seriously, or in a traditional way. This has to do with an increasing interest in ‘documentary style’, both in film and art in general. The technical means available today, i.e., software, etc., make this style of work easy

to produce, and the philosophical models that send reality into the realm of fiction and construction only speed up this process.

Of course, this ‘borderlessness’ assigns totally new meanings to ‘document’ and ‘archive’, undermining their hitherto prevailing definitions. If everything is fiction, then why not produce and use invented archives and fictional documents? This is a dangerous phenomenon – think of the extremely rare photographs of prisoners in Auschwitz. They can also be ‘recreated’ or ‘simulated’ without difficulty.

And then what happens when it’s no longer possible to tell counterfeit from copy, and documents and archives can be easily forged? Who should stand up against this and for what reason? The ‘open notion of art’ has only accelerated this process; montage, collage, defamiliarisation/dematerialisation, i.e., fictionalisation. In fact these are modern stylistic means. At the same time, doubts about the ‘truth of the archive’ are absolutely allowed and legitimate.” ✖

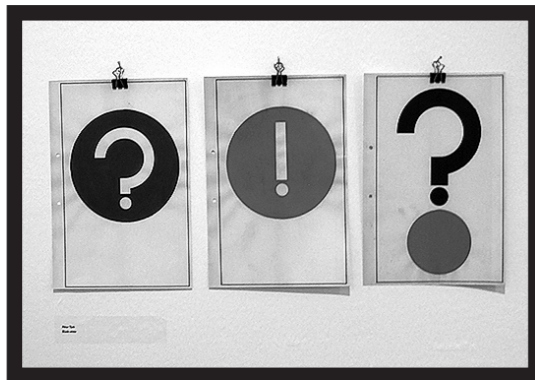
— EXCERPT FROM A CONVERSATION BETWEEN LUTZ DAMMBECK & KRZYSZTOF PIJARSKI, PUBLISHED IN WORKING TITLE: ARCHIVE #1



► 09.01-08.02.2009 ★ Gallery Nova, Zagreb

### Invisible History of Exhibitions/ Second Publicity, 2<sup>nd</sup> round

EXHIBITION CURATED BY Dóra Hegyi & Zsuzsa László (tranzit.hu, Budapest) ★ Magdalena Ziółkowska (Muzeum Sztuki, Łódź) & WHW (Zagreb)



▲ EXHIBITION  
VIEW: Idea Art

▲ EXHIBITION VIEW: *Imagination/Idea*,  
PHOTOS: DEJAN KRŠIĆ

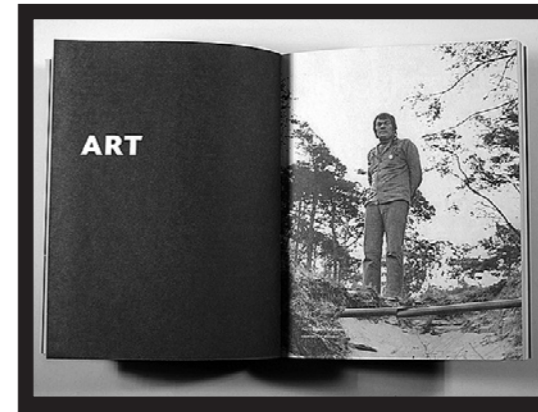
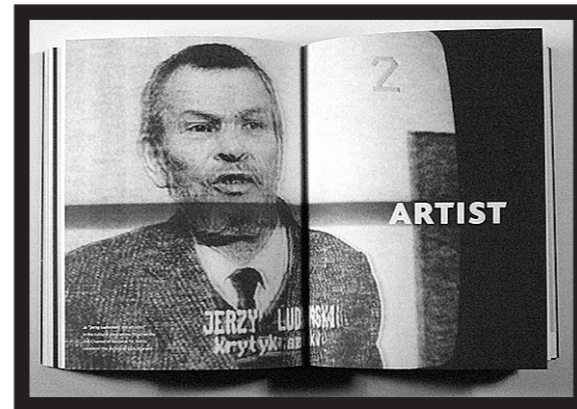
By researching archival materials, the exhibition presented some of the crucial, yet insufficiently researched examples of socially engaged artistic production in Eastern Europe. It featured some of the paradigmatic historical examples of conceptual art from this area: *IDEA ART* [1970, project initiator: Jerzy Ludwiński, Wrocław], *Imagination/Idea* [1971, project initiator: László Beke, Budapest] and *MAJ 75* [1975-1981, project initiators: Group of Six Authors, Zagreb]. These were the most radical conceptual examples of collaborative platforms that occurred outside of the institutional framework and included a large number of participants, thus initiating innovative and autonomous ways of producing and circulating art.

*IDEA ART* (1970, project initiator: Jerzy Ludwiński, Wrocław) including works by Andrzej Lachowicz ★ Zdzisław Jurkiewicz ★ Zbigniew Dłubak ★ Natalia Lach-Lachowicz ★ Jerzy Rosołowicz ★ Zbigniew Makarewicz ★ Stanisław Dróżdź ★ Anastazy Wiśniewski ★ Antoni Dzieduszycki ★ Barbara Kozłowska ★ Jan Chwałczyk ★ Maria Michałowska ★ Jerzy Fedorowicz and Ludmiła Popiel

*Imagination/Idea* (1971, project initiator: László Beke, Budapest) including works by Gábor Attalai ★ Imre Bak ★ Jenő Balaskó ★ András ★ Baranyay Attila Csáji ★ Tibor Csiky ★ Péter Donáth ★ Miklós Erdély ★ János Fajó ★ Ferenc Ficzek ★ Gadányi György ★ Gyula Gulyás ★ István Haraszty ★ Tamás Hencze ★ György Jovánovics ★ György Kemény ★ Ilona Keserü ★ Károly Kismányoki ★ László Lakner ★ Ferenc Lantos ★ János Major ★ László Méhes ★ István Nádler ★ Gyula Pauer ★ Géza Pernecky ★ Sándor Pinczehelyi ★ Tamás Szentjóbý ★ Kálmán Szijártó ★ Dezső Tandori ★ Endre Tót and Péter Türk

*MAJ 75* (1975-1981, project initiators: Group of Six Authors, Zagreb) – Boris Demur, Željko Jerman, Vlado Martek, Mladen Stilinović, Sven Stilinović, and Fedor Vučemilović ✕

“Impossible art is not a tendency, but rather a new artistic sphere, comprising equally the elements of both tendencies outlined earlier. It is not, however, a simple synthesis or the allying of former trends, but rather their further dispersion. Impossible art brought about such a reevaluation of artistic phenomena that it has become necessary to redefine art itself. A new definition would have to take into consideration all the new elements of art, which have not been considered before. It should be more capacious than all the previous definitions. Consequently, impossible art in all its variations would become a notion much broader than all the former definitions of art. In the last two years various attempts have been made to define and classify impossible art. These attempts have not yet been entirely successful, though some statements produced by both artists and art theorists from those circles deserve closer consideration. Douglas Huebler, an American artist, thus referred to his own practice: ‘Art is not SOMETHING, art is EVERYTHING’, with the exception of all the things that resemble art.”



◀ Fragments from the publication *Notes from the Future of Art. Selected Writings* by Jerzy Ludwiński (Eindhoven-Rotterdam: Van Abbemuseum / Veenman Publishers, 2007)

“Though the number of artists is increasing, it is obvious that the age in which we live is not the age of art. There are areas in which progress is much faster and these set the tone of contemporary civilization. I mean here science and technology. The two major functions of art – cognitive and creative – have been considerably challenged: the former by science, and the latter by technology. It might seem that artists have been pushed away from previously occupied positions or that they are being moved to a marginal position.

This results in a paradoxical situation. The more the territory of art is shrinking, the more art is encroaching upon the territories of the apparently victorious disciplines. And since these are most symptomatic of contemporary reality, art cannot avoid confronting them, and it has to enter into a dialogue with science and technology. This dialogue, like all dialogues between art and reality, is complex, and it embraces a broad range of attitudes, from acceptance to rejection. As regards visual experiments, art enters so much into the territory of science and technology, that they become indistinguishable; the products of new realism and dada cannot be distinguished from commonplace objects and natural things, and happenings and other artistic actions from everyday activities.”

“At this moment we need the notion of a process, which cannot be reconstructed, and for which I would suggest the name of ‘absent art’, to become aware of a certain critical situation, comparable to the notion of limes in mathematics. When these processes have been deciphered and absent art becomes part of an art system, then we could certainly equate art and reality.

Perhaps, even today, we do not deal with art. We might have overlooked the moment when it transformed itself into something else, something which we cannot yet name. It is certain, however, that what we deal with offers greater possibilities.” ✕

— EXCERPTS FROM JERZY LUDWIŃSKI, “ART IN THE POSTARTISTIC AGE”, IN *S.P. SZTUKA POJĘCIOWA*, EXH. CAT., MONA LISA GALLERY, WROCLAW, 4 DEC. 1970

“Rhetorically or not, I always ask the following question: What is the use of liars in art [or ultra-aestheticians, as we art critics tend to say]? What followed most of the New Practice people like a shadow was the aura of ethics. That was also the case with the issues of MAJ 75 throughout the years of its publication. The way of participating, both spiritually and technically, the methods of distribution and feedback – all that was special, based on individual responsibility, and intended for both expected and unexpected readership.

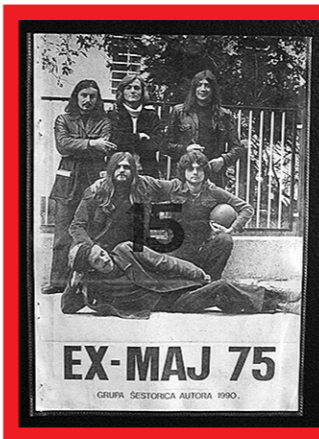
The format of MAJ 75 speaks of the spirit of the time and its convictions. The A4 format persisted, both as paper and as a format, a recognisable feature of art in the 1970s: conceptualism and post-conceptualism. To be sure, the **Group of Six Authors**, which was publishing the magazine, made the issues additionally recognisable – by using sellotape and Xeroxing, for example. Whoever glances through any of the issues of MAJ 75 is bound to find a brief introduction that is important for the physiognomy of collaboration and even for the poetics of those years. Having started with the six authors, the magazine spread its wings over the years and eventually included over forty artists from various parts of the country. There were 17+1 issues altogether, marked with 17 letters [A to Q]. This was linked to the idea of bringing out the entire alphabet, which would represent an adequate number and thus reveal the conceptual obsession with linguistics. I will now briefly address the

question of romanticisms. Romanticisms tend to emerge from an idealist mind, and such a dose of idealism was typical of the 1970s, since those artists were heirs of the enlightenment and surrealist utopia [of society]. Change tends to happen [if it happens] in an individual who is thus imbued with romanticism. It is all about freedom, about subjectivity that comes out of spontaneity, and about loyalty to courage, which brings insights into the deep nature of man that are not always comfortable. Despite this, one seeks to find an alternative to the common, while petty successes are sacrificed for the freshness of something new, touchingly unexpected, and barely profitable. With the practice of creating an outprint, the horizontal value of today may become the vertical value of the future audience. To this, one can add the principle ‘less is more’, thus coming to the conceptual gain of MAJ 75, and this is all paradigmatic for the imperfect collapse of art into the cellar of culture, that is happening today.

The magazine functioned as a mobile exhibition of originals, ready-mades, and copies. Disorder became a welcome order in the readers’ heads. The transparency of collaboration and assemblage certainly helped preserve the great charm of the material. Once they were broadened, the horizons of perception and reception were not susceptible to secondary criticism [of form etc.]; instead, they were set as a sort of limitation to freedom, freedom that the Russian avant-garde had left us as a legacy: the visionary freedom. The concept is thus a divine thing, while conceptualism, which was the approximate context from which MAJ 75 emerged, is the afternoon of a utopian vision. We may easily say that without projects such as MAJ 75 there would be a void, an uninspired void, and that they give legitimacy to idealism; not an official legitimacy, but rather a spiritual one, despite the numerous basic problems that were bringing the project down.

Or else we may say: it was the dusty sections as opposed to [and combined with] the glorious ones.” ✱

— V. MARTEK, “ČASOPIS – KATALOG MAJ 75”,  
GALLERY NOVA NEWSPAPER № 18 (DECEMBER 2008)



▲ EXHIBITION VIEW & DETAILS: MAJ 75, PHOTOS: DEJAN KRŠIĆ

► 06.02.2009 ★ Gallery Nova, Zagreb

## Imagination/Idea

LECTURE BY László Beke (Budapest)

“Dear Friend,  
I ask you here to take part in an experimental, educational, and documentation project titled

Budapest, 4. August 1971.

### IDEA

which I have initiated and which has the following aims:  
1/ to give an overview on the current state of a few tendencies in contemporary Hungarian art;  
2/ to find a solution for the well-known difficulties of exhibiting, publishing etc.

The point of the project: the creation of an ‘exhibition’ that is only realised in thought, the material of which, however, is accurately documented. It is possible to participate with any kind of and any number of artistic comments /objects, processes, situations, etc./ the only condition is that the work should be described in such a way that we can understand its idea. For this reason it is strongly advised to send – in addition to the description – the most complete documentation possible /sketches, photos, etc./. Consequently:

### the WORK = the DOCUMENTATION OF THE IDEA

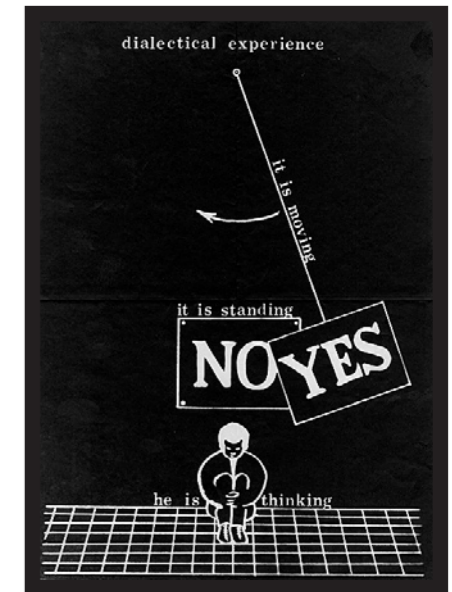
The materials submitted will probably be placed in a standard size folder – in alphabetical order according to the names of the artists – and will be accessible to anyone who is interested. I have sent invitations to the following artists:

attalai, bak, balaskó, baranyay, csáji, csiky, donáth, erdély, fajó, ficzek, gulyás, haraszty, hencze, jovánovics, kemény, keserü, kismányoki, lakner, lantos, major j., méhes, perneczky, pinczehelyi, szentjőby, szijártó, tandori, tót, türk.

If you agree with my proposal send your material to the following address before the 31st of September, 1971. / Bp.IX. Thaly Kálmán u. 56.I/3a/

Kind regards,  
László Beke” ✱

— LETTER SENT TO 28 ARTISTS, INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE IN THE IMAGINATION/IDEA PROJECT, 1971



▲ Géza Perneczky, *Untitled [yes & no, dialectics, and möbius & möbius]*, 1971



▲ János Major, *The Tomb of Lajos Kubista*, 1971, typewritten text and photo  
Contributions to the *Imagination/Idea* project, 1971

✦ 26.02–05.05.2009 ✦ Muzeum Sztuki, Łódź

## Working Title: Archive

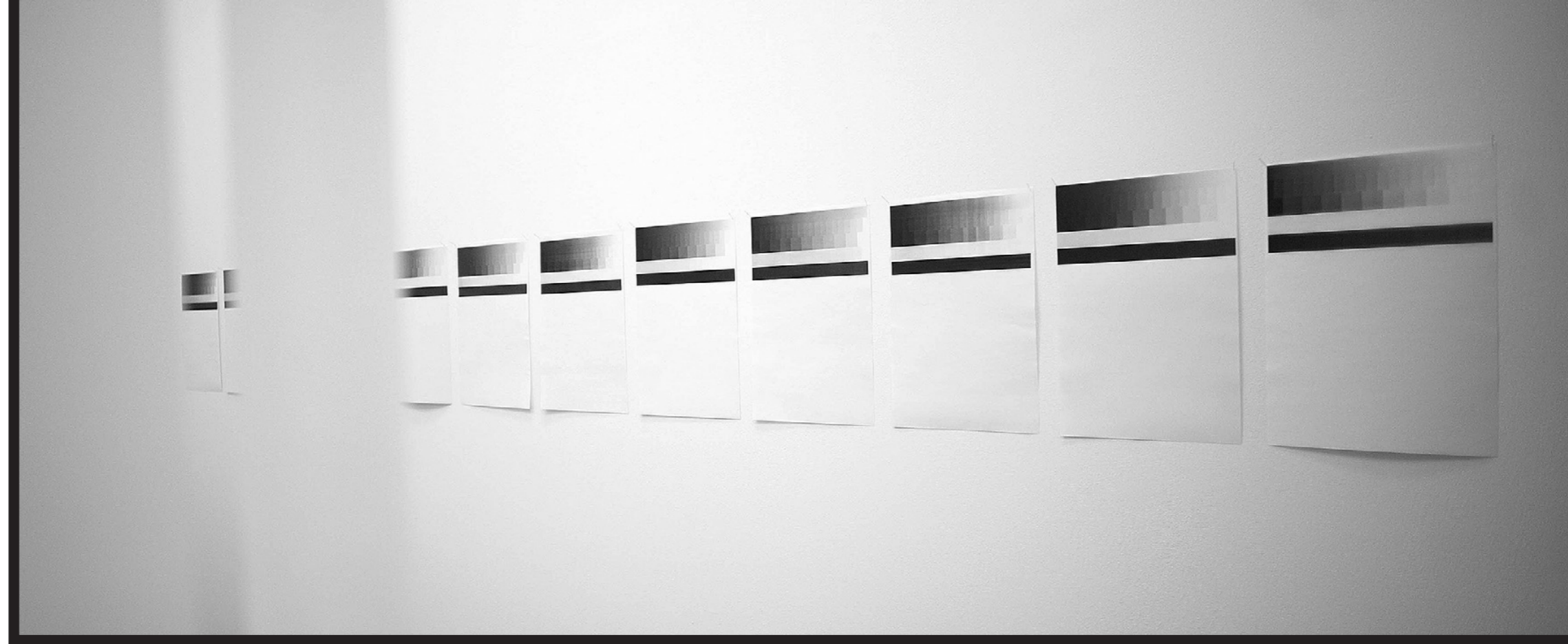
EXHIBITION CURATED BY Magdalena Ziółkowska

Archiving is a work of memory that determines what is to be preserved in order to form a historical reserve for the future. In today's network culture, privileging access and openness, we momentarily forget about how we are being shaped by the past. There still exist places, however, where the past is not only deposited, but its traces organised, indexed and categorised according to strict systems of historical classification. One such site is the museum archive, which offers the means for reconsidering the relationship between the past and the present, as well as its duty of public character, not only in reference to what it holds, but also to everything that has been overshadowed, excluded or deprived of access. For the first time in the history of **Muzeum Sztuki** in Łódź, an institutional archive became the point of departure for an exhibition. Reflecting on the functioning of the archive and its accessibility is at the core of **Marysia Lewandowska** and **Lasse Schmidt Hansen's** practice expressed in both direct and metaphorical gestures. Both projects set out to question the truth of the document while focusing on phenomena emerging on the margins of an institution's official activity. In *Tender Museum*, **Marysia Lewandowska** combines the public and private image of the **Muzeum**, preserved in conversations, films and sound recordings. By making the archive material



▲ Marysia Lewandowska, *Recovered Conversation 2009–1991*, 2009

accessible, the artist re-activates the act of giving that lies at the heart of the **Muzeum's** origin. The works of **Lasse Schmidt Hansen**, which frequently use anonymous and mass-produced objects, with meticulous attention drawn to minute details of office and archive space, prove unsettling. The artist's practice, rooted in the drive towards bureaucratisation and documenting, serves as a characteristic feature of modernity. The final section of *Working Title: Archive* offers a critical reflection on the rhetoric of the exhibition titled *Constructivism in Poland 1923–1936*, which, being among one of the best-known projects in the history of the **Muzeum**, was presented in more than sixteen institutions, inscribing Polish constructivism into international art history. ✦



▲ Lasse Schmidt Hansen, *Uro*, 2006 and *Untitled Grey*, 2008, PHOTO: M. STĘPIEŃ

“ [...] **Lasse Schmidt Hansen's** works deconstruct norms and prescriptions and the way they determine perception and behaviour. If it seems counter-intuitive to bring up the notion of will in connection to the way his works re-connect to a Conceptualist play with paradigms, it is an attempt to talk about an intuition for the paradoxical with which his works place themselves in the world with an investigative scepticism to the way things are identified, ordered and categorised. The various kinds of sameness in his work (seriality and automatism in the work's structure, anonymity and discreteness in its appearance), makes it safe to say that this is art that refuses to be Things. However, every repeated action in **Schmidt Hansen's** work is informed by a desire to further explore the organisation of things, by driving wedges in between the will that has organised them, and its

representation. His works can be like trapdoors that threaten to swallow us up because the centre and the solid ground of logic no longer hold – if it weren't for the fact that at the same time they pull us headlong into space because they open up infinite lines of flight.

[...] **Schmidt Hansen** escapes the dichotomy of materiality versus non-materiality that is often constructed in Conceptualist and post-Conceptualist practices and their reception. Only for a conventional and de-contextualised consideration will a Conceptual work be something 'less'; firstly seeing how this idea in a self-contradictory way departs from objecthood, and secondly because objecthood in a spectacular culture is already something infinitely relative.

Even as the spatial aspect of his works is pronounced it is of a different sort than, say, those of a **Michael Asher**, with



Lasse Schmidt Hansen,  
*Untitled*, 2005,  
PHOTO: M. STĘPIEŃ



whom **Schmidt Hansen** shares a rigour and economy of mundane materials found in familiar and institutional spaces; but he employs this familiarity to produce agitation rather than transparency. ‘Agitation’ would be the literal translation of the Danish title of his 2006 work *Uro*, consisting of a number of plastic strips from a blind of the sort where the strips move in coordination when pulled by a string. **Schmidt Hansen** has taken the strips from their frame and hung them vertically so they hover just above the gallery floor, where they are invisibly suspended by strings and rotate as free individuals. The art historically correct title of this type of work would have been ‘mobile’, in reference to a category of kinetic sculpture. That the artist has instead chosen to call it ‘agitation’ denotes the undoing or re-organisation of several categories into a new, kinaesthetic state that can be set in motion by the smallest gust of wind.

If **Schmidt Hansen**’s works delight in revealing absences in the midst of spectacular culture, they are also often full to the brim. Accumulation takes on special significance as a characteristic of materiality versus identification. An accumulation describes an undifferentiated mass or quantum of a single category that typically tends towards entropy and non-meaning. The four colour photographs of *Piled Up Stuff Photographed From the Front, Back, Right and Left But Not Necessarily in That Order* (2007) could be a depiction of very important documents or completely redundant printed matter. It is the belated and obviously failed attempt at a categorical approach to a bunch of ‘piled up stuff’ that has reduced accumulated singularities to pure material, and hence has become a pure exterior.

As things pile up, they invariably fall outside of use, place and order, or they even become threatening when they reach critical mass. Piling up is meaningless: only for a religious mind could ethical value accrue; and also human beings tend to become less significant the more there are of them (as in the proverbially faceless crowd and the statistical erasure of

subjectivity). The city must be thought of as infrastructure, movement and events rather than mass, otherwise it is sheer alienation. One could read *Piled up Stuff...* as a critique of commercialism, in that the only single category that gets more meaningful the more uncontrollably it grows, is money – no matter which way you turn it. Thereby it increases its facility for exchanging, circulating and consuming other things. With four photographs, exchangeable between each other, *Piled Up Stuff* is the Conceptualist’s resistance to capital’s irrational laws of commercial flows.

**Lasse Schmidt Hansen**’s works aren’t prone to schopenhauerian pessimism. On the contrary, they re-focus our attention. By permitting and performing breakdowns in preconceived orders they demonstrate that there is a possibility of subjective perception to detect error. This doesn’t imply any purity of perception (as he often shows us, the human isn’t a machine even on the best of days) and it is only the beginning of the story, because after we have detected the error we are faced with the challenge to live with the difference thus produced. This is when experience can begin anew, in zones of indetermination where art produces its own truths.” ✖

— EXCERPT FROM LARS BANG LARSEN, ‘INDISCRETIONS OF A BUREAUCRATIC GALACTICO. WILL AND FORMS OF ORGANISATION IN LASSE SCHMIDT HANSEN’S WORK’, PUBLISHED IN *WORKING TITLE: ARCHIVE #2*

## Mise-en-scène of gender politics

– a conversation between **Marysia Lewandowska & Ewa Małgorzata Tatar**

**EWA MAŁGORZATA TATAR:** To start with I would like to ask you about the origins of the *Tender Museum* project that took place in *Muzeum Sztuki* in Łódź (26.02–03.05.2009). The earlier projects you realised with **Neil Cummings** (such as *Capital*, Tate Modern, London 2001) operated within a context of institutional critique – the dismantling and analysis of power structures and the processes of generating and redistributing symbolic capital. The *Enthusiasts* exhibition (CCA Ujazdowski Castle, Warsaw 2004) expanded this context to a political one, which by way of questioning the social production of leisure time in late capitalism triggered an analysis of the most private and intimate areas of life. I touch upon this as I see the *Enthusiasts* project both formally and textually as closest to the *Tender Museum*, which has embraced an even more intimate dimension.

**MARYSIA LEWANDOWSKA:** Ewa, when you ask about subjectivities and their relationship to the institution, in this case *Muzeum Sztuki* (MS), I began by thinking how the museum was established and how much of its origins are still present in the encounter we might have with it today.

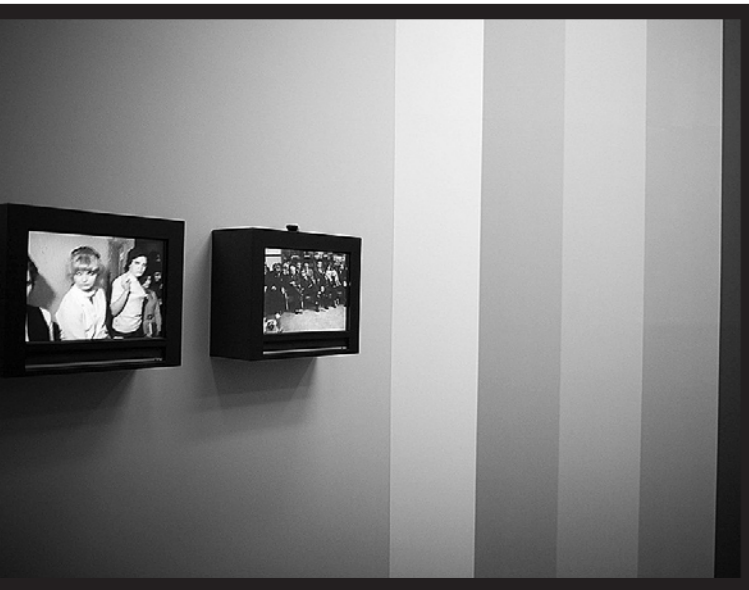
This particular institution has strong foundations in the realm of artists’ friendships and their gifts. For me this suggests an already distinct beginning related to and affecting the mechanisms of dissemination. Establishing an art collection at MS was made through a gift to the citizens of Łódź. Such a generous act and a culturally significant gesture still prevail in the museum today and needs to be distributed as part of an accumulated cultural capital. The values embedded in the collection are ensured only by maintaining their cultural relevance through public engagement. The work of the original founders – members of the ‘a.r.’ group including **Henryk Stażewski**, **Katarzyna Kobro** and **Władysław Strzemiński** among others – has been continued in the context of new

institutional and political demands of the post-war era. In the case of MS we also encounter a somewhat unusual situation, an institutional exception, where the *Poznański* Palace on *Więckowskiego* St. for most of its post WWII period housed both the public museum and the home of its director **Ryszard Stanisławski**, his wife **Urszula Czartoryska** and their daughter **Olga**.

This situation inspired me to look more closely at the impact of privacy in its public manifestations. It seemed important to examine how the private lives marked by friendships with artists, curators and writers, professional and family trips, gardening in the courtyard of the museum, parties and scenes of domesticity, and all that social backdrop, contributed to the public sphere, through donations, special exhibitions, lectures, loans, and the famous *Sundays in the Museum*. This ongoing informal dialogue between the two spheres is often rendered invisible in the staging of exhibition displays but appears to have determined how the museum functioned during the twenty-five years of **Stanisławski**’s directorship. The writing of history seen through subjectivities and marginalisation, is a theme that has been most fully developed in the *Enthusiasts*<sup>01</sup> project. With it our main concern was to investigate how it was possible for a whole class of creative people and their production to disappear from culture with the introduction of political changes in 1989. Our work as artists resided in establishing a platform, the exhibition, and an online archive, by re-introducing the values of amateur production under communism to new audiences.

**E.M.T.:** But how do you engage in an institutional critique

<sup>01</sup> *Enthusiasts from Amateur Film Clubs*. Marysia Lewandowska & Neil Cummings, CCA Ujazdowski Castle, Warsaw, 26.06–29.08.2004, Łukasz Ronduda, ed. SEE: [www.enthusiastsarchive.net](http://www.enthusiastsarchive.net)



▲ ALL IMAGES: Marysia Lewandowska, *Tender Museum*, 2009, PHOTOS: M. STĘPIEŃ

while employing the perspective or context of a marginalised individual?

**M.L.:** The *Tender Museum* project proposes a different critical and discursive space, where questions of gender, care, and attention are articulated by re-positioning the voice of one individual, that of curator and critic **Urszula Czartoryska**. If there was something missing in my perception of how the museum discloses and discusses its own history, it was the role of women as public intellectuals. My line of enquiry was to speculate on the relationship between the distinct spheres of the private and public, testing their boundaries and finding the gaps. I detected a connection between the marginalisation of women and representations of public life, in the way that **Hannah Arendt** writes so eloquently about: “The emergence of society – the rise of housekeeping, its activities, problems, and organizational devices – from the shadowy interior of the household into the light of the public sphere, has not only blurred the old border line between private and political, it has also changed almost beyond recognition the meaning of the two terms and their significance for the life of the individual and the citizen.”<sup>02</sup> The Latin origin of the word privacy indicates the state of being deprived of something. So it is all the more important to perhaps link privacy and marginalisation, to trace exclusions from public participation inherent in the organisational forms of public institutions. I was attempting to interrogate a space where certain contributions remained unacknowledged, as there were no structures, or systems through which they could enter public consciousness. The writing of histories relies on connecting different intensities and in tracing omissions. And if one of the roles of a contemporary art museum is to activate different communities of discourse, we need to create structures and to insist on the inclusion of women as well as other under-represented groups.

**E.M.T.:** Could you give some details of the professional and private relationship between **Ryszard Stanisławski** and **Urszula Czartoryska**, two significant figures associated with the post-war history of **Muzeum Sztuki**?

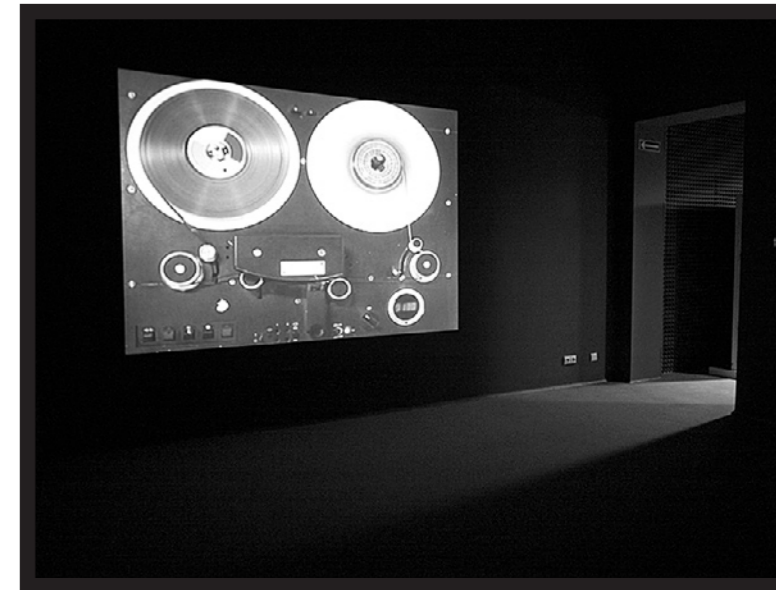
**M.L.:** I was more interested in **Stanisławski** and

**02** Hannah Arendt, *The Public and the Private Realm*, in Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition*, New York 1959, p. 35.

**Czartoryska** as a professional couple, looking more closely at how their partnership in life and work shaped a public institution. Since I had access to their private archive of personal photographs, I was struck by how disparate events such as family holidays, dinners with friends, birthday parties and professional trips formed a coherent whole. And yet it was not just a picture of a life style. Their engagement in the cultural life of the ‘West’ during their twenty-five years at **MS**, was marked by a busy travel itinerary to seminal events in the art world calendar: *Documenta*, the Venice and Sao Paulo Biennials, combined with, for example, pictures taken during vacations in rural Poland. The photographs included in my project don’t necessarily attempt to unveil biographical aspects but are functioning as an extended enquiry into the politics of representation. Their status cannot be properly assessed in any social or cultural terms unless they are exposed to public scrutiny. By placing the sequence of images inside the museum I would like to encourage reflection on **Stanisławski**’s and **Czartoryska**’s intellectual origins and place their personal bond as a significant factor contributing to the experience of **Muzeum Sztuki** in its public role.

**E.M.T.:** The form of your installation in **MS** is very precisely constructed, as if calculated with the viewer’s potential movement in mind, perhaps predetermining one’s reception and emotive reading.

**M.L.:** On many previous occasions I have referred to the processes of exhibition practice, which I perceive as an integral part of the work of art, especially pertinent to museum discourse and the language of display. The organisation of any given space, physical as well as cultural, encourages exploration, not only of the spatial conditions but also the embedded histories. The **Poznański Palace** has been the location of **Muzeum Sztuki** since 1948 and presents us with an architecturally and socially hybrid space, a combination of domestic functions and the representational. A suite of rooms whose original features have partly been obliterated to accommodate museum galleries, with their temporary walls and screened off windows, still impose a strong sense of interior identity. With the assistance of London based architect **Roman Hałat**, I proposed to treat the succession of galleries as a series of interconnected cells or nodes, which visitors could inhabit for different periods of time. By following



▲ ALL IMAGES: Marysia Lewandowska, *Tender Museum*, 2009, PHOTOS: M. STĘPIEŃ

International Women's Day at  
the Muzeum Sztuki,  
8 March 1980,  
COURTESY OF OLGA STANISŁAWSKA



the sequence, a visitor is encouraged to move quickly through some of the rooms and to consider staying longer in others where seating is provided to create a more intimate environment. One of the most important elements in the process of structuring the reception of archival materials included in the project, which are all without exception audio visual, were the decisions about audience engagement. While visiting any museum we are part of a social body, as individuals in our singularity but also as

visitors belonging to a community. For most of the inhabitants of Łódź, MS is a very familiar destination, so my intention was to incorporate some of that familiarity and yet to disrupt the habits of museum behaviour. Each room was treated differently, and referenced other kinds of spaces. The colour control bars belonging to the experience of television filled the first room simulating being inside the 'box' while watching a behind the scenes 1976 broadcast from MS itself. The self-referential and self-reflexive elements of experiencing the well-rehearsed route immediately alerted the visitor to a different set of possible narratives when entering. Central to the experience of the project as a whole was loosely staging the interior of a radio-recording studio, where the visitor was implicated in the act of listening. The soft, foam-lined cell of a sound-proofed room lit by a warm source of light, with two armchairs facing each other, provided conditions for a particular kind of attention. *A Recovered Conversation 2009–1991*, now one of the new

purchases for the Muzeum's collection, is a constructed conversation with **Urszula Czartoryska**, taking excerpts from her *Radio Łódź* interview recorded in 1991 and adding my own recording in 2009. By editing myself into the script I am performing the gesture of re-vision, shifting emphasis from simply presenting the archival sources, to intervening into the their potential meaning. As **Czartoryska's** original interview interrogates the relationship between artist and critic, artist and museum, I am re-connecting those themes from within the project itself.

**E.M.T.:** A crucial aspect in your work is an engagement with the archive. In this instance, we have been looking at the conflation between private and institutional archives. What do you see as their specificities? What did they unearth for you? Were there surprises? What were your initial expectations and how did they change? Along what kind of trajectory did your ideas



◀ Olga Stanisławska in the front  
of Marysia Lewandowska's  
*Tender Museum*, 2009,  
PHOTO: M. STĘPIEŃ

on its representation by the media, and understanding what kind of images were constructed for a wider public. Following my current interests in the dissemination of culture, and questions of intellectual property, my focus fell on audio recordings, films, broadcasts and photographs. And it is within the context of this wider research that I was introduced to the family archive, which **Olga Stanisławska** donated to Muzeum Sztuki. The collection of photographs formed an archive of her late mother, the curator

and critic, **Urszula Czartoryska** and was not previously incorporated into any public institution. The archives of her late father **Ryszard Stanisławski** were deposited many years earlier at the **Institute of Art at the Polish Academy of Sciences** in Warsaw. This is an example of how their contributions were valued differently and therefore what place they, as individuals, occupy in the historical accounts of the **Muzeum**. The ideas around tenderness and affect emerged in two ways. There was a clear indication of how important it was for **Stanisławski** to run the museum as a caring organisation, both in his relations with staff and in his strong commitment to educational and audience focused projects. The most extensive and inspiring were the annual gatherings known as *Sundays in the Museum*. Bringing together different types of activities, from brass bands, fashion shows, artists' talks, vegetable stalls, their ludic nature didn't feel like a token populist gesture, it genuinely promoted social exchanges using the museum as an engine and inspiration. It was also worth considering

move before they materialised as an exhibition? At what stage did your enquiry into the archive pave the way towards conceptualising the *Tender Museum* project?

**M.L.:** It is important to remember that I was invited to participate in what was a larger project called *Working Title: Archive*. My research and working methods were very much encouraged by the curator of the project, **Magdalena Ziółkowska**. We spent many hours together watching film material and listening to recordings without having a very clear plan. The project grew in its ambition through the spirit of openness and mutual support, from conversations, and in the editing process. I spent eighteen months researching publicly available archives, beginning with **Muzeum Sztuki** itself, as well as **Television and Radio**, the **Film School and Educational Film Production** company archives, all based in Łódź.

In all of those collections I tried to identify materials directly related to the **Muzeum**. This enquiry was centred

the presence of family life spilling over to the museum. Scenes of untroubled domesticity mixed with more official functions populate many of the archival photographs. As you know, in Latin, the root of the word curator is *curare*, a person taking care or the guardian. I had an overwhelming impression that the success of Muzeum Sztuki in its public mandate was closely connected to the economies of affect, often marginalised or excluded from procedures endorsing the existing systems of representation.

**E.M.T.:** How did the museum respond to your proposal – what kind of emotions were triggered by your subtle questioning of the myth surrounding Ryszard Stanisławski?

**M.L.:** The process of de-mythologising the figure of Ryszard Stanisławski was not part of my original intention. I was trying to connect the lesser known acts of generosity performed by him and Czartoryska, and present them as indicative of a set of omissions inherent in the self-image of Muzeum Sztuki. It was during his directorship that the position of this iconic cultural institution was secured. Was that due just to his artistic decisions and political alliances or did his ethical conduct play an important role? In this instance it is worth problematising histories of individual achievements by opening up questions of gender, internal politics, and by challenging the separation of private and public interests.



▲ Marysia Lewandowska, *Tender Museum*, 2009, POSTCARD DESIGN: GRZEGORZ LASZUK

**E.M.T.:** This last question is particularly important – on the one hand the project's title alludes to a certain sensitivity and thus catalyses the question of affect, and on the other by means of an aesthetic subtlety it drafts a precise history of Muzeum Sztuki in Łódź, while interrogating the questions of power. I refer to this, as I'm interested in the conflation between sensitivity and decisiveness, which in terms of your practice I have considered as 'feminist curating'. How then to maintain a position that at once reconstructs an existing order and yet also proposes new solutions? Not oppressive ones, but rather solutions that rework affect – the author's emotions, as well as those of the institution and viewer.

**M.L.:** This is a question of how hierarchies and power relationships are mediated. Mediation and negotiation are at the centre of this project; both are addressing the agency of the artist inside an institutional structure. How does the museum empower an artist, and how does the artist negotiate a space for herself in the existing narratives of the museum and its history? Additionally, how does reversing the roles of artist and curator contribute to reading the mechanisms of power? By re-inserting the voice of Urszula Czartoryska, I authorised the presence of a person, whose contributions, at least as far as I could see, found no proper representation. Constructing a dialogue between myself and the historically marginalised

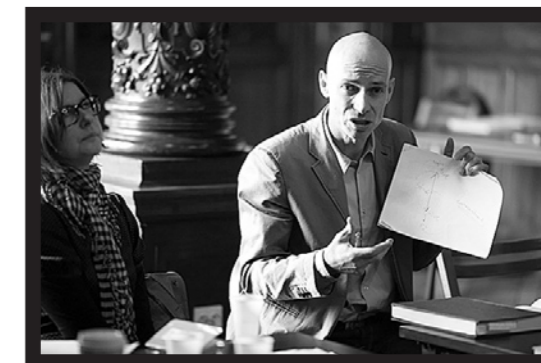
figure of the female curator led to a 'fictional' encounter and provided me with an important generational link. Acting as an artist I felt no obligation to reproduce an existing system of power relations, so I decided to complicate the reading by introducing affect, as a more contentious site in the construction of institutional history. The museum can be seen as a contemporary 'social factory', with the archive as its silent engine. But like all factories it is a place where production, dissemination and reception must be equally addressed.

From the perspective of the twelve months since the opening of the project, I wonder if by creating a *mise-en-scène* of gender politics with its alternative narrative, a rupture in the visitor's habitual experience has been achieved. ✖

LONDON-KRAKÓW, JUNE 2010



◀ The lecture room at the Muzeum Sztuki, Więckowskiego Street 36



▲ Marysia Lewandowska and Shepherd Steiner

✚ 22-25.04.2009 ★ Muzeum Sztuki, Łódź  
**Working Title: Archive – workshop**

The workshop aimed at fostering critical reflection on the potential of an institutional archive that came to occupy a key position in contemporary artistic and curatorial practices. The archive collection of Muzeum Sztuki, including documents, audio recordings, and photographs, provided a point of departure for invited guests (artists, curators, art historians) to analyse archive theory in a broad context, in relation to research in the field of history, sociology, and the history of ideas, as well as document-gathering practices. The workshop included the following sessions:



- ★ David Dibosa, *Giving Voice*
- ★ Lia Perjovschi, *Art (Between Design Your Self and Funky Business)*
- ★ Marysia Lewandowska & Lisa Le Feuvre, *Future Conversation*
- ★ Marysia Lewandowska & Antony Hudek, *The Lover's Voice*
- ★ Shepherd Steiner, *Working Title: Archive – S(h)elf-Help*
- ★ What, How & for Whom? (Sabina Sabolović, Nataša Ilić) & Chto Delat? (Dmitry Vilensky, Alexandr Skidan), *Between a Rock and a Hard Place*
- ★ What, How & for Whom? (Sabina Sabolović, Nataša Ilić) & Prelom kolektiv (Jelena Vesić, Dušan Grlja), *Political Practices of [Post-] Yugoslav Art* ✖

◀ Workshop participants Łukasz Biskupski, Przemysław Sanecki and Marta Gendera, ALL PHOTOS: M. STĘPIEŃ

20.05-13.06.2009 ★ Labor, Budapest

### Parallel Chronologies – documentary and research exhibition

CURATED BY Dóra Hegyi & Zsuzsa László ★ kuda.org (Novi Sad) ★ Prelom kolektiv (Belgrade)

The Invisible History of Exhibitions project organised by tranzit.hu in Budapest included a documentary and research exhibition, *Parallel Chronologies*, and a symposium. It looked at the history and current interpretations of the exhibition, as the dominant format of contemporary art production and presentation. 'History' in this context is interpreted as constructed narratives based on events that constitute shifts in the notions of art (art history) and the modes of its presentation (exhibition history).

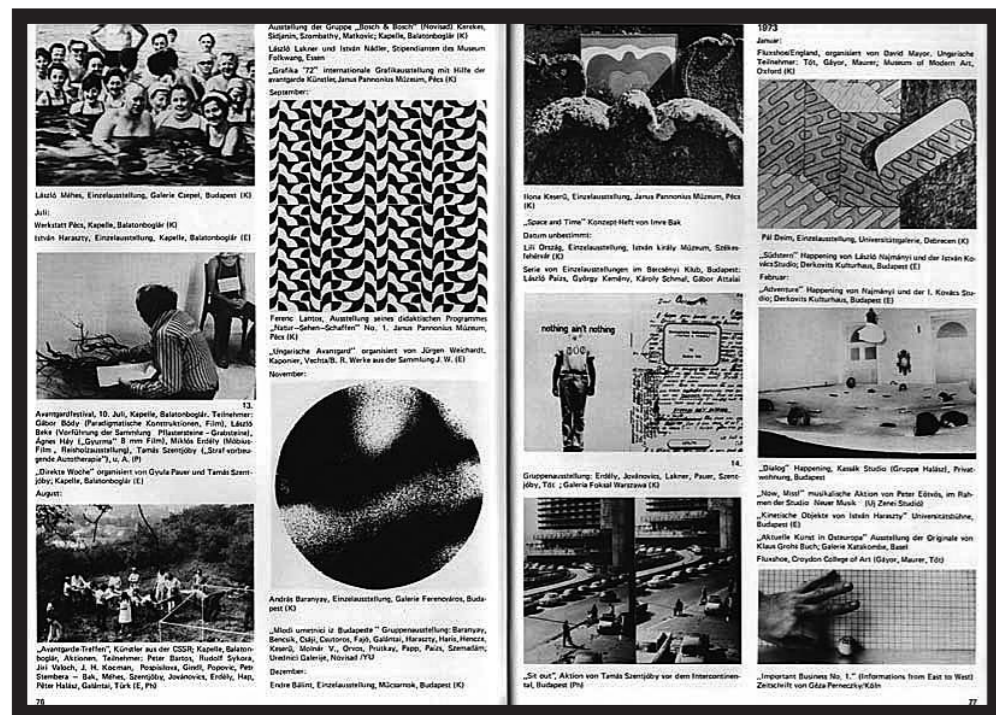
In Eastern Europe, progressive art events could only happen in 'second publicity', so they are deeply embedded in the historical conditions of the public sphere. While in Western countries mainstream art institutions hosted curatorial group exhibitions that constitute landmarks in the history

of exhibitions, in Eastern Europe paradigmatic events often happened in private flats and off-site spaces outside of official art institutions. Consequently, a different methodology must be introduced to enable the inclusion of Eastern European events in the international discourse on exhibition theory.

*Parallel Chronologies* investigated the exhibition as a cultural phenomenon and genre in its own right, focusing on the period determined by different versions of state socialisms in Eastern Europe. The intention of the project was to break with the usual ways that international and local exhibitions and publications ignore or exoticise this field. To this end we presented a network of professional relationships, exhibitions, events, and art spaces, rather than the usual static display of artworks from the period.

As a starting point the research addressed the genre of chronology, an important channel for mediating art events of a particular epoch. Chronologies play a defining role in transforming small events into histories and canons, especially in the case of Eastern European art events, that often happened in the 'second publicity' during the 1960s and 1970s.

For this reason we collected and compared chronologies of the period, composed either synchronically or retrospectively. Selecting events and related documentation we looked at why some projects gain significance as soon as they happen, making them the starting points for anecdotes and legends, while others are quickly



▲ Pages from the chronology published in the exhibition catalogue *Künstler aus Ungarn*, 1980, Wilhelmshaven, compiled by Dóra Mauer, 1972-73



▲ The Continuous Art Class – Novi Sad  
Neo-Avant-garde of the 1960s-1970s,  
CURATED BY kuda.org

forgotten or can only be interpreted and their significance understood when viewed from a later perspective.

In the framework of the exhibition, two archives dealing with neo-avant-garde art from the region, from Belgrade and Novi Sad were presented. *Prelom kolektiv* has studied several significant events at SKC, the *Student Cultural Centre* in Belgrade in the 1970s, and *kuda.org* media centre has collected the most important documents of the neo-avant-garde in Novi Sad.

As well as these documents from the 1960s and 1970s, progressive art events in Hungary were shown. The exhibition documentation from Hungary was structured around research that asked a number of Hungarian art professionals which art events from this period were most significant in relation to their own practice. ✖



▲ EXHIBITION VIEW: *Parallel Chronologies*

“In the framework of the collaboration with the *Invisible History of Exhibitions*, we are organising an archive exhibition in Labor in May 2009, which endeavours to place the events of the Hungarian art scene of the 1960s and 1970s into an international context. Alongside Hungarian archival documents, works, and publications, we also present two similar projects from Belgrade and Serbia.

Within the Hungarian art scene of the 1960s and 1970s, the majority of progressive events took place in the grey zone of non-official exhibition spaces, which is why their international visibility and availability for research has remained fragmentary and difficult to convey. Numerous chronologies of the era, built upon each other, have been produced: from the *Magyar Műhely's* (Hungarian Atelier) annual art almanac, through the list of events compiled by *Dóra Maurer* and *László Beke* in 1980, and up to the chronologies of the *Artpool Research Centre* and *C3 Foundation*. In addition to chronologies, many have treated the era in map and collection/museum formats, such as *NETRAF* with his *Portable Intelligence Increase Museum*, *Little Warsaw's Only Artist* project, or internationally *Irwin's East Art Map*.

Instead of aiming at an objective history gained from the synthesis or reconciliation of differing individual points of view we would like to trace the idiosyncratic pattern of difference and accordance, the map of blind-spots and legends. It is to this end that we ask your help. Name ten events or exhibitions of key importance to you from the Hungarian art scene of the 1960s and 1970s! You may also explain your responses.

Thank you for your contribution,  
Dóra Hegyi and Zsuzsa László” ✖

— INVITATION TO CONTRIBUTE TO PARALLEL CHRONOLOGIES, SENT TO 60 ARTISTS, CURATORS, ART- AND CULTURAL HISTORIANS, FEBRUARY 2009. APPROXIMATELY 40 REPLIES WERE RECEIVED IN RETURN.

## Case Studies (selection)\*

We were interested to find out what public roles and exhibition opportunities the era's political and social climate provided, what connections it had with international trends, and how events defined the relation between art and the public. To this end, we put in parallel the activity of the various generations, as well as events that were held at official (public), professional, and ad hoc exhibition venues, such as culture houses or clubs, or those that didn't go beyond the planning stage, or were banned. Through the selection we were considering events, which in one way or another shaped or renewed the exhibition genre, reinterpreting the exhibition space in relation to the art object or through the nature of a show. As we were also looking for an answer to the questions of how an exhibition becomes an event and what can happen at an exhibition, we endeavoured to explore the connections between shows that included a static presentation of art work and various actionist and performative practices. ✖

In Hungary between the 1950s and the 1980s, all public exhibitions had to have permission from the relevant authorities – on the basis of a precise list of artworks – and were fully financed by state institutions. Those tendencies that were not approved had to find alternative sites, ways of presentation and self-management. Many important events, especially in the first half of the 1960s, took place in private flats and similar venues.

Most Hungarian and international chronologies that deal with neo-avant-garde art in Hungary refer to the first Hungarian happening, *The Lunch (in memoriam Batu Khan)*, as a point of departure. The event was organised in 1966 at a private cellar by two poets – **Tamás Szentjóby** and **Gábor Altorjay** – who were in their early twenties.

About 150 invitation cards were distributed; photo and film documentation was arranged, and journalists were also invited. The happening was very radical, pushing the limits of the participants' and audience's physical and mental tolerance. Although only about thirty viewers were present, this event redefined how art was produced and presented in the following years. The secret police filed a report on it, the concept of the 'happening', as a dangerous and insane manifestation of disorder coming from the imperialist West emerged in the regular press; even in the columns of humour magazines, recollections of the happening often contradicted each other without any objective reference point. Public evaluation of the genre was banned. ✖

### SUMMARISING REPORT AND ACTION PLAN

On 25 June 1966, the first Hungarian happening took place in Budapest.

The English word *happening* indicates some kind of event. The movement developed in the 1920s and 1930s and can be traced back to the Futurist and Dadaist initiatives. (...)

The concept of the happening was brought to Hungary from Europe by **László Moholy** (an architect of Hungarian origin) (...)

A happening, as regards its philosophical aspect, is a declaration of nihilism, darkness, irrationalism and the denial of healthy human activity. (...)

[The description of the *Lunch* by an agent of the secret police present at the event follows here.]

(...) **Action Plan**

Based on the above, it can be stated that the spreading of the happening phenomenon is harmful to the intellectual and political development of youth. Furthermore, it is an occurrence that goes against progress, and facilitates the decentralising politics of imperialist circles.

- In order to decrease its harmful effects on today's youth, the spreading of happenings must be prevented.
- The key organising figures of Hungarian happenings, as well as their possible foreign contacts, must be placed under surveillance.
- By way of open administrative and operative means the main circles of the organisers must be broken up.
- Public appearances by the organisers of happenings must be prevented. It must be made impossible for them to use public forums for spreading and popularising the happening phenomenon (...)

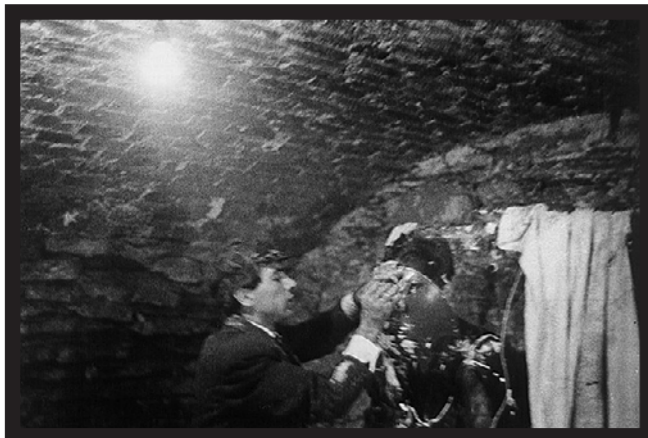
— SOURCE: NR. V-156455 FILE ("SCHWITTERS") P. 103-113.  
ORIGINAL DOCUMENT HELD AT THE HISTORICAL OFFICE]  
[HTTP://WWW.C3.HU/COLLECTION/TILOS/DOCS.HTML](http://www.c3.hu/collection/tiLOS/DOCS.HTML)



▶  
*The Lunch*  
(in memoriam  
Batu Khan),  
1966,  
PHOTOS: GYULA  
ZARÁND



\* excerpts from the exhibition guide by Dóra Hegyi and Zsuzsa László



“How did you encounter the genre of the happening, what did you find interesting/inspiring in it at that time in 1966?”

While I was already fed up with the ridiculous psychoanalytic kitsch of Abstract Expressionism in the mid-1960s, I also had unsolvable, general semantic problems with poetry. In 1965 I suddenly made – as a spontaneous break with my conventional mentality – recipes of some objects (intermedial per se) – that qualified as ‘pop’ and ‘conceptual things’. I planned to show them publicly, but the internal and external situation was not yet ready. I wrote – still using the earlier, ‘metaphysical’ approach – my ‘last poem’ in January 1966, and was waiting paralysed for many weeks for new inspiration.

(...)

At that sparkingly fresh moment of enlightenment an awkward and despising article was published in the May 1966 issue of the periodical *Film, Theatre, Music* mentioning some happenings in the US and Western Europe. Despite the author’s negativity, the extreme importance of the happening as such was apparent. I came across the idea, and the names of **Allan Kaprow** and **Joseph Beuys**, for the first time in this article. The recipes of the objects I made some months earlier were substantiated.

(...)

It is difficult to find something more basic, more earthly, more physical than eating and unloading – so we did that. It is difficult to find something more evident, more accurate, more contemporary than a cellar at a time of underground ideas and practices. It is difficult to find a better sub-title than the reference to the supposed builder of the cellar. It is difficult to find something man-made not suitable for its destruction. It is difficult to find matter that is not for colliding, fusing, smashing and transilluminating it by the Will.” ✖

— EXCERPT FROM AN INTERVIEW BETWEEN DÓRA HEGYI, ZSUZSA LÁSZLÓ & TAMÁS ST.AUBY CONDUCTED FOR GALLERY NOVA NEWSPAPERS № 19/20, JULY 2009



◀ ▲ The Lunch (in memoriam Batu Khan), 1966, PHOTOS: GYULA ZARÁND

In the increasingly liberal 1960s, alongside, but initially independent from the emergence of actionist practices, new possibilities appeared in the making of exhibitions. The idea (initiated by **György Aczél**, Minister of Culture) emerged that exhibitions, which for ideological reasons were not supported through the cultural policy, should still be provided with a venue. This exhibition space was the *Fényes Adolf Hall*, where artists that represented different trends exhibited their work on the understanding that they had to finance their own projects.

The first shows that used the entire exhibition space to present projects and environments rather than displaying individual art objects also had to find venues outside the state-controlled exhibition

institutions. Aside from the *Fényes Adolf Hall*, designated for the display of 'tolerated' art, such works could only be exhibited in remote cultural centres and exhibition spaces outside the capital.

The painter **István Nádler** and the sculptor **György Jovánovics** had a joint exhibition at this venue in 1970. **Jovánovics's**'

work was a plaster cast that reproduced the ground plan of the exhibition space using the surface imprint of a table covered with cloth. His starting point in making this work was that the exhibition space did not contain any right angles, and had nothing to do with a white cube exhibition space. Reflecting on the limited publicity for this venue, the exhibition opened with a fictional radio programme that reported on this event among the most important international news of the day. ✖



▲ Opening performance of the exhibition at *Fényes Adolf Hall*, 1970, COURTESY OF GÖRGY JOVÁNOVICS



▲ György Jovánovics plaster cast sculpture showing the ground plan of the exhibition space, COURTESY OF GÖRGY JOVÁNOVICS



▲ Works by István Nádler and György Jovánovics, COURTESY OF GÖRGY JOVÁNOVICS

“It's 7 PM  
*Evening Chronicle*  
Good evening!

From the reports of news agencies:

The Hungarian delegation led by **Jenő Fok** has arrived home from a session of the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance in Warsaw.

**Gromiko**, Soviet Minister of Foreign Affairs continued preliminary talks with **Egon Bahr**, Secretary of the Prime Minister's Office of West Germany, about a pact that would cease the use of force on the part of both countries.

The communist parties of Western Europe held a conference on the situation in Indochina.

Nixon's cabinet members, in a separate meeting, requested the support of the senators of the president's party in reference to the Cambodian offensive. Senator Goodell, who was also present at the meeting, stated that only one participant of the discussion agreed with the Cambodian intervention. The other participants unanimously refused the request for mediation and expressed their disapproval of the offensive.

Two more protesting students were shot in the United States. Last night in Jacksonville, the police attacked students protesting against the Cambodian offensive. They opened fire on a dormitory building because its residents allegedly threw bottles and stones at the police who were beating protesting students in the street. Two students died, 11 have been injured.

Libya has acknowledged Cambodia's National Government. A number of incidents have been reported from the frontlines of the Near East. Palestinian fighters launched a successful missile attack against a semi-military settlement in Israel. Egyptian and Syrian artillery units were also firing at Israeli positions. Israel's artillery launched attacks against two Jordanian villages.

At the *Fényes Adolf Hall*, the exhibition of painter **István Nádler** and sculptor **György Jovánovics** is just opening. **István Nádler** is showing four older and eight recent works, as well as silkscreen graphics. Through the entrance, the graphic works are displayed on the left. The first canvas painting of 200 x 120 cm is entitled *Movement*. The three paintings of identical size (120 x 120 cm) along the longer wall use forms that can be formulated within a square. After the window, a 120 x 200 cm horizontally oriented painting is entitled *Lowlands*. The main wall features a 4-piece series with two recurring motifs in an AB-BA rhythm, 180 x 130 cm in size, using a casein tempera technique. The larger painting behind the radio, *Homage a Vajda*, was painted by the young artist in honour of **Lajos Vajda**. The smaller work is 100 x 120 cm. Finally, to the right of the entrance we see a 200 x 150 cm painting from 1968. It is a re-articulation of the flower motif known from folk art.

**György Jovánovics** has only put a single artwork on display. What you see in front of you, surrounded by the audience, is identical in its layout to that of the interior, irregular space of the *Fényes Adolf Hall*. Every one of its angles and sides follows the walls with precision. Its height is 90 cm. Its greatest length is 6 m, and its width is 3 m. The total outer circumference of the small and large parts together is 16 m. It is made of slightly pink plaster, which gradually loses its colour over time, until it finally turns completely white. Perhaps it is difficult to see at the moment, but if you look at the top piece that is closest to us, located on the side of the larger piece of the sculpture that is parallel to the smaller, separate piece, you will see a slight difference in colour compared to the other parts. If you touch it, you will feel that the plaster is still wet there. This piece was only cast by the artist yesterday.

And now, as soon as **János Frank** turns the radio off, please consider the exhibition open.

We, on the other hand, will continue our *Evening Chronicle*.

**János**, please turn it off then.

And now: reports from our correspondents.

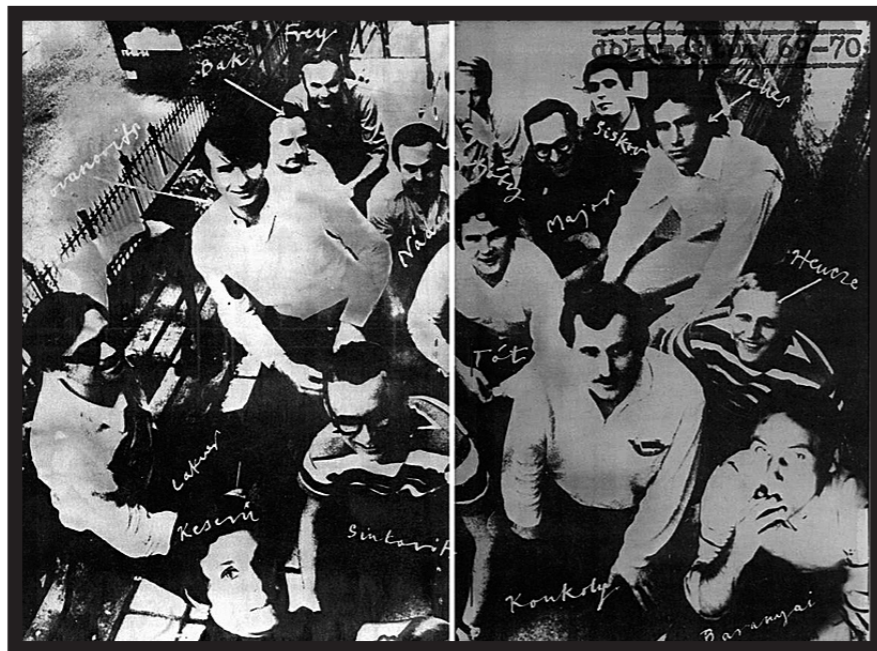
**István Zoltán Vass** reports from Szeged.” ✖

— AUDIO CASSETTE TRANSCRIBED FROM TAPE, SOURCE: ARTPOOL

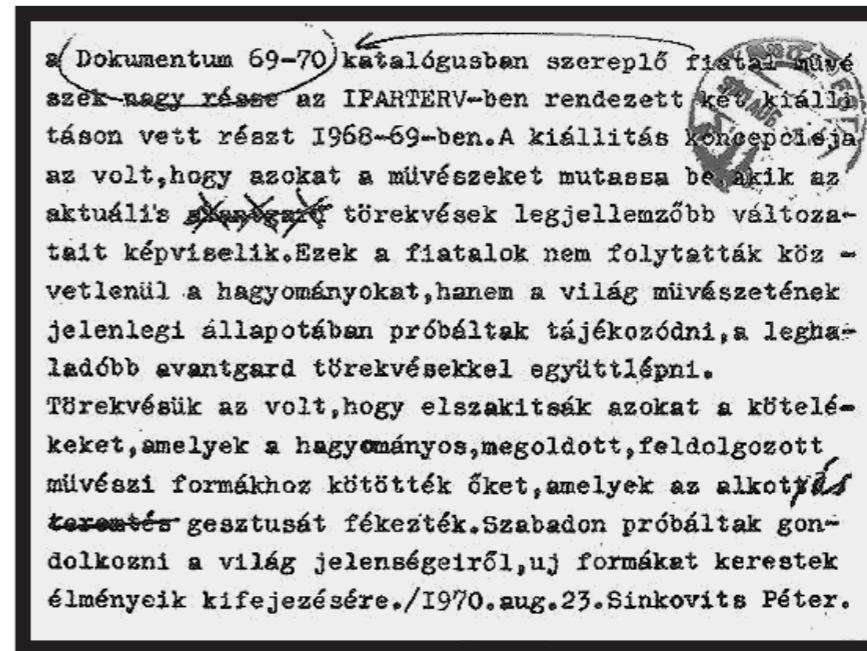
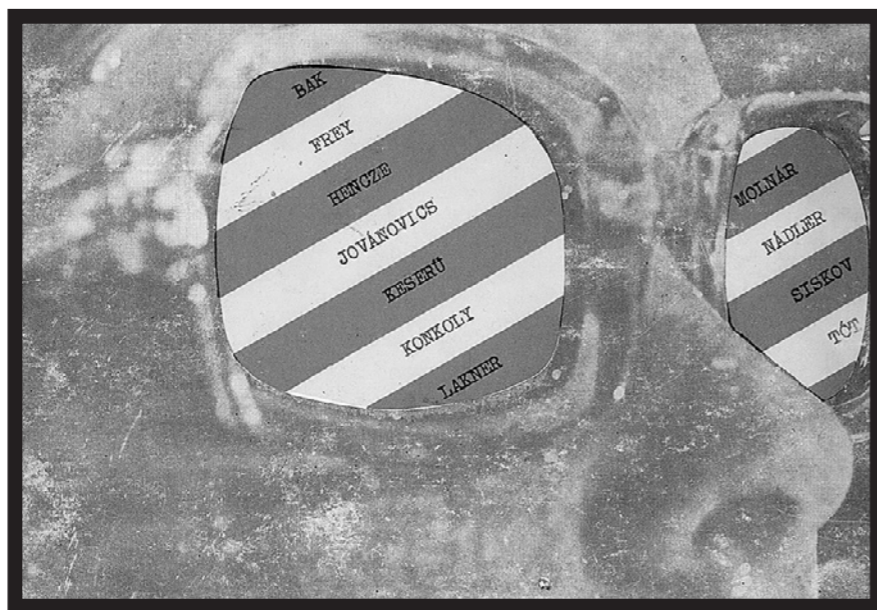


The so-called 'Iparterv-exhibitions' from 1968-1980 have a particular significance in the history of exhibitions in Hungary in the sense that they provided a common platform and professional 'management' for a new generation of artists engaged in various progressive tendencies, from abstract and informal painting and sculpture, through pop art to actionist practices. The group exhibitions were initiated by the artists themselves who asked a young art historian to organise them. He also made references to the 1968 *Documenta* exhibition presenting the new artistic manifestations in the context of international trends. The first exhibition, which only lasted a few days, took place in December 1968 at the main hall of the *Iparterv State Architectural Office*. For this event an invitation, poster, and small catalogue were printed. For the next show in 1969, they produced a publication with the title *Document*, which was published illegally. This publication was used in the education of secret service officers as an example of samizdat publications with ideologically dangerous content. *Iparterv* became a legend as it happened. In 1980, this group of artists again exhibited together at the same venue. On that occasion an English-Hungarian publication was issued containing a number of texts in which the authors write about the *Iparterv* legend. ✖

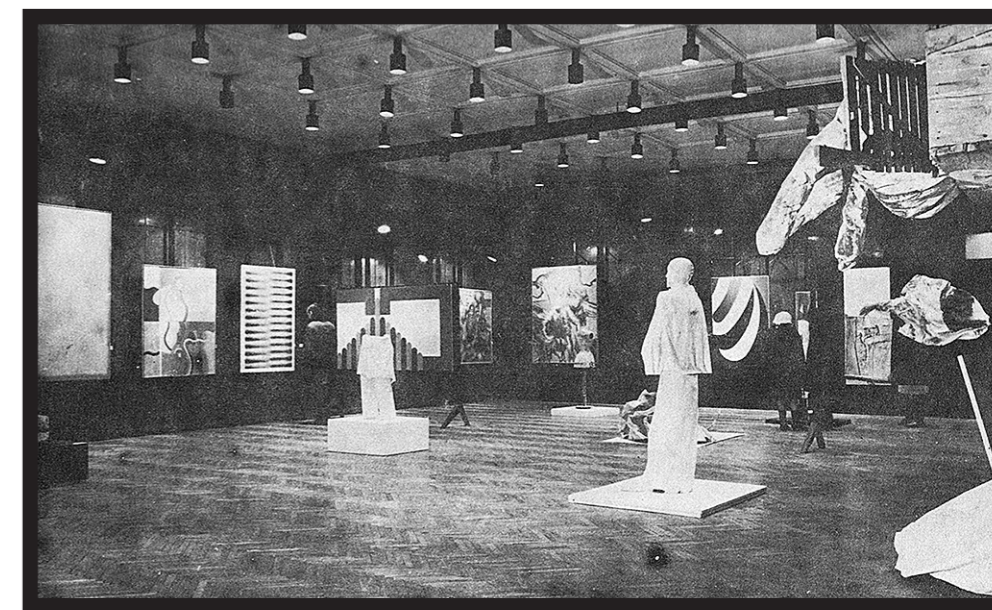
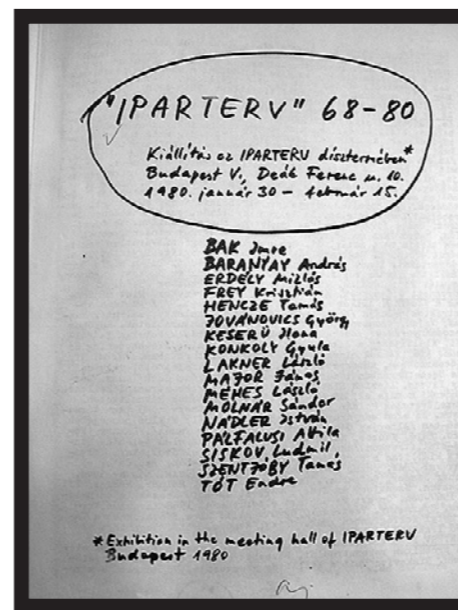
Pages from *Iparterv* 1968-80 catalogue. Poster, catalogue cover and interiors from the 1968 and 1969 exhibitions



▲ *Document* 1969-70 catalogue, documenting the Iparterv II exhibition. Cover with the members of the group



▲ *Document* 1969-70, last page of the catalogue



“The majority of the young artists featured in the *Document* 69-70 catalogue participated in two exhibitions held at the IPARTERV in 1968-1969. The concept of the exhibition was to introduce artists who represent the most characteristic versions of recent aspirations. Instead of directly continuing tradition, these young artists have attempted to orientate themselves in the context of the international art world and to keep pace with the most progressive avant-garde ambitions.

They have sought to sever the ties that bind them to traditional, ‘complete’, processed forms of art, which stand in the way of their creative gestures. They have attempted to think freely about the phenomena of the world, searching for new ways to express their experiences.” ✖

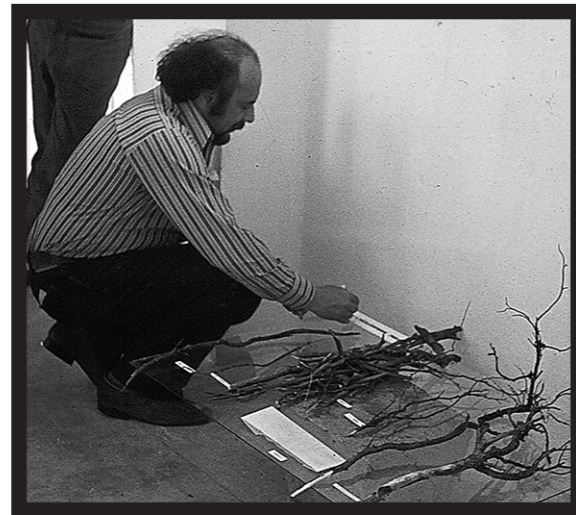
— Péter Sinkovits,

23 AUGUST 1970



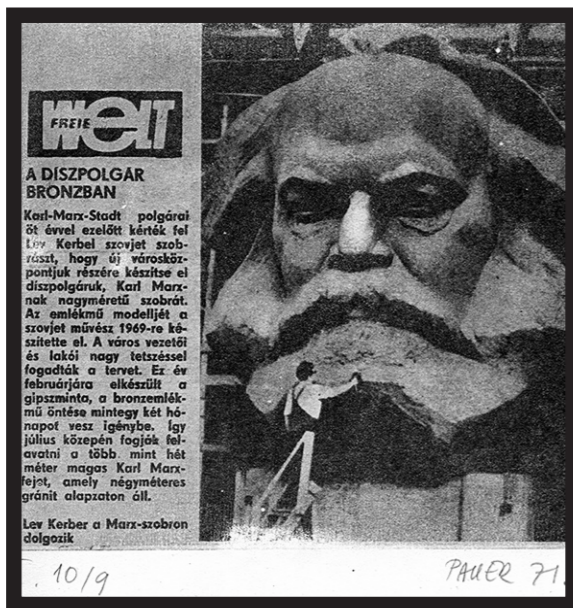
▲ The Balatonboglár Chapel in 1973, with a signpost by György Galántai, PHOTO: GYÖRGY GALÁNTAI, COURTESY OF ARTPOOL ART RESEARCH CENTRE, BUDAPEST

In addition to off-site cultural centres and ad hoc venues, artists were also looking for empty, unused properties to use. In 1966 **György Galántai**, a recent graduate of visual art, found an abandoned chapel in Balatonboglár at Lake Balaton, and decided to open a studio and exhibition space in the empty building. Following a long and testing procedure to obtain permission, the first exhibition opened in 1970. The initially more traditional exhibitions – which also allowed room for ‘tolerated’ trends – gradually gave way to experimental, performative and time-based events, as well as to projects articulating an institutional critique and political statements. When obtaining permission from the authorities for increasingly non-conformist exhibitions and events became a hopeless endeavour, **Galántai** gave up the official procedure and renamed the **Chapel Gallery** the **Chapel Studio** – which could only house non-public events.

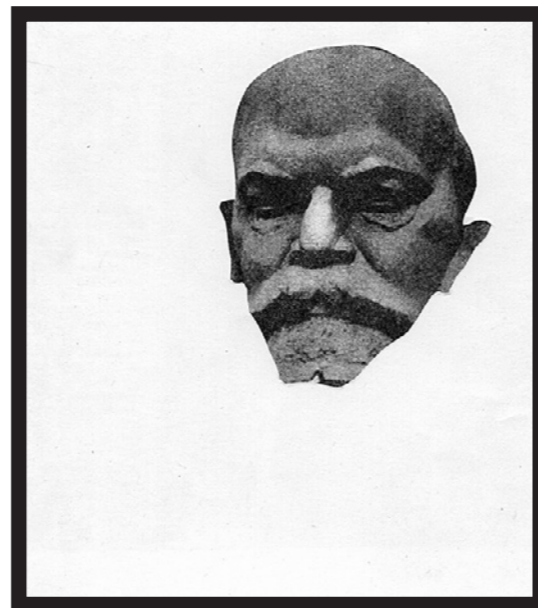


▲ Miklós Erdély, *Dry sticks are the proletarians among the fuels*, COURTESY OF ARTPOOL ART RESEARCH CENTRE, BUDAPEST

In principal, all events were designated ‘private’, yet they often dealt with the concept of audience. The 1972 series of events and exhibitions entitled *Direct Week*, according to the idea outlined in the call for participation, aimed to establish direct contact with the audience instead of exhibiting art objects. It was during this exhibition that **Tamás Szentjóby** presented his action entitled *Exclusion exercise – Punishment-preventive autotherapy*: with a bucket over his head he ‘punished’ himself for a week, for eight hours a day, while also inviting the audience (occasional local visitors and art professionals) to interrogate him. ✕



▲ Gyula Pauer, *Marx/Lenin*, 1972



## Call for the Direct Week

18.06.1972

The chapel at Balatonboglár will be available to us from 1-8 July 1972

We can hope to broaden our possibilities through direct contacts. Our programme makes use of means/methods through which we can obtain direct feedback. In other words the audience comes into contact with us not through contemplation but through activity.

From 1-7 July we will hold a DIRECT WEEK. (So we are not organising an “exhibition” and we don’t make use of traditional means/methods)

On 8 July we will ‘re-organize’ the ‘cancelled’ AVANGARD FESTIVAL, which was originally to be held on 30 April

(We will send out invitations to the day’s events)

One can contribute to the completion of DIRECT WEEK in two ways:

- a/ personally – : presentations, concepts evolved on site, happenings, events, body, agitation, other actions
- b/ through various media – : film, slide, tape recorder, projects, concept-sheets, message, correspondence, environments, etc.

The AVANGARD FESTIVAL programme will begin in the early afternoon and continue until late evening.

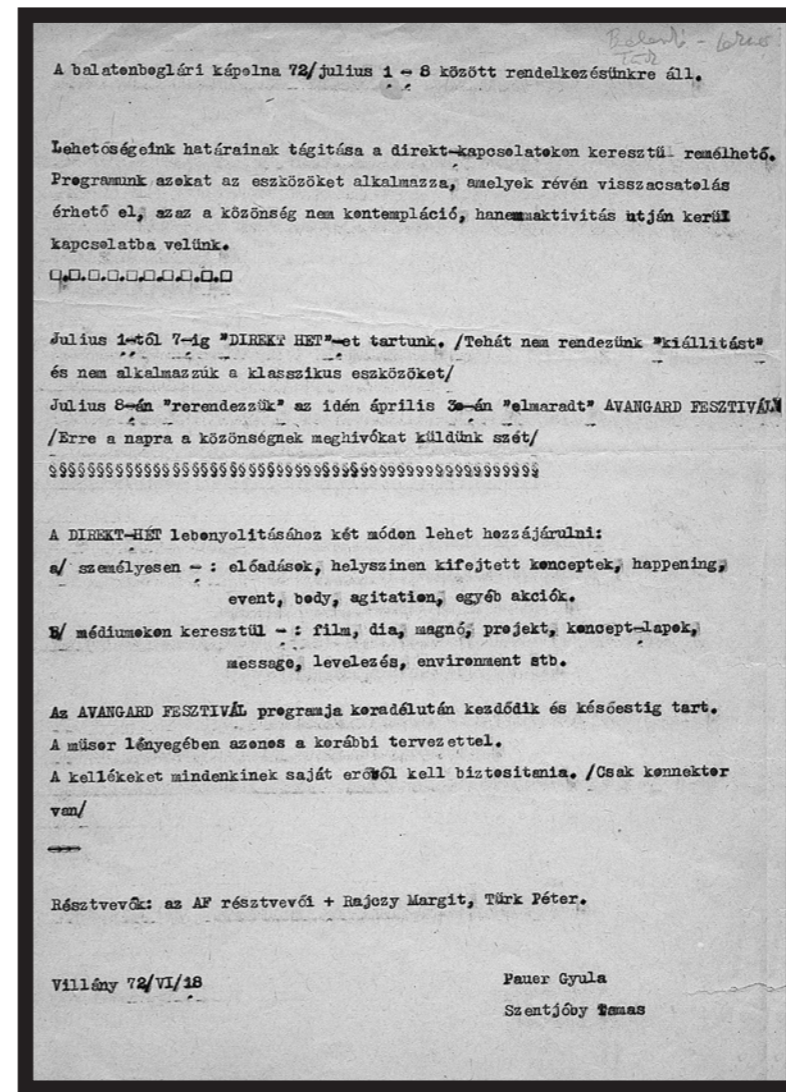
The programme is essentially identical with that previously planned.

You must provide whatever equipment you may need. (There are only sockets)

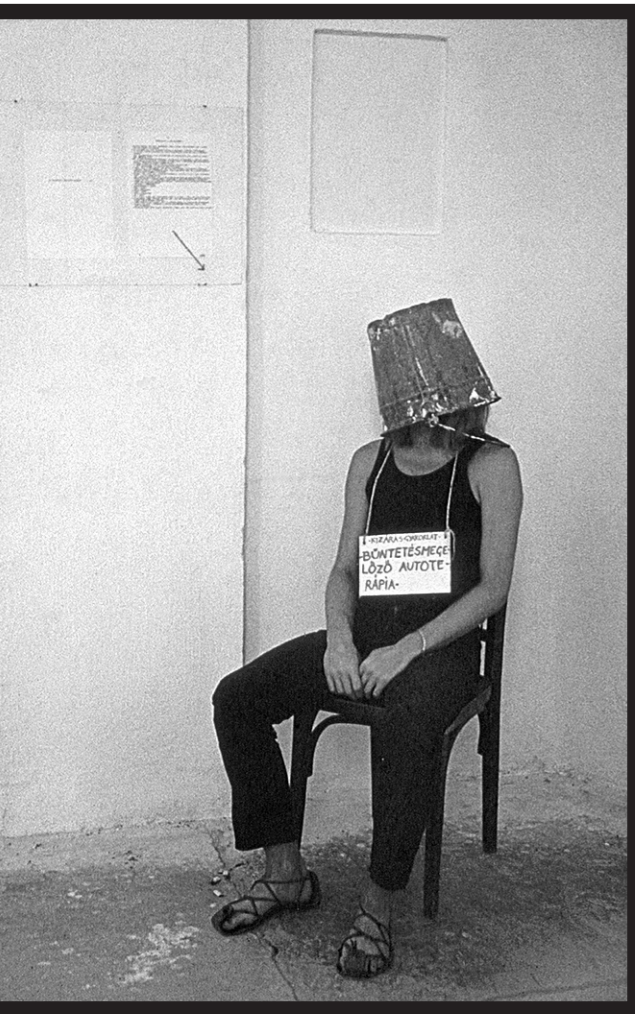
Participants: the participants of the AF + Margit Rajczy, Péter Türk.

VILLÁNY, 18 JUNE 1972

**Gyula Pauer**  
**Tamás Szentjóby ✕**



▲ Call for the *Direct Week* by Gyula Pauer and Tamás Szentjóby, COURTESY OF ARTPOOL ART RESEARCH CENTRE, BUDAPEST



## Exclusion exercise – Punishment-preventive autotherapy

- I. You can ask anything from the self-sentenced and
- II. You can ask the following:
- Are all life-schemes that exclude even one other human being immoral?
  - Can one form a community with another person without being completely free oneself?
  - Is culture's real purpose to make one conscious of the fact that one's fate is identical to history?
  - Is it the most important thing to discover and realise what is needed in life?
  - Those who bear the unbearable, do they know nothing about life? Know nothing about the interdependence that is contained in life: Can he bear himself without us, is everything hopeless without us? Can the blockade of the present be broken only by a new type of behaviour?
  - Is the realisation of the future in the present an acceleration of our lives?
  - Because historical time applies to the totality and not to the individual, would you try to live the facts of the present and your future desolation simultaneously?
  - Is this all to manifest difference and therefore there to activate a potentially different?
  - Can the changeable also be unfinished? Is the unfinished to be changed? Is unchange: suffering? Is incompleteness: suffering?
  - Do you hope that you can make us conscious of interdependence by demonstrating that we are all at each other's mercy?
  - Is there punishment in your action?
  - Is there action in your punishment?
  - Is action a sin? Is punishment a sin?
  - Is sin action?
  - Is action punishment?
  - What is a sin?
  - Is sin that action that causes suffering?
  - Is sin that action that causes no change?
  - Is there anything at all that you can call an action that would not produce a change, and whose existence is not aimed at reducing suffering?
  - Are you punishing yourself because by self-punishment taking the punishment of self-punishment you release the punisher from the punishment that is not action: that is sin?
  - Do you feel particularly exposed because you cannot see to whom you are talking?" ✖

▲ Tamás Szentjóby, *Exclusion Exercise – Punishment-preventative autotherapy*, 1972, PHOTO: LÁSZLÓ BEKE

At the end of the 1970s a new generation of artists appeared, addressing new issues such as self-management or gender relationships. **The Club of Young Artists** housed the exhibition *NudeModel* by Orsolya Drozdik, a member of the post-conceptualist artist group **Rózsa Circle**. The group represented an emergent generation who inherited the language of conceptual art but were also looking for new ways to become professional artists. Drozdik's performance reflected on the male-centred perspective of traditional art education. In addition to the consciously assumed female position, the critique on art history also indicated a new, postmodern critical approach. ✖



▲ EXHIBITION VIEW: Orsolya Drozdik, *NudeModel* performance, FMK, January 4-10, 1977

## Interview with Orshi Drozdik, András Halász and Károly Kelemen

"... **ORSHI DROZDIK:** I invited some artists and critics to participate in my performance in order to legitimise my work. Oh, yes, their names are: András Halász, Zsigmond Károlyi, Károly Kelemen, László Beke and Miklós Erdély. They were my friends rather than just colleagues. They could do whatever they wanted. They opened my show.

**ANDRÁS HALÁSZ:** I liked it a lot: it was a silent, relatively small room. And behind these big wooden doors, they were sitting together. Piroska was sitting naked on a chair, and Orshi was drawing in a sketch-book. I found it beautiful, because it is somehow the truth of this situation. She went to school for six or seven years, and she was looking at the nude carefully all the time. I found it very funny. It was not erotic at all.

**ZSIGMOND KÁROLYI:** I can remember that there were five of us, and I wrote a text... Then Orshi and Piroska walked into this room, which was somehow closed off, first with a cordon, then with a gauze curtain, so you could not enter. The spectator could see them as a picture through the frame of the door.

**ORSHI DROZDIK:** They didn't understand the work – the art-history and the audience. On a visual level it was very pleasurable and complex. It was comprehensible in a modernist way too. They understood the work this way. But the use of the female body and its complex structure they did not understand. Unfortunately, I did not explain enough why I chose a female nude. I should have elaborated more what the conflict was about. Even though I consider secrecy as a very important component of art, this work was didactic; still, I did not provide any guidance to its reading. The intention was to show the grotesque nature of the situation – that a woman artist has to draw a naked woman..." ✖

— EXCERPT FROM INTERVIEWS RECORDED AND TRANSCRIBED BY EMESE SÜVECCZ IN BUDAPEST AND MALMÖ, NOVEMBER 2007–JANUARY 2008.

1. Fine Art Model.
  2. The institutionalised Fine Art model. Art model.
  3. The model of thought – that society wants for the individual.
  4. The model of thought – that the individual offers to society.
  5. Model conflict. ✖
- ORSOLYA DROZDIK, 1976



▲ Orsolya Drozdik, *NudeModel* performance, FMK, January 4-10, 1977

21.05–22.05.2009 ★ Krétakör Bázis, Budapest

## Invisible History of Exhibitions / Parallel Chronologies

– INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM

ORGANISED BY Dóra Hegyi, Zsuzsa László, & Emese Süvecz

The symposium, organised to coincide with the exhibition, addressed important questions in relation to auto-histories, self-positioning, and the reinterpretation of art history.

How can we remember, reconstruct, and recycle exhibitions in order to include them in our shared historical knowledge. How could historical research, adapted to international curatorial discourses, change the prevailing feeling of being ignored, and the sense of belatedness of historically and geo-politically marginal art scenes. How could Eastern European art practitioners take advantage of, and at the same time overcome the voyeuristic interest of the Western art market in the communist past, fuelled as it is by post-colonialism and globalism. How can we make sense of the shared experiences of youth movements, sub-, parallel- and counter cultures, political activism and the fundamental differences concerning the legacies of the neo-avantgarde.

The themes and sessions of the symposium included:

1. Revisiting exhibitions: reconstruction and re-contextualisation
2. Archives – the archive as exhibition format, and exhibition archives
3. East European Exhibitions as tools of identity-politics
4. Exhibition-making as an emancipatory practice

SPEAKERS:

Judit Angel (HU) ★ Maja & Reuben Fowkes (GB, HR) ★ Izabel Galliera (USA) ★ Reesa Greenberg (CAN) ★ Vít Havranek (CZ) ★ Yelena Kalinsky (USA/RU) ★ kuda.org (SRB) ★ Viktor Misiano (RU) ★ Cristian Nae (RO) ★ Prelom kolektiv (SRB) ★ Nataša Petrešin-Bachelez (SLO) ★ Isabelle Schwarz (D) ★ Keiko Sei (JPN/THA) ★ Georg Schöllhammer (AT) ★ Emese Süvecz & Orshi Drozdik (HU) ★ Tamás St. Auby (HU) ★ What, How & for Whom? (HR) ★ Andrea Tarczali (HU) ★ Magdalena Ziolkowska (PL) ✖



▲ Invisible History of Exhibitions – Parallel Chronologies symposium



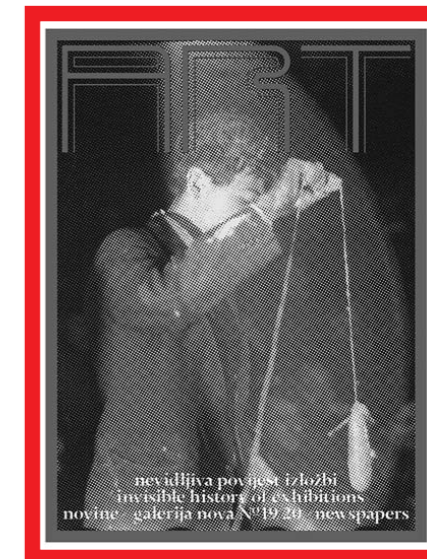
▲ LECTURE BY Ana Dević

04.06-15.07.2009 ★ Gallery Nova, Zagreb

## Wouldn't it be easier for the government to dissolve the people and elect another?

CURATED BY WHW

EXHIBITION OF WORKS BY Soci t  R aliste (Budapest & Paris) ★ Tam s St. Auby (Budapest) ★ Artur  mijewski (Warsaw)



July 2009

## Invisible History of Exhibitions, Gallery Nova Newspapers N  19/20

EDITED BY Dóra Hegyi & Zsuzsa L szl  (tranzit. hu)

The second special edition of the Gallery Nova Newspapers resulted from discussions and research conducted within the international symposium *Invisible History of Exhibitions*, organised by *Tranzit.hu* in Budapest in May 2009, with the aim of sharing knowledge and discourse on Eastern European art exhibitions from the 1960s to the present. The newspapers included interviews with *Reesa Greenberg*, *Prelom kolektiv*, *kuda.org*, *Tam s Szentj by*, and texts by *Nataša Petrešin* and *Yelena Kalinsky*. ✖

◀ OPENING OF *Wouldn't it be easier for the government to dissolve the people and elect another?*, PHOTO: IVAN KUHARIĆ

13.10–15.11.2009 ★ Labor, Dorottya Gallery, Budapest  
& 22.10–27.11.2009 ★ Platan Gallery, Budapest

## Typopass – Critical design and conceptual typography exhibition

ORGANISED BY tranzit.hu & Dorottya Gallery (Mucsarnok)  
WITH THE COLLABORATION OF THE POLISH INSTITUTE



▲ EXHIBITION  
VIEW: *Typopass: Typographic Utopias*. Modern Hungarian Typography History – compiled by Márton Orosz, PHOTO: SÁNDOR BARTHA

The project focused on typography, a visual language that can be interpreted in the field of art and design. The exhibition presented historical and contemporary projects and publications from the boundaries of design and the visual arts in three groups: *Typographic utopias*, *Anti- and parallel design* and *Subversive design*.

A utopian approach to design first appeared in the modernist movements, questioning the ornamental function of design and aligning it with social and political goals. The 1960s and 1970s saw the appearance of anti-design; as a means of expressing a critical attitude, more and more artists turned to deliberately amateur DIY methods. Today, design elements that were originally created through political and social commitment have become freely interchangeable stylistic elements, devices for marketing, political decoding and the conscious use of a range of visual languages necessary for a critical approach.

PARTICIPANTS: Attila Cosovan ★ Kai Bernau ★ Andreas Fogarasi ★ Dejan Kršić ★ Tibor Kálmán ★ Lajos Kassák ★ László Moholy-Nagy ★ Boris Ondreička ★ Gábor Palotai ★ Gábor Papp ★ Plágium 2000 ★ Katarina Šević ★ Société Réaliste ★ Mladen Stilinović ★ SZAF (Judit Fischer, Miklós Mécs) ★ Žiga Testen ★ Modern Hungarian typography-history – compiled by Márton Orosz ★ Montage (ed. Florian Pumhösl) ★ Artist publications from Poland (Stefan Themerson ★ Andrzej Partum ★ Jan Berdyszak ★ Jarosław Kozłowski ★ Stanisław Drózdź ★ Zygmunt Piotrowski ★ Fabryka ★ Tango ★ Luxus and others) selected and lent by Piotr Rypson ★ Artist publications from the collection of Artpool Art Research Centre selected by Viktor Kótun, and further publications  
CURATORS: Judit Angel ★ Dóra Hegyi ★ Zsuzsa László

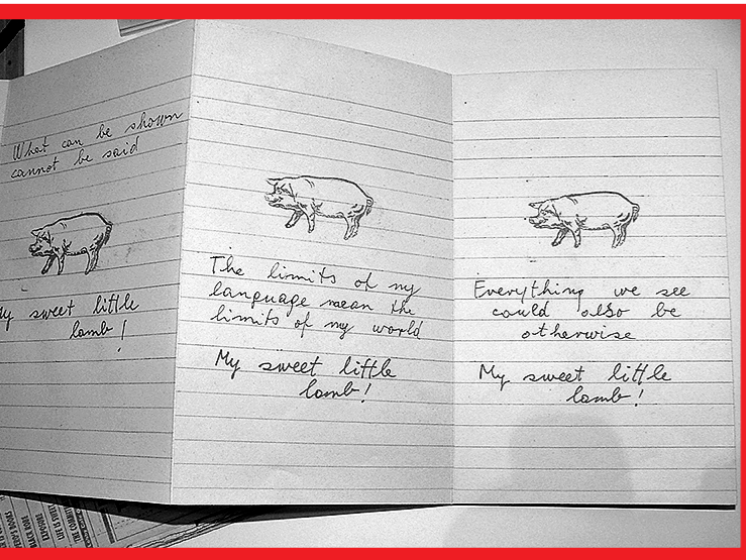
The autumn seminar of the *Free School for Art Theory and Practice* was connected to *Typopass – Critical design and conceptual typography exhibition*.



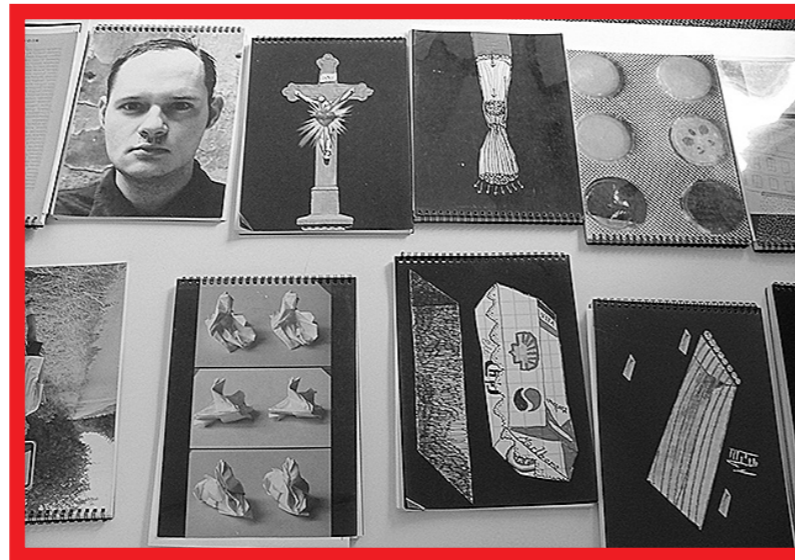
▲ EXHIBITION VIEW:  
*Typopass* at Dorottya Gallery, Budapest, PHOTO: SÁNDOR BARTHA

### TYPOGRAPHIC UTOPIAS

The belief that design and typography can have the political potential to shape society emerged as part of the constructivist movement. At the same time, the approach of typography as a world-constructing system can also be discerned in neo-avant-garde and contemporary practices. In this section we presented historical documents and contemporary projects that deal with the heritage and reception of modernist design and typography. ✖



▲ DETAIL: Maden Stilinović, *My sweet little lamb*, artist's book



▲ Calendars by SZAF (Judith Fischer and Miklós Mécs), ALL PHOTOS: SÁNDOR BARTHA



▲ Polish artists publications, selected by Piotr Rypson, PHOTO: HAJNALKA TULISZ

### ANTI- AND PARALLEL DESIGN

The basic form of typography; handwriting, or typewritten, photocopied and stapled publications are not always shortcomings but 'trademarks' of political, cultural and market resistance. East European neo-avantgarde artists and samizdat publishers often use such solutions as a revolt against the 'good taste' and professionalism representative of institutions. This segment focused on Eastern-European artists' publications, historical and contemporary practices using deliberately rudimentary and unpretentious design techniques. ✕



▲ Plágium 2000 collection: anarchistic and non-official publications from the 2000s

EDUCATION  
ECONOMY  
EXISTANCE  
FABRYKA

PARTICIPATES IN THE CREATION OF CO-EXISTANCE WITHIN A GENERAL FRAMEWORK OF ART, SOCIETY AND EVERY-DAY LIFE

IS A COMBINED EFFORT OF ARTISTS

ITS CONTENT IS ORGANIZED BY ARTISTS

HAS AN OPEN FORM

ELIMINATES THE DIVISIONS CLASSIFICATIONS AND TENDENCES IN ART MOTIVATED BY COMMERCIAL, ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL ASPECTS

IS SELF-GOVERNMENT AND INDEPENDENT

IS A PLACE OF WORK AND ACTIVITY

FABRYKA IS A CONTINUOUS PROCESS

AIMS FOR DISCLOSURE OF PROCESSES EXISTING BEYOND THE "WORK OF ART"

HAS A WORKING CHARACTER

DOES NOT TAKE UP ANY EVIDENCES OF ART EVENTS CARRIED OUT IN ART-INSTITUTIONS

DOES NOT ADVERTISE ARTIST OR "WORK OF ART"

FABRYKA IS NOT ART-MAGAZINE

ORGANIZES AN ALTERNATIVE CIRCULATION OF INFORMATION

REALIZES VARIOUS KINDS OF ART EVENTS

IS FINANCED BY ARTISTS

BY R.WASKO

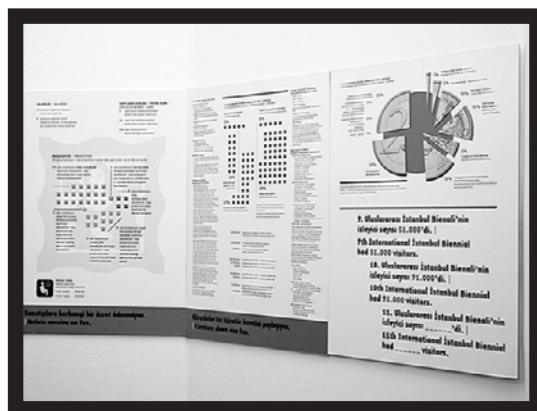
▲ Ryszard Wasko, *Fabryka*, Archives of Contemporary Thought, Łódź, 1983

## SUBVERSIVE DESIGN

In addition to the establishment of new visual languages another important device of critical design is the reflection on, and appropriation of, the phenomena of visual culture, decoding and deconstruction of aestheticised political gestures. New and existing projects raise awareness of underlying mechanisms and signs embedded in various typographical practices. ✖



▲ INSTALLATION VIEW: Andreas Fogarasi, *Sound Traveler*, 2003, light box and display presenting montage book series edited by Florian Pumhösl since 1997, PHOTO: SÁNDOR BARTHA



◀ Dejan Kršić/  
WHW, *What keeps mankind alive?, Statistics of the 11th Istanbul Biennial*, 2009

▶ Ziga Testen,  
*Returns of Marxism*, 2009, poster



The three-part exhibition was accompanied by a series of events:

□ 14.10.2009 ★ Dorottya Gallery, Budapest

### 1979 – seminar

PRESENTED BY **Société Réaliste**

At the seminar, **Société Réaliste** planned to make visible the changes that have been made in the Hungarian Constitution since 1949, and to ask the participants to start a massive amendment process in order to unveil the very concept of the 'constitution', this juridico-typographic tool of rule. ✖

□ 14.10.2009 ★ Dorottya Gallery, Budapest

### Glyphs and Strata

LECTURE BY **Société Réaliste**

□ 15.10.2009 ★ Dorottya Gallery, Budapest

### Helvetica

(directed by Gary Hustwit) – screening

INTRODUCTION BY Márton Orosz, typographer, art historian

□ 22.10.2009 ★ Platán Gallery, Budapest

LECTURES BY

**Branka Stipančić**

**Mladen Stilinović – Artist's Books**

**Piotr Rypson**

**Out of Type – Polish Artist's Publications**

**Géza Perneckzy**

**Artists' publications on the border of the underground and the avant.garde**

□ 11.11.2009 ★ Dorottya Gallery, Budapest

### Design and criticality.

**Examples from the field of Hungarian and international design culture.**

LECTURE BY Márton Szentpéteri



▲ Ziga Testen, *Manifesto*, 2009, poster

23.10-23.11.2009 ★ Museum of Contemporary Art of Vojvodina, Novi Sad

## ID: Ideology of Design

CURATED BY New Media Center\_kuda.org

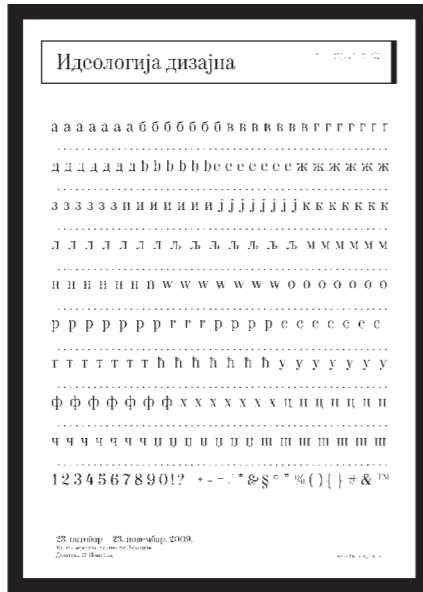
EXHIBITION OF WORKS BY: A3.Format Group (Filip Bojović & All) ★ Dejan Kršić ★ NAO – Normal Architecture Office (Srđan Jovanović Weiss & Thabo Lenneiy) ★ Metahaven (Vinca Kruk • Dimitri van Loenen • Daniel Melse • Daniel van der Velden) ★ Open Design Studio (Katarina Lukić Balažikova & Marko Brkić) ★ Société Réaliste (Ferenc Gróf & Jean-Baptiste Naudy).

With the research, exhibition and publications that comprise the project *ID: Ideology of Design*, the following questions have been asked: In what way are design practices perceived and understood today, and how can one follow their crucial development during the last decades of the twentieth century and their connections with artistic practices and critical discourses? Creating blueprints for mass production, graphic design, industrial design, environmental design, advertising, interior design, fashion design etc. is just one of the determinants of this complex 'discipline' of culture. Whether we examine its development under socialism or capitalism, design is always in close and dynamic connection with the economic and 'productive' bases of society, building different and/or specific relationships between man and material culture. The focus of the research and of the *Ideology of Design* exhibition, events and publications are the theories and practices of (industrial and graphic) design that were taking place during almost half a century of socialist Yugoslavia, examining their wider social and ideological context.

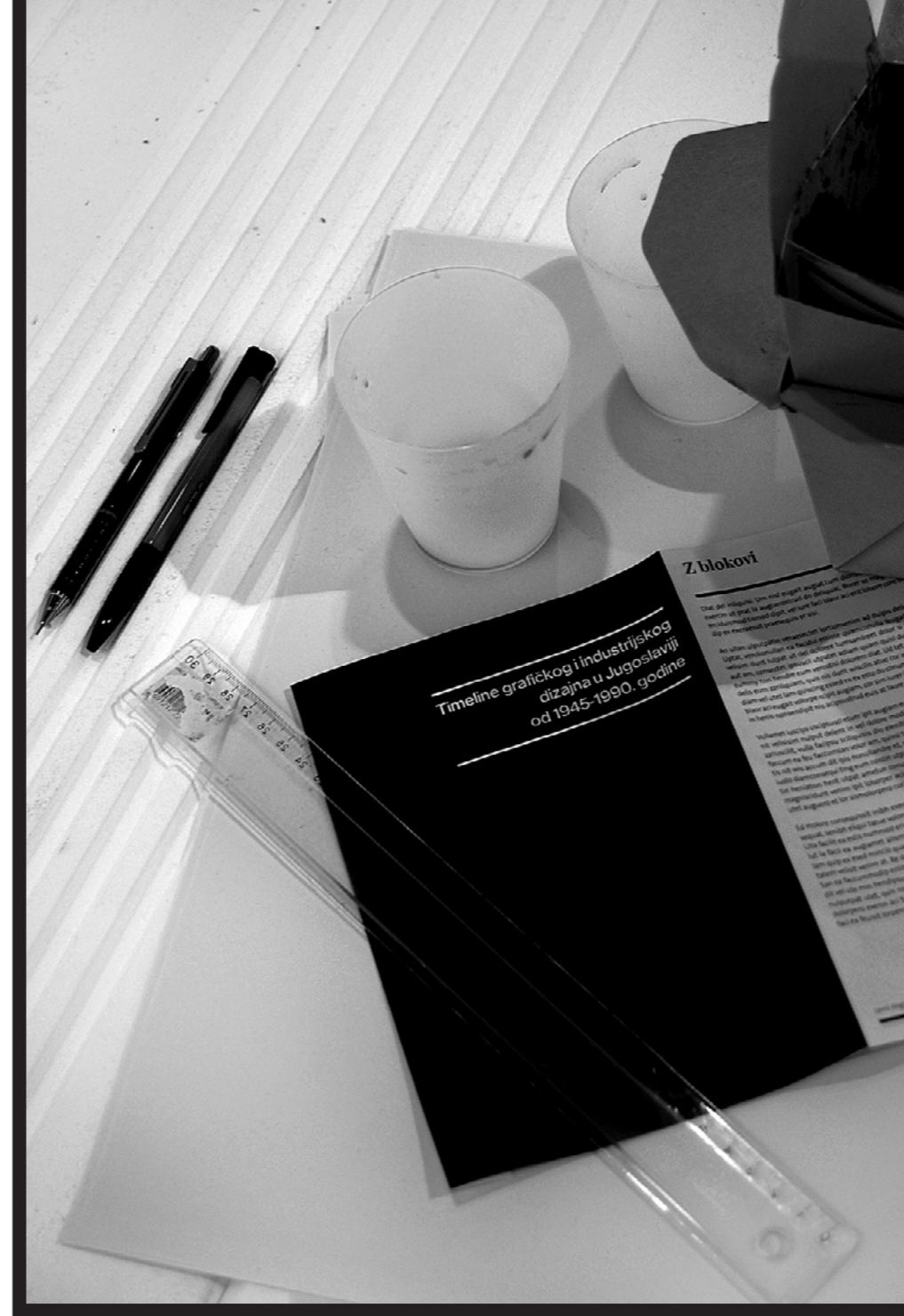
Design is a productive and highly interdisciplinary field, which includes achievements from culture, science, architecture, technology and artistic practice, and thus represents fertile ground for sociological and philosophical discussions on technology and the market, about the social and political-economical dynamics and the labour process. A special aspect of the project focused on discussions and practices taking place in socialist Yugoslavia, which tried to define the role of design in a (non-)market socialist economy, its functionalism and its being conditioned by the market, or its social engagement, and the role of design in

forming a new relationship between man and material objects, a new way of life towards establishing a classless human community. Developing progressive, critical and contradictory positions, design was simultaneously presented as a symbol of post-war reconstruction in a country in the sway of industrialisation and as a means for the liberation of man from material privation, but as decades went by it became one of the central factors in building a 'socialist market society'.

The project, *Ideology of Design*, deals with the contextualisation of contradictory processes refracted through theory and practices of design and, parallel to this, the way in which different 'ideologies of design' and visual identities were created, first in post-war Yugoslavia, then during the tempestuous 1960s and 1970s, through to the stage at which this community ceased to exist. The project also re-examines the opportunity to create the relationship between critical and historical design and contemporary practice, which is increasingly seen as the exclusive domain of the 'creative industries'. Refracted through an 'ideological' prism of neoliberal capitalism these industries preserve the exploitative relationship between 'creativity' and 'the creative personae'. Thus, a question arises: Is it possible today to observe and practice design outside of the dominant functionalist principles and market-dictated production and consumption, and to develop their engaged dimension in creating 'more humane' social relations, i.e., is it possible to politicise design practices during 'transition' times? ✖



ID: Ideology of Design exhibition poster, designed by Filip Bojović of A3.Format



DETAIL: ID: DEADLINE design performance by Open Design Studio, PHOTO: MARKO BRKIĆ

The designer who wakes up on an early morning in the 21<sup>st</sup> century knows that his human capital, creativity and labour are the last reserve of the western economies.

Or, to put it differently: you don't get out of bed to go to work. You cannot go to work, because you are your work. And since you already are your work you can be nowhere where there isn't also your work.

At the moment of the 'big bang' of design in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, we the designers are becoming the key producers of value of all sorts. The collateral damage is everywhere at the same time, so that everywhere there is design, and the way it operates is uncontrolled and inconsistent.

So what signifies 'we', the generation of the design blast, what makes this generation different from others, with what new problems and challenges are 'we' confronted?

My thesis is that we, the generation of the design blast, who live in the explosion and its aftermath, have to reinvent our 'we'. We are in a situation where there is little or no emphasis on our collectivity as we are all, of course, individuals, and we are competitors, and we can try to hide this by creating our own niches where it seems we're not competing. What is needed at the moment is not another niche, but the description of a new condition, one through which we may be able to construct a 'we.' ✖

— EXCERPT FROM THE TEXT 'WE' BY THE ART&DESIGN COLLECTIVE METAHAVEN





**JERKO DENEGRİ:** “Phenomena such as the Bauhaus, the Russian Avant-garde, Futurism, De Stijl, etc. – are big movements that have design as a very important part of their practice. It is clear that design is an integral part of visual culture and culture generally, in shaping the twentieth century.”

“When design was discussed, it was usually understood that it was concerned with items for everyday use, that there is nothing to be said about it, or that it is about the pure functionality of design. However, some authors had developed certain ideological discussions – about the consumer society, the media and the extension of autonomous art into productive practice.”

“The year 1968 spread the seed of questioning – what should artists do in a market society, what should artists do in the society of ideological polarisation, etc. This year is key to the environment around which this described problematic revolves. What is interesting is that all those fluctuations touch on the realm of design. Design is not something that is only happening in offices, at drawing tables, factories or stores...”

“However, there was a struggle to position design as the topic of the day in the socialist society with the slogan: we need a society with higher social standards, not a consumer society as such. In this we can see the enthusiasm of the immediate post-war generations.” ✖

**MATKO MEŠTROVIĆ:** “It can be clearly observed that the 1950s were the decisive moment. Perhaps it was the Informbiro Resolution that had caused a deep moral, political and economic crisis, but by the beginning of the 1950s that crisis was already overcome and the strength of the collective was activated, with a certain vision, of course.”

“There was this exceptional strategic and principled politics of solidarity, and that was crucial in helping the country’s balanced development... there was no deepening of differences, quite the contrary, the effort was to decrease them.”

“Capital supported counter-revolution. The fact that it continued working turned into something that is of the opposite meaning. The fall of the Berlin Wall has two meanings: it was not only the fall of the psychological leftovers of one deformed revolutionary idea that is today called communism, and communism as understood only in that sense, but it was the victory of counter-revolution; finally there was only one ruler and he imposed his power. Ideologically speaking, today this is classified as the ideology of neoliberalism. Within the countries that fell under its impact no one is capable of adopting a neutral point of view and saying: well, that is counter-revolution, because the real revolution is long gone and forgotten.” ✖

Video interviews were recorded with some of the most important protagonists of Yugoslav design theory and practice, history of design and art criticism. Among them were **Jerko Denegri** and **Branko Vučićević** from Belgrade, **Matko Meštrović** and **Fedor Kritovac** from Zagreb, **Stane Bernik** from Ljubljana and **Branislav Dobanovački** from Novi Sad.

An interview with **Ivan Picelj**, a graphic designer from Zagreb was added to the series of dialogues produced for the *Ideology of Design* project. This was realised by **Dragan Mileusnić** and **Željko Serdarević**, a designer couple from Zagreb, on the occasion of the anniversary of Helvetica typeface. ✖



▲ Ivan Picelj, video still from *Helvetica Matrices*, by Serdarević & Mileusnić

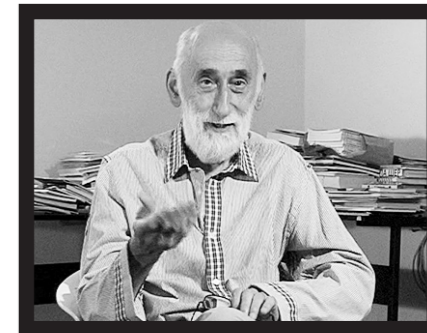


**STANE BERNIK:** “People should actually start this story with the social conditions and situation. We are talking about a well-planned industry, when actually we need to speak about the market, because everything that was carefully fabricated was being sold; everybody was looking for better goods. That was the place for creation and design.”

“Design encompasses the widest category and definition. It is actually realised through its sociality.”

“After all, EXAT 51 is a reader about the breakthrough towards modern, socially responsible art.” ✖

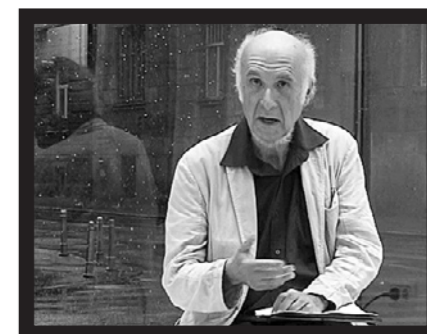
**BRANKO VUČIČEVIĆ:** “If we were to make some kind of balance sheet of the last century, according to me it would look completely different than it does in art history. If we want to state what was most important in twentieth century art, I would start by saying that it wasn’t painting, but photography, architecture, partly film and graphic design.”



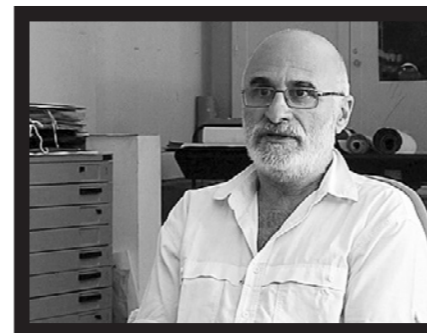
“The tools back then were callipers, rulers and scissors. Scissors naturally lead us to the basic principle of what was good in twentieth century art history, and that is editing. So, to me graphic design is a form of editing – a montage.”

“There is an attitude that in the past something was useless if it was painted red, pink, etc. We cannot alter the fact that someone has that opinion, but it is an opinion that deprives us all of something I call left cultural heritage, which is not bad at all.

Since the Germans didn’t renounce Brecht, it would be smart for us not to throw away anything from our heritage.” ✖



**BRANISLAV DOBANOVAČKI:** “During the jury sessions [official competitions for political posters] one could learn a lot; those sessions were simply an additional education for those who were at the beginning of their professional career, especially for me at the beginning of the seventies.”



“Back then, the Association [of Applied Artists] worked really well. Freelance artists had health, social and pension security, and the title of freelance artist wasn’t easy to get. It was simply that things were functioning...” ✖

**FEDOR KRITOVAC:** “Design – to whom and for whom? When we disregard something that initially looks like a slogan – ‘for all, for the people, for the citizens’ – then we cannot avoid the questions that were relevant then, and are even more so today, and that is: within this Enlightenment-utopia dimension, design is necessary as a general value, regardless of how it is consumed.”

“When people remember those international exhibitions, from Great Britain and Germany, then it would be an oversimplification to say that this is only for political reasons, because those exhibitions had an aspect of learning and enlightenment. The fact that it was all to hand, that it could be heard, seen, understood – that is an absolute gain that didn’t come from consumerism.” ✖



### Timeline of Graphic and Industrial Design in Yugoslavia from 1945–1990

As part of the exhibition, Zagreb designer **Dejan Kršić** and **Center\_kuda.org** jointly presented a subjective timeline of industrial and graphic design practices, and institutional and alternative frameworks related to the paradigmatic social, political and economic events in socialist Yugoslavia. This overview of practices in industrial and graphic design results from the work of **Dejan Kršić** and is developed from his timeline of the history of graphic design in Croatia from 1950–2005, which was presented as part of the didactical exhibition *Designed in Croatia* (May 2009) in the gallery of the **Croatian Society of Designers** in Zagreb. ✖



▲ Timeline by Dejan Kršić and kuda.org, PHOTO: SZILÁRD KOVÁCS

### Société Réaliste, Paris /www.societerealiste.net/ Transitioners: London View

In 2006, the Paris-based cooperative **Société Réaliste** launched *Transitioners*, a 'trend design agency' specialising in political transitions. The project questions revolution (transition?) as a central category for contemporary Western society. How can a 'democratic transition' be produced? What is the role of design in the ongoing conversion of political flux into mythology? In Novi Sad, *Transitioners* presented a preview of its 2009 collection, *London View*. Inspired by the 1848 European Revolution, this 2009 collection focuses on the very specific context of the 'Year of Revolution' and the new political paradigm experienced in those days: the plan for a synchronised attempt at continental revolution. Indeed, from the first students and workers demonstrations in Paris at the beginning of February 1848 to the end of the Hungarian Civil War in December 1849, revolutions took place everywhere in Europe. Forty European cities have been the theatres of major collective events that continue to interrogate today's political context: collective spontaneity, polycentric organisation, international collaboration by means of communication and 'glocal' networking. The central question of *Transitioners: London View* concerns specific points in **Marx & Engels'** analyses of the political situation from which they write, in particular the inaccuracy of their London-centric theoretical point of view with regard to the multiplicity and complexity of the revolutions happening concurrently throughout Europe. The collection intends to highlight similar contemporary situations of disjunction between manifold revolutionary practices and standardised theoretical attempts. ✖

**Société Réaliste** was created by **Ferenc Gróf** and **Jean-Baptiste Naudy** in June 2004. The cooperative manages the development of several research and economical structures in fields such as territorial ergonomics, experimental economics, political design and counter-strategy.



▲ EXHIBITION VIEW:  
Société Réaliste  
(Ferenc Gróf and  
Jean-Baptiste Naudy),  
*Transitioners: London View*,  
PHOTO: SZILÁRD KOVÁCS

### Z Blocks

DESIGN: **NAO – Normal Architecture Office:**  
**Srdan Jovanović Weiss & Thabo Lenneiyi**, 2009.  
(ORIGINAL DESIGN: **Normal Group for**  
**Architecture**, 2003) /www.thenao.net/

**N**ormal Architecture Office (NAO)'s *Z blocks* are light and reconfigurable blocks that can be used in multiple ways thanks to their smart geometry, designed to resemble the Latin letter Z. The main concept behind this adaptive use of design is the ease of arranging *Z blocks* in individual, social and hybrid spaces, different in size, being formal or informal, public or intimate. The blocks can stand on their own and be used as chairs, or can be combined horizontally to form benches and sofas. Furthermore, the *Z blocks* can be arranged vertically into building partitions, niches, walls and columns. Finally they can be treated as scattered furniture across rooms and galleries. The geometry of a single block derives from reading alleged US medical recommendations for using prosthetic devices offering better sensual comfort during sexual encounters between middle-class couples. The



▲ *Z Blocks*, designed by NAO – Normal Architecture Office (Srdan Jovanović Weiss & Thabo Lenneiyi), PHOTO: ORFEAS SKUTELIS

specificity of geometric angles offered by the US sexologists and their direct applications in sexual products informed the elegant angles of the geometry of the *Z block*. If capitalism is able to produce specific knowledge of its intended use in the bedrooms of the American middle-class, the aim behind proposing and producing *Z blocks* is to disperse and Balkanise this scientific knowledge into an abstract for everyday social use anywhere, free from the dictate of its prescribed purpose. After every event visitors using *Z blocks* are free to take them home and use them as they like. The earlier, 'dumber' version of this design, produced by **Normal Architecture Office's** predecessor, **Normal Group of Architecture**, appeared in the stage set of a production by an all female contemporary dance company performing in St.Marks Church in the East Village, New York in 2003. ✖

23.10-22.11.2009 ★ Museum of Contemporary Art of Vojvodina, Novi Sad

### ID: IDENTITY, Collaborative work on the logo of the exhibition ID: Ideology of Design

23.11.2009 ★ Presentation of the ID:IDENTITY

INITIATED & LED BY Open Design Studio (Marko Brkić ★ Katarina Lukić Balažikova)

The project *ID: Identity* ([www.id-identity.org](http://www.id-identity.org)) is a collaborative work on the *ID: Ideology of Design* logo, presented as a web platform and restricted to the duration of the exhibition. Redesigning the existing logo proposal is enabled through the upload/download option on the website of the project and starts with the exhibition opening. The possibility of redesigning only the last posted proposal of the logo on the website restricts the field of creativity and the authors' inspiration, but it could also lead to better solutions. This process demonstrates redesigning as an ongoing process of identity change, which constantly redefines the very ideology of an event. Furthermore, redesign and the continual redefining of identity illustrate the competitive nature of design in terms of the ongoing demand for innovation. The significance of redesigning and redefining the exhibition's identity when the exhibition is already open also lies in viewing identity as a retrospective action, rather than an instantly formulated visual representation. The identity of the exhibition is formed as it ends, revealing all existing redesigned logo suggestions.



▲ ID: Identity presentation, PHOTO: SZILÁRD KOVÁCS

**Open Design Studio** (Novi Sad/Bratislava; [www.opendesignstudio.net](http://www.opendesignstudio.net)) is an independent initiative of graphic designers aiming to support an open understanding of visual communication and graphic design. The main aim of the **Open Design Studio** is to realise educational and informative activities for different target groups and to support open understanding of visual culture through workshops, plays, lectures and discussions. One of the aims of these activities is to build an international network of designers that openly discuss, present, create, understand and inform about things related to graphic design and visual communication. Project **Open Design**



▲ ID: Identity presentation by Open Design Studio (Katarina Lukić Balažikova & Marko Brkić), PHOTO: ORFEAS SKUTELIS

**Studio** is dealing with contemporary problems in the realm of graphic design and visual culture from different aspects, and opens new possibilities for viewing graphic design as a free and accessible discipline that helps to develop the collaborative practice of young designers and their network, thereby increasing visual literacy and visual culture in society. **Open Design Studio's** involvement in the exhibition *ID: Ideology of Design* focused on play, collaboration and experiment. Two projects presented to the public were based on notions – psychological pressure, deadline, speed and identity – representing ideologies that define design as an open and collaborative discipline, but also show the phenomena of contemporary society. ✖

30.10.2009 ★ Museum of Contemporary Art of Vojvodina, Novi Sad

### Hybrid Identities and Paralyzing Traditions

LECTURE BY Feđa Vukić, design theorist and writer (Zagreb)



▲ ID: DEADLINE and the catalogue presentation; designed by Katarina Lukić Balažikova, Marko Brkić and Filip Bojović

10-11.11.2009 ★ Museum of Contemporary Art of Vojvodina, Novi Sad

### ID: DEADLINE, Design performance – open work on exhibition catalogue

PARTICIPANTS: Open Design Studio (Marko Brkić ★ Katarina Lukić Balažikova)

The speed of work, and meeting the deadline, have become the criterion of quality and quantity, and together with price define and negatively influence current design production. Working under pressure influences participants and results. The need for a quick response, increased concentration, and fast communication, is omnipresent. The project *ID: Deadline* design performance presents an open studio, where two graphic designers (Marko Brkić and Katarina Lukić Balažikova) work together in the exhibition space of the *Museum of Contemporary Art* in Vojvodina. With time restraints and unpleasant physical and psychological conditions the pair are creating an exhibition catalogue. ✖

13.11.2009 ★ Museum of Contemporary Art of Vojvodina, Novi Sad

### I(deology), D(esign) or Nothing, public discussion

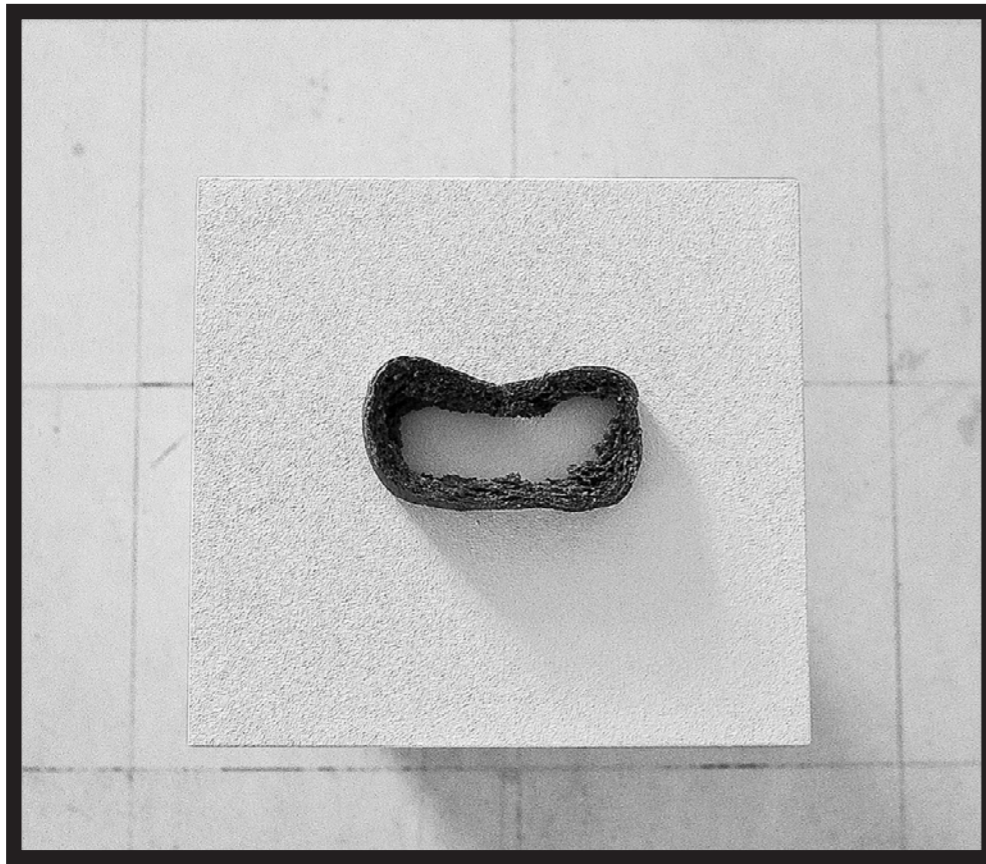
PARTICIPANTS: Olivera Batajić, art director (Tipometar, Belgrade) ★ Lazar Bodroža (Metaklinika, Belgrade) ★ Škart group (Belgrade) ★ Marijana Zarić & Jovan Trkulja (Peter Gregson Studio, Novi Sad) ★ Filip Bojović (Fajn Hajp agency, Novi Sad) ★ Katarina Lukić Balažikova (Open Design Studio, Novi Sad/Bratislava)

MODERATORS: Dejan Kršić, graphic designer and publicist (WHW/Arkzin, Zagreb) & Borut Vild, graphic designer (Belgrade).



The public discussion *I(deology), D(esign) or Nothing* gathered contemporary design practitioners from Novi Sad, Belgrade and Zagreb, to discuss contemporary conditions for producing design, and its political background. ✖

Hans-Peter Feldmann,  
*Bread*, 2009

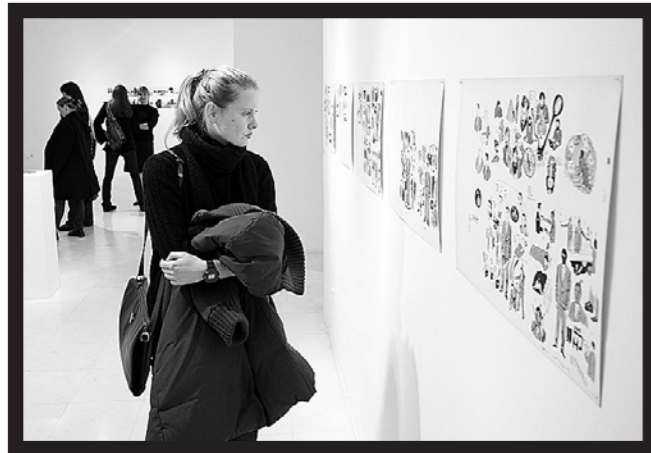


► 17.11-08.12.2009 ★ Gallery  
Nova, Zagreb

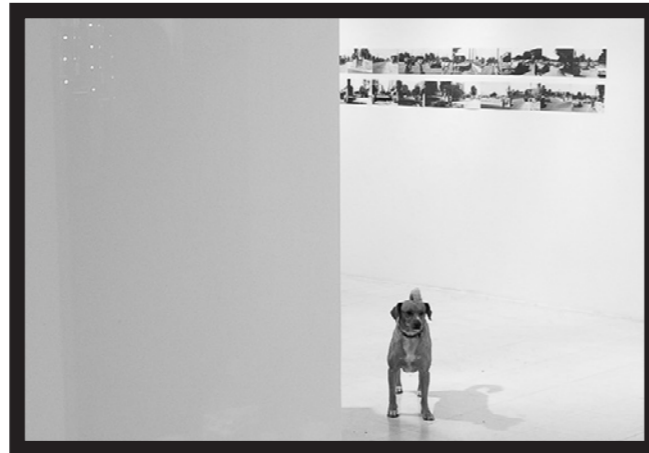
### School, Job, Family

CURATED BY WHW

Exhibition of works by  
Cengiz Çekil (Istanbul)  
★ Hans Peter Feldmann  
(Dusseldorf) ★ KwieKulik  
(Warsaw) ★ Siniša Labrović  
(Zagreb) ★ Katarina  
Zdjelar (Amsterdam  
& Belgrade) and Artur  
Żmijewski (Warsaw). ✖



▲ Siniša Labrović, *Postgraduate Education*, 2009



▲ Cengiz Çekil, *Visual Tracks*, 1979 (2009), ALL PHOTOS: IVAN KUHARIĆ



▲ Cover, *A3.Format* Vol. 4, DESIGN BY Metaklinika

● 17.11.2009 ★ Museum of Contemporary  
Art of Vojvodina, Novi Sad

### A3.Format Group, project presentation

**A**3.Format ([www.a3format.org](http://www.a3format.org)) is an art & design collective initiated in 2005 by Filip Bojović from Novi Sad, working closely with Vladimir Manovski. The idea of the *A3.Format* project is that creative ideas begin with an online collaborative platform, which is open to a range of interventions on a so-called 'digital canvas', dimensions 29.7×42 cm. The origin of the *A3.Format* project started with the development of this digital format, using the Internet. *A3:ID* – is the presentation of the *Ideology of Design* competition works for publication [Vol:4] [digital version]. This includes specific modified fonts, 'handwritten' typographies, experimental illustrated letters, systems 'inside grid', 'modular', 'stretched'... The publication is a particular overview of new typographic tendencies among several younger authors currently working in the countries of the former Yugoslavia. The rules were simple, use one colour – black. ✖

● 18.11.2009 ★ Museum of Contemporary  
Art of Vojvodina, Novi Sad

### ID: Ideology of Design, reader promotion

PARTICIPANTS: Branislav Dimitrijević, art historian, writer  
& curator, Belgrade ★ Nenad Malešević, design theorist,  
Belgrade ★ MODERATION: Branka Ćurčić, the reader editor

**A**part from the programme of talks that took place during the exhibition, the project's discursive platform was completed with the publication of thirteen collected essays, which provide a theoretical insight into the theme of the project, published by *Autonomeia* ([www.autonomeia.org](http://www.autonomeia.org)), New York.

The authors of the essays: Jean Baudrillard ★ Igor Chubarov ★ an interview with Jerko Denegri ★ Branislav Dimitrijević ★ Hal Foster ★ Dejan Kršić ★ Nenad Malešević ★ Metahaven ★ Borislav Mikulić ★ Barbara Predan ★ Jacques Rancière ★ Feđa Vukić and WHW collective  
EDITOR: Branka Ćurčić  
DESIGNER: Peter Gregson Studio, Novi Sad  
ISBN 978-1-57027-209-7



▲ ID: *Ideology of Design* reader promotion, PHOTO: ORFEAS SKUTELIS

*ID: Ideology of Design* is also an integral part of a long-term project *Individual Utopias Now & Before* ([www.pro.ba/bs/utopije/](http://www.pro.ba/bs/utopije/)), which is organised in cooperation with *SCCA/pro.ba* from Bosnia and Herzegovina and *T.I.C.A.* from Albania. ✖



○ / + / □ / ▶ / /

08.05–02.06.10 ★ former Museum of Contemporary Art, Zagreb

### Art Always Has Its Consequences exhibition

CURATED BY Dóra Hegyi & Zsuzsa László (tranzit. hu) ★ Magdalena Ziolkowska & Katarzyna Słoboda (Muzeum Sztuki Łódź) ★ kuda.org ★ & What, How & for Whom/WHW

EXHIBITION OF WORKS BY: Creativity Exercises (Miklós Erdély & Dóra Maurer)

★ Goran Đorđević ★ Miklós Erdély ★ Andreas Fogarasi ★ Guerilla Art Action Group ★ Tibor Hajas ★ Sanja Iveković ★ David Maljković ★ Dimitrije Bašičević Mangelos ★ Vlado Martek ★ Piet Mondrian ★ Ciprian Mureșan ★ Deimantas Narkevičius ★ Andreja Kulunčić ★ Novi Kolektivizam ★ Andrzej Partum ★ Gyula Pauer ★ Tomo Savić-Gecan ★ Mladen Stilinović ★ Sean Snyder ★ Tamás St. Auby ★ Bálint Szombathy ★ Milan Trenc ★ Ultra-red &

★ *As soon as I open my eyes, I see a film* (cinema clubs & the Genre Film Festival/GEFF) - Ana Janevski (Museum of Modern Art Warsaw)

★ *Didactic Exhibition: Abstract Art*

★ *Ideology of Design: Fragments on the History of Yugoslav Design*

★ *Symposium Wrocław '70*

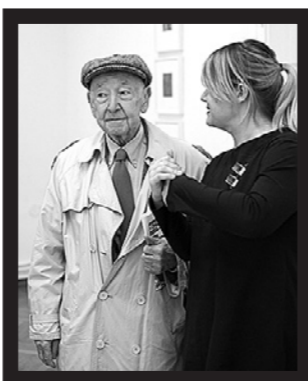
✘

▶ November 2009

### Art Always Has Its Consequences, Gallery Nova Newspapers № 21/22

EDITED BY WHW

The last special edition of *Gallery Nova Newspapers* published within the framework of *Art Always Has Its Consequences*, contextualised the *New Productions* exhibitions and *Gallery Nova* programme in 2009, and included texts by **Meltem Ahiska**, **Boris Buden**, **Mladen Dolar**, **Morad Farhadpour** and **Erden Kosova**. ✘



◀

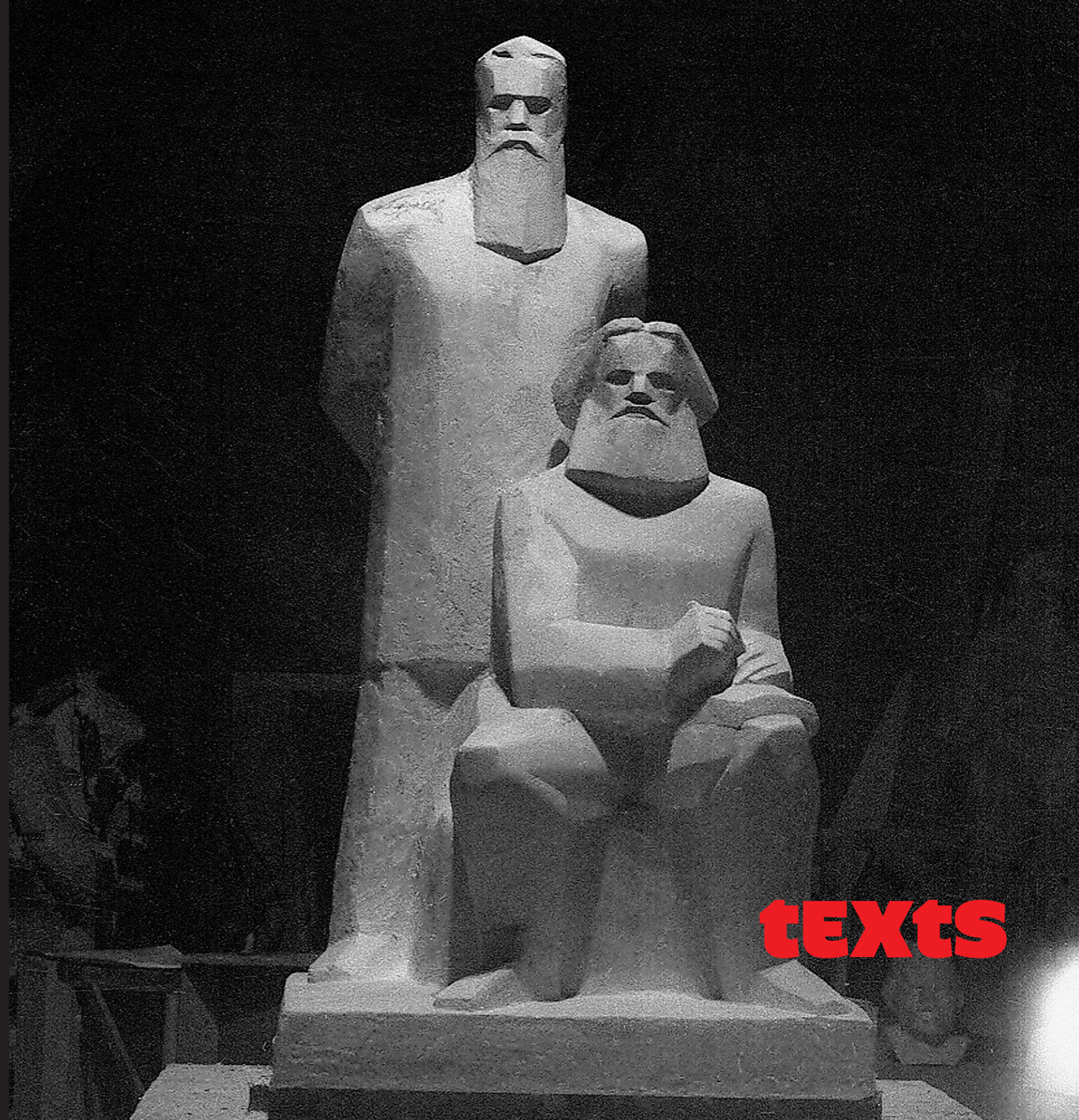
EXHIBITION VIEW:  
Mladen Stilinović,  
*Tomorrow*,  
1975 (2006)  
and  
Piet Mondrian,  
*Composition in red,  
blue and yellow*, 1933,  
PHOTO: IVAN KUHARIĆ

EXHIBITION VIEWS:  
*Art Always Has Its  
Consequences*,  
IMAGE 2: Ivan  
Picelj with Sabina  
Sabolović,

ALL PHOTOS: IVAN KUHARIĆ



▶  
Vojin Bakić, *Marx  
& Engels, model of  
the proposal to the  
monument, 1953.*  
PHOTO: TOŠO DABAC



**texts**

**g.m. tamás**

# COMMUNISM ON THE RUINS OF SOCIALISM

**O**ur beloved heroine has said our choice is 'socialism or barbarism'. It is quite clear what she meant. Capitalism threatens to annihilate civilisation. Socialism took it upon itself to save it. By 'socialism' we should understand 'the real movement' – trade unions, workers' parties, workers' councils, proletarian revolutions, a large body of theory and of committed art, and the resulting systems of government – that set its face against capital and the bourgeois state, and thus, has attempted to save and transform civilisation as it has found it. Civilisation has certainly survived, such as it is, thanks to socialism, nuclear war has been averted and, for a while, we have perhaps witnessed a slight attenuation of cruelty and a minuscule retreat of misery and inequality, at least there, where the workers' movement could force temporary compromises on the adversary. While fighting barbarism and saving civilisation, socialism became barbarous itself and was compelled to forget how to be socialist.

Socialism aimed at equality in every sense, social fairness, a well-anchored presence of the working class in politics where the Party has played the role of the *tribunus plebis*. In some places it has expropriated private companies and let them be run by the state, helped to introduce universal franchise, old-age pensions, paid holidays, free schools and healthcare, higher wages, shorter working hours, cheap housing, cheap public transport, unemployment benefit, social assistance of various kinds, upheld the possibility of a strong cultural opposition to the system, thereby making bourgeois society freer, more pluralistic, less racist and sexist, mostly rid of traditional deference and humility, less religious, less punitive, more hedonistic in its general outlook, less restrictive in its sexual mores – and so on. This is indeed an advance for civilisation, at a tremendous cost of course. Be that as it may, the perfected variant of bourgeois society, modern liberal democracy, would have never come into being without the contribution of socialism, given the intrinsic and perva-

sive political weakness of the bourgeoisie, which was always sharing its class power either with elements of the *ancien régime* or, failing that, with representatives of the working class or various state élites such as, in the recent past, the military and other bureaucratic apparatuses, marching to the beat of a different drummer.

It is precisely *this* civilisation that is now collapsing all around us.

This forcibly reminds us (and it should) that we communists are barbarians, that we are enemies of civilisation, that the salvaging work of socialism has only propped up capitalism, which is the only kind of civilisation to be had if the separations that are at its base persist – and this civilisation is sure to destroy itself and humanity exactly as Rosa Luxemburg predicted.

For it is communism that wishes to put an end to a whole comprehensive system of separations,

- ★ to the separation of the producers and of the means of production,
- ★ to the separation of the propertied and those without property,
- ★ to the difference between citizens and non-citizens,
- ★ to the difference between men and women,
- ★ between adults and children,
- ★ between straight and queer,
- ★ between people well and ill,
- ★ between manual and intellectual labour,
- ★ between leaders and led,
- ★ between exploiters and the exploited,
- ★ between oppressors and the oppressed,
- ★ between rich and poor,
- ★ between proletarian and bourgeois,
- ★ between coloured and white,
- ★ between 'state' and 'civil society',
- ★ between science and religion,
- ★ between theory and practice,



▲ Milan Trenc,  
*Hammer and  
sickle*, Start, 1986

- ★ between ‘sane’ and ‘insane’,
- ★ between authority and subversion,
- ★ between work and leisure,
- ★ between producer and consumer,
- ★ between knowledge and ignorance,
- ★ between teachers and taught,
- ★ between soul and body,
- ★ between art and life,
- ★ between town and country,
- ★ between courtesy and kindness,
- ★ between desire and love,
- ★ between community and individuality,
- ★ between action and reflection,
- ★ between nature and artifice,
- ★ between beautiful and ugly,
- ★ between law and morals,
- ★ between tradition and innovation,
- ★ between memory and oblivion,
- ★ between identity and difference,
- ★ between ‘state’ and ‘civil society’,
- ★ between priest and layman,
- ★ between powerful and powerless,
- ★ between fortunate and unfortunate,
- ★ between strong and weak,
- ★ between armed and unarmed,
- ★ between raptor and victim,
- ★ between expert and amateur,
- ★ between art and audience,
- ★ between successful and unsuccessful,
- ★ between (closed) text and talk, writing and speaking,
- ★ between friend and foe,
- ★ between ‘public’ and ‘private’,
- ★ between guest and host,
- ★ between home and abroad,
- ★ between strange and familiar,
- ★ between inner and outer.

Our civilisation has been ‘humanised’ thanks to separations. It has separated power (branches of government) because there is power. It has declared pluralism and tolerance because it has given up on truth. It draws frontiers and boundaries because it cannot trust merely human (that is, political) communities, it must ground them on the basis of race, ethnicity, language, culture, tradition, inertia about the past, on any social passion that transcends – or seems to transcend – class. It redistributes wealth because wealth is always poorly

distributed. It offers legal redress for injustice, for it is unjust. It enforces voluntary contracts between the unequal to offer formal equality because there is no substantial equality. It offers marriage to make peace between men and women whom it has made into enemies. It punishes thieves because there is property. It enforces taxation because people don’t feel they have to contribute to the common good, as it does not appear to exist. It instigates elections since the permanent power of the same powerful men would be intolerable, thereby recognising – what everybody knows – that power is evil. It differentiates between legal entitlements and rights, and informal power. It tries to mitigate cultural differences through schooling, as ‘raw’, untutored humanity sinks into ‘spectacular’ idiocy, as economic, political, military and cultural power seems to coagulate.

Socialism has contributed to closing the unfinished business of the Enlightenment, to the closing of the unfinished business of creating representative government, to the completion of the incomplete industrialisation, urbanisation and secularisation. But most importantly, it has helped replace *subordination* with *separation* (to replace ‘status’ by ‘contract’) and therefore it was the co-author of bourgeois modernity. At the origin of exploitation there is the separation of the producers from the means of production. The latter are owned by the capitalist, the former have only themselves – their time – to offer. By purchasing the means of production and time itself, the capitalist fuses people and things, labour and capital, matter and time, mediating it through money. The proletarian has to ‘go’ voluntarily, deliberately to the capitalist to offer her time to the latter, the contract formalising the sale is a voluntary act between equals. At the moment of this transaction – but not later – the proletarian is not the subordinate of the bourgeois(e) and she is not her superior. In agrarian and aristocratic societies, producers do sometimes own their means of production (land, cattle), and the surplus is appropriated through legal means (taxes, tithes, *corvée* etc.) by the lord, for the lord is the superior of the subordinate and subaltern peasant or labourer whose giving up of surplus value is coerced through the legal acceptance and enforcement of hierarchy. Hierarchy does not disappear from capitalism altogether, but it is frequently merely supernumerary. The separation and, thus, the fusion are perfected only in capitalism. Socialism – ‘the real movement’ – has improved contracts, the price of the labour force has gone up, working hours down, reducing misery and legitimising separation.

Entering production through the gate of the labour contract, solemnising the sale of her time, the proletarian immediately loses her status as a contracting party equal to – and as free as – the capitalist. She will become a subordinate, but less so to a person or persons than to capital, this subordination, mediated through the ‘general intellect’, technology and science. Blueprints, algorithms, software, instructions, regulations are not negotiated, but prescribed or ordered to increase ‘efficiency’, that is, productivity. The social division of labour separates proletarians into ‘professions’ with the concomitant ideology of proficiency, of ‘pride of workmanship’. Life in the workplace is devoid of the civil liberties allegedly obtained ‘outside’, in the marketplace and in the public sphere. Rhythm, movement, bodily needs, space of confinement, the effort required, behaviour, even style are determined by rigid rules. The profound wisdom of the Ancients who equated freedom with leisure is vindicated. As Marx has repeatedly shown, life begins after work.

How is this possible in a society which deems itself free? It is realised in a quite unencumbered manner by the specific idea that bourgeois modernity has the correct division of ‘public’ and ‘private’. Contractual relationships, being voluntary, non-hierarchical, symmetrical, are private. If you choose to sell yourself and your time under certain conditions, it is your affair; you can terminate such voluntarily assumed obligations at will. Of course, there are laws forbidding you to sell yourself into slavery, slaves being, after all, unpaid. There is a hierarchy in the public sphere, however, but this hierarchy is legal rather than personal and is therefore impermanent, unlike the old dispensation of rank and of the noble and the ignoble. In this respect the ‘rule of law’ means a hierarchy that is impersonal, institutional, within which personal freedom is protected by public authority within carefully defined limits. You may elect your Member of Parliament or mayor, and you can unseat him or her. You do not choose your exploiter (although you can sometimes chose your specific employer) or your boss or your foreman or *contremaître* at will. If public power wants to confine your movements, it has to argue this in a court of law. If you are prevented at your workplace from talking or from urinating, no argument is necessary. By denying the presence of coercion and power in the workplace – which is the indispensable foundation of inner peace and cohesion in a capitalist society – bourgeois modernity produces the semblance of liberty very well.

In aristocratic societies, of which feudalism is only one, coercion is unified and so is supremacy. Coercion stems from hierarchy, thus it is an accepted feature of the human condition, and liberty is an enclave – in fact, a pretty voluminous enclave – given that labour is not a universal condition, there are escapes (such as monasteries and pilgrimages, respect for mendicants and the destitute, a possible escape from the generality of procreative sex and marriage), and time is not unified in the capitalist manner.<sup>01</sup>

In capitalism, time is divided into two: labour time and leisure time. Both are ruled to be private. Labour time is private, since it is under the rule of private contracts assumed under the dominion and through the mediation of the market which is – besides *Öffentlichkeit* and voluntary associations – the main component of ‘civil society’ as opposed to the state, which is virtually synonymous with ‘the public’ – but so is leisure time where the producer who has ended her work is celebrating her *Feierabend* as a consumer, a person at rest or play, a householder, parent, a sexual partner or as a person out of her mind: asleep. When and where does a proletarian enter the public sphere? The public sphere – politics, law (legislation and jurisprudence, natural rights and the constitution), morals – appears to the proletarian as an abstraction outside her time, which is completely filled with ‘the private’ and is apparently wholly determined by ‘choice’. As both work and leisure are presented as being governed by ‘choice’, obligations are inherent and hidden; seemingly they are mere consequences of the natural order, only ‘framed’ from the outside by legal conditions and guarantees. Obligations appear only in the breach for the taxpayer, debtor, voter, nation-state citizen, enlisted soldier, which proletarians exclusively are when they are neither working nor at leisure while they are private persons.

Both proletarians and the bourgeois can ‘participate in politics’ in their ‘free time’ as ‘private citizens’ (a beautiful English oxymoron) in electoral constituencies (districts) in which they are placed according to where they live as private

<sup>01</sup> On the crucial character of time in the formation of capitalist society, there are two important recent Marxist works: Moishe Postone, *Time, Labour and Social Domination: A Reinterpretation of Marx’s Critical Theory*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993 and Antonio Negri, “The Constitution of Time”, in: *Time for Revolution*, London and New York: Continuum, 2003, pp. 21-137.



householders.<sup>02</sup> Nevertheless, their separation from ‘the public’ is absolute. Hence, political subjectivity is nowhere to be found. Representation is, of course, no *prima facie* domination, but it is – quite in Carl Schmitt’s sense – a ‘neutralisation’, a dissolution of politics, law and morals by way of entrusting political subjectivity, collective deliberation and rationality (literally) to others limited in transforming this into autocratic rule by another abstraction, a superior law, legislating law (constitutions, international law, judicially created law, natural right and ‘human rights’ etc.). Separation ends in conflation, resulting thereby in separation within the person (*bourgeois* and *citoyen*, ‘man and citizen’, the reign of desire and the reign of reason, the latter always construed as self-limiting, altruistic, diligent, thrifty, disciplined and so on), reunited again in a putative community (the ‘nation’ and similar constructs).

Socialism, ‘the real movement’, represented in the West by social democracy and its ramifications such as Euro-Communism, and in the East by ‘really existing socialism’ has done nothing to obliterate this state of affairs. It has effected ‘progress’ in patches and it has instituted a sort of counter-power in the guise of a new ‘tribunate’, it was able to defend an adversary culture ranging from high modernism to revolutionary counter-cultures and subcultures, which it hated all along, and it created a collective ideological dignity for a people of have-nots. By remaining within the orbit of capitalism, it has replaced the class struggle with a largely fictitious conflict between ‘the market’ and ‘the state’ or a rational government of planners, which is still what the international media calls ‘socialism’. Planning is another name for egalitarian, top-down redistribution as though the market were not also a device of redistribution and as though there might exist a market without legal regulation, that is, without planning. As far as the proletarians as consumers and political actors are concerned, planning through the prescription of ‘natural’, quantitative production goals and of consumer prices (‘real socialism’) or planning through taxation, monetary and budgetary controls (‘market capi-

talism’) differs only in terms of its social content, austerity measures aimed at the reduction of real wages, the increase of relative labour time and the creation of ‘industrial reserve armies’ (redundancies, unemployment or, indirectly, compulsory work) being perfectly possible in both. For the fundamental separation – that of the producers and the means of production – persists in both, in spite of the initial taking of *political* power by the proletarian party<sup>03</sup> (and, of course, the separation of politics and of the economy is a key feature of capitalism to begin with).

The name of ‘state capitalism’ (a term elaborated by the International Socialist Tendency led by Tony Cliff, now represented by the SWP in Britain and groups affiliated with it elsewhere) is acceptable if we take several factors into account. ‘Real socialism’ was state capitalism from the proletariat point of view alone, surely a privileged sight for us. As I said before, it does not matter one iota for the proletarian producer whether the means of production are owned by an individual, a limited liability company, an investment fund or the ‘socialist state’ led by the workers’ party, and she has to sell her labour force and labour time in order to have access to the means of production to enable her to earn a living, and thus she spends her life forces on objectives independent and alien to her. Even the *real* subsumption of labour to capital is not prevented by ‘public ownership’. (Similar situations are taking place under the rule of social democratic régimes, although things are less well-defined.) But from the point of view of the bourgeois revolution – still an unfinished business and likely to remain so – completed within the historical limits of the possible by various ‘socialist régimes’ the picture is different.

Fascists were not entirely mistaken in treating liberalism and socialism as their twin enemies. (Curiously, in Nazi vocabulary the common term for both was ‘Marxism’, which, according to the *Horst-Wessel-Lied*, had to be trampled along with ‘reaction’, i.e. the conservative and monarchist *Soldateska* and high bureaucracy.) This is of course an error as far as communist theory is concerned, for communism is beyond

02 The workers’ council and the proletarian party (and the trade union), on the contrary, is based on the workplace, and thus takes up a strategic position at the point of production, which has been the beginning of new politics, see G. M. Tamás, “Marx on 1989”, *Angelaki*, London (forthcoming); there is a Croatian translation, “Marx o 1989”, *Up & Underground*, № 17-18, Zagreb 2010, pp. 42-56.

03 Cf. G. M. Tamás, “A Capitalism Pure and Simple”, *Left Curve*, № 32 (2008), pp. 66-75, reprinted in *Genealogies of Post-Communism*, Adrian T. Sirbu, Alexandru Polgár, eds., *Idea*, Cluj/Kolozsvár/Klausenburg, 2009, pp. 11-28; “Counter-Revolution Against A Counter-Revolution”, *Left Curve*, Oakland, № 33 (2009), pp. 61-67, the same (with footnotes) in *Maska*, № 121-122 (Spring 2009, Ljubljana), pp. 16-31 (in English and Slovene).

Enlightenment, although ‘real socialism’ (both the social democratic and the Bolshevik version) is its pinnacle. We have to examine this aspect very carefully as the future of communism, at least in Europe, China and a number of other regions with a ‘real socialist’ past (and no region is totally exempt from such influences, perhaps in the mitigated form of a ‘welfare state’ or a developmentalist/populist semi-autocracy), depends on it. I do not speak of mere industrialisation, urbanisation, secularisation or the like, but of the success of ‘real socialism’ (planned state capitalism) in bringing forth *a people*. This success is obscured by the vexed problem of ‘democracy’ versus ‘dictatorship’. I will return to this dilemma in a moment. Here, I am attempting only to describe something that is more or less common in social democracy and in Soviet-type societies. The political question is naturally, whether or not the creation of *a people* is relevant in regarding the devastated field of ruins baptised as ‘real socialism’ as a possible ground for the communist project.

The creation of *a people* by planned state capitalism steered by an initially proletarian party should be regarded primarily from the simple Aristotelian definition of democracy as the rule of the poor over the rich, defined similarly by Pseudo-Xenophon, the unknown author of the arch-conservative tract, *The Constitution of the Athenians* (IVth century BC) as the rule of the wretched over ‘quality’. This did not ever mean that poverty was or was likely to be ended, only that social power could be counterbalanced by political power. The Roman tribunate did not aim at the obliteration of property, only at the rehabilitation of *ager publicus*, and handouts to the indigent and the preservation of an independent counter-power. ‘Democracy’ has also meant (and it still does to a certain, ever dwindling, extent) *lay power*, magistrates and political leaders elected by drawing lots, and devices to prevent strong political or military privilege. The people, essentially those who are free and without property, were circumscribed by their social position – as opposed to ‘the nation’ – within an arrangement that sanctified conflict under the political preponderance of the ‘lower classes’ (*hoi polloi*: the many).

However little this has to do with the original socialist idea (e.g. Proudhon, parts of Marx and Engels, Lassalle), it was ideologically inherited from the radical strands of the French revolution (from Babeuf to Blanqui) and it had become the essence of ‘real socialism’ whose work was – and this explains in part its horrors of tyranny and persecution – to annihilate old élites and to instaurate the (classical re-

publican) idea of political equality in the sense of the power of the ‘men of the people’ meaning in practice committed, ‘class-conscious’ and ‘organised’ workers and ‘organic’ Party intellectuals. This power was as absolute as power could ever be, but this should not hide its defining *negative* function from us. ‘Real socialism’ remained beyond doubt a class society but, paradoxically, without a full-bore, authentic ruling class. The traditional kind of ruling class with its concomitant authority/deference, rôles handed down, permanence of position, cultural independence (*habitus*, style, elegance, manners, taste, bodily demeanour, patronage, conspicuous consumption, pomp and circumstance, *orgueil*), all based on wealth *inherited* and *hereditary*, disappeared altogether. Rôles, functions, positions, influence and (impermanent) rank were constantly redistributed, the actual ruling was done by *an institution*, the members of which were subject to the rotation, advancement and rustication (*limogement*) usual in an institution: to use an imperfect historical parallel, a court rather than a nobility. Property – the ownership of the means of production – was separated from the producers but was not individualised, and control as such could not be and was not inherited. Those who exercised control were selected politically and bureaucratically, not according to the hereditary privileges of their forebears assured by the concept of property inherent in Roman law and decisive in all ‘white’ and many other (caste or class) societies.

Imprecisely and perhaps even erroneously, it was ‘the state’ that was seen to personify (in fact, it had de-personalised) class rule in ‘real socialism’, hence the intensely moralised and politicised character of proletarian revolutions against ‘real socialism’ (bureaucratic, planned state capitalism) from Kronstadt to Berlin 1953, Budapest 1956, Prague 1968, Gdańsk 1981, Temesvár/Timişoara 1989. Where ‘socialism’ of any kind is involved, politics cannot be far behind. In ‘real socialism’ many things were hidden (such as inequality, exploitation, oppression, poverty and resistance to all this), one thing though, the sheer fact of power, was never hidden. The Party has always posed the question of power (since it *was* power) and it has decreed that *the people* had power as long as the State owned most economic assets and the Party was the only authority allowed to rule the State in the interest of the many, as any relaxation of this double exercising of power would threaten equality and popular supremacy. Anyone who argued against the Party – who was therefore outlawed and out of bounds – had to prove that any gain in any other respect would not put popular, more precisely *plebeian* rule

(the ‘tribunate’) and its virtual synonym, equality, at risk. This task was fulfilled by the aforementioned revolutions that were mostly egalitarian, plebeian, ideologically socialist (not communist) revolutions.

The character of these *plebeian* societies with their cult of work and of the worker – where the usual tableau of virtues was reversed to an extent unknown in the West, where heroism and altruism were attributed to the everyday and where (however fraudulently) resistance and disobedience were extolled, where not kings but recalcitrant retainers were praised, where historical revolutions were never presented as ‘mob rule’, where misfortune was not attributed to personal failure but to injustice, but where people who tried to act upon these virtuous ideas were punished – cannot be understood if we do not take into account the dominance of anti-clericalism and atheism, the glorifying of science and advanced technology, the respect in which especially modern high culture was held. This militant positivism and modernism, in conjunction with the central state idea of equality, which shaped a society without a hereditary and radically separated ruling class (so that if compared to the West, it was virtually headless since the dynastic pretensions of some of the dictators provoked only hilarity – the source of fear was elsewhere) has increased the feeling of a human world thoroughly cleansed of the sacred.

I am not stressing here the well-known repressive, mendacious and generally unfree character of the Eastern ‘real socialist’ régimes as I have done so copiously earlier, including during their reign, and I have no regrets for having attacked and ridiculed them. What I am trying to do now is to examine whether *the specific ground created by a planned state capitalism dominated by an egalitarian, rationalistic and secular politics expressed, disseminated and enforced by the single Party ideologically committed to socialism and to the working class* is or is not fertile for the communist project opposed to the separations essential for the survival of what we would broadly call capitalism. Here, as I am not writing detailed political history, I shall largely omit the twenty or so troubled years that have passed since *die Wende*, which do not seem to have swept away some of these determinations, especially three factors: (1) egalitarianism and the consubstantial lack of deference, and the lack of a clear sense of legitimate authority; (2) an unprecedented absence of the sacred; (3) a sharply political view of the economy and of the state not regarded as separate. These are not merely thought habits or an ‘illiberal political culture’ (albeit there is something in

this), these are social characteristics and they fit together.

There can be no doubt that the very special version of a state capitalism dubbed ‘real socialism’ has missed the rather limited goals of the classical workers’ movement as formulated by Kautsky, Otto Bauer, Lenin and Trotsky – giants, but the giants of a bygone era – however, its historical creation was not just another, at the time quite ‘advanced’, variant of exploitation decorated with an emancipatory message confined in the main to symbolism. Also, while it should be clearly distinguished from the ultimate communist project, we should not be too slow to recognise its sometimes rather repulsive and often tragic grandeur. Whatever we might feel about it – and paying our silent respect to its countless victims – it has made a clean sweep of authority that was unprecedented in scale and in subversive, destructive, negative durability. What I mean by an astonishing absence of the sacred is not simply a conspicuous absence of *mysterium tremendum*, which has been increasingly foreign to the modern experience since the sixteenth century. The sense that there is nothing intrinsically inviolable has been confined in the West to radical avant-gardes. While ‘real socialism’ has not been exactly famous for bold experimentation, it could never entirely repudiate its revolutionary and rationalistic origins. It regarded itself as an order resting on philosophy and science – and censorship does not preclude a fundamental and sincere, however misguided, love for truth. Even those who are striving towards truth and have but a slight chance to attain it, have to recognise at the start that mere belief will not do. The Holy Inquisition and the Santa Hermandad could not and did not uproot all authentic Christian faith, nor did Stalinist censorship and the uniformly imposed ‘Party line’ totally deracinate the philosophical, *not* theological character of the régime’s political self-understanding. (Here philosophy signifies something similar to what in the eighteenth century was called ‘Newtonian philosophy’, an allegedly illusionless conception of ‘Nature and Man’. By the way, this is no novelty. Herr Sonnenfels, the confidential minister of the great enlightened despot, Emperor Joseph II of Austria was at the same time the head of his secret police – and virtually the inventor of the genre, with covert reports on the opinions of His Majesty’s subjects – and his propaganda chief, the organiser of his radical but loyal opposition, progressive masonic lodges, who edited a philosophical-political monthly called *Der Mann ohne Vorurteil...*)

While Stalinists tried at times to dilute their wine with nationalist and even anti-Semitic dishwater, this was a fail-

ure. Apart from this, ‘legitimacy’ (a term I happen to detest) was not offered as a result of origins, descent, tradition – something earlier and higher – especially not anything divine. What can be more secular than to refer the elevated conceptual moment of ‘foundation’ to ‘interests’ denied so vehemently by all other class societies so subservient to those? Which other class society would dare to mention *class* (in this case, the working class) in foundational constitutional documents? Which state, with the partial and paradoxical exception of the United States, would venture to obliterate all ethnic or geographic-regional reference from its name, to make an international flag (the red flag) its own and the *Internationale* its (first) ‘national’ anthem, and the terrestrial globe hugged by stripes saying in all languages ‘The proletariat of all countries, unite!’ its coat of arms? (The defunct German Democratic Republic had a crossed hammer and calliper compass in its coat of arms, very masonic, if you ask me.) No lions, no unicorns.

One of reasons why ‘real socialism’ had to be so tyrannical and bloodthirsty (similar to certain phases of the French revolution) was that it was not blessed with any kind of cohesive ideology making an even implicit claim to the suprahuman, to any *prior* certainty implied in the most mundane and triv-

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red Shanghai and hammer-and-sickle Billancourt – an austere and parsimonious, and disciplined and dead serious attempt at self-abnegation has been made to call *a people* into being by subtracting anything *above*: anything, in other words, which was represented by an aristocracy or a clergy; a merely *human* community with no ‘outside’, a world of plebeians without property faced only with a faceless state, impersonal like (and in this case identical with) capital, where ‘masses’ were not identified contemptuously with ‘crowds’ where no one could pinpoint the true social origin of oppression and confinement. The masses, which, during instances

ial constitutional doctrine of natural right, prevented as it was by its philosophical and revolutionary self-understanding. As Alex Callinicos has shown in his comradely debate with Slavoj Žižek,<sup>94</sup> Lenin and Trotsky even rejected the possibility of a merely moral justification – you never saw such rationalist atheists. (This world view is encompassed with classic simplicity in one immortal masterpiece, John Lennon’s *Imagine*, the elegiac note in this *Lied* worthy of Schumann showing precisely the late moment in time for the history of the international workers’ movement and of the ‘progressive forces’.)

In former ‘real socialism’, from Berlin to Vladivostok, from Prague to Saigon – and including red Bologna and

**04** Alex Callinicos, ‘Leninism in the Twenty-First Century? Lenin, Weber and the Politics of Responsibility’, in: *Lenin Reloaded*, Sebastian Budgen, Stathis Kouvelakis, Slavoj Žižek, eds., Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2007, pp. 18-41. Cf. Slavoj Žižek’s foreword to Leon Trotsky, *Terrorism and Communism: A Reply to Karl Kautsky*, London: Verso, 2007, pp. vii-xxii. Compare Leon Trotsky’s debate with John Dewey in Trotsky, *Their Morals and Ours*, George Novack, ed., New York: Pathfinder Press, 1973 (many reprints).

of proletarian resistance protested that the state sending tanks against them was not ‘really’ socialist, were not engaging in semantic scholasticism. It was unimaginable that the state could be in opposition to the proletarian masses in a plebeian society with no ‘outside’. A system where the state was desperately denying that it had any existence separate and different from a society of equals could not be reformed, only destroyed.

In the social desert that followed this destruction of an industrial, secular, scientific, mundane, strict and non-bourgeois world, which was at the same time incapable of transcending the capitalist world of separations, of serial dichotomies, a society immobilised before the leap that never came, everything egalitarian and plebeian was denied but never quite contradicted. ‘Democracy’ could have meant a similar egalitarian world united with ‘civil liberties’, ‘pluralism’ and popular/representative government, but of course it did not. It might end in a perilous ‘civilisation’ worse than any barbarism, where the Other of the *class* would appear as the foreign, always a possibility in capitalism, and made likely by the *de facto* colonisation of these territories, this time not by any identifiable colonising empire-metropolis, but by forces that were invisible and occult.

Or a no less pernicious turning back to the moment of *rigor mortis* before ‘the changes’ (1988-91) when – as always since 1917 – the definitive leap could not take place, and begin from that imaginary moment without a visibly and also symbolically separated ‘above’, this time by turning against the invisible: against capital and the state which meant the same before ‘1989’. That turn would horrify people, as the horror of communism was described by Marx and Engels in *The Communist Manifesto*: turning against property, state, nation, family, heterosexual identity, religion, war, law, school, work, money and ‘culture’. Nietzsche has shown without any ambiguity that any respectable and vigorous civilisation depends on servitude and privilege. He was right, as his Greek models had been right, and like Joseph de Maistre was right before him when extolling the hangman as the main pillar of society. Communists should be – and in fact are – barbarians. Our enemies are justified in their hatred. No contemporary (or any) institutions will be allowed to exist. No permanence, hence no tradition.

Only people. ✘

## KUDA.ORG INTERVIEW WITH HITO STEYERL HOW ABOUT THINKING ABOUT THE FUTURE RATHER THAN THE PAST?

**KUDA.ORG:** Why is the experience of socialist countries important for the current moment, if, with the downfall of socialist states, emancipatory politics and the language of emancipation have disappeared. As you said, the language of an international workers’ movement has deteriorated, and solidarity beyond identity is impossible to think of even as a possibility. Is there another contemporary perspective on this issue?

**HITO STEYERL:** I don’t think the experience of any individual country or even a group of countries, is important for the present as such. The legacy of socialist internationalism is, though. As I see it this was usually secondary to specific national interests, or had already become so in the early 1920s. The story surrounding Rosa Luxemburg’s corpse illustrates that: last year, the suspicion emerged that Rosa’s body was actually never buried, but remained on display as an anonymous decapitated naked floater in a Berlin museum of pathology. It couldn’t be verified that this torso really was her body, but even the possibility that generations of Germans stared at Rosa’s torso as a forensic object is striking. It is paradigmatic of the tremendous hatred that (female) internationalists endured, not only from fascists but also from other socialists. The trajectories of the internationalist type of socialist relations are fascinating though and important for the present – the visual bonds between workers everywhere, that Dziga Vertov articulated visually, the international workers photographers networks of the 1920s, the anti-fascist aesthetics of resistance expressed by Peter Weiss, the tri-continental links established by the *Third Cinema*, but perhaps also the completely unexplored relations

between non-aligned countries. For example, what happened between Indonesia, Egypt and Yugoslavia in the 1960s and 1970s? If nothing, then why was this? Although the attempt to imagine alternative national or territorial histories rather than looking at relations, seems ultimately like a dead-end to me.

**KUDA.ORG:** What does it mean when you say that “you’ve lost faith in the postcolonial paradigm”?

**HITO STEYERL:** Exactly that. Essentially, any attempt to think about identity or its deconstruction always ends up with the question of origin or specificity. How about thinking about the future rather than the past? Let’s think about relationships, not identity? I found Hannah Arendt’s idea of natality as opposed to mortality extremely interesting. Where do we go from here? Where is there any potential to repeat something differently? It’s not about forgetting history, but about focusing it in a way that helps to reconfigure the present and avoid being nostalgic.

**KUDA.ORG:** There are some interesting thoughts about today’s ambivalence towards becoming a subject... Where does this ambivalence lay? Rather than connecting subjectivity to emancipation, you are writing about becoming an object – about objectivity – where the idea of emancipation opens up somewhat differently. How can someone perpetually objectified become an object in an emancipatory sense?

**HITO STEYERL:** I am taking my cue from some of the Soviet avant-garde artists: Popova, Stepanova and others. Can one engage with the power and tensions that are

condensed within objects (think commodity fetish)? If objects can be comrades as Rodchenko stated, comrades can also be objects, I suppose. I can be an object if that makes me a potential comrade. For example, could we be these digital objects called images, a condensation of (superfluous) labour power, desires and electricity? How about thinking of orchestrating (and joining in with) these energies instead of articulating subjects in relation to each other? These are thoughts derived from the practice of digital montage as applied to a more general field. In digital practice I am often confronted with the energetic, material, dynamic and affective aspect of the image, not its so-called content. How about focusing on this rather than the element of representation that most images usually profess?

There is another aspect of the object. Remember Hegel's master-slave paradigm. The slave emancipates himself by alienating himself into the object. But then the slave himself probably becomes a master, if only over nature, and he remains a slave to his own productivity, the work of death, as J.L. Nancy put it in Bataille's wake. Why should one strive to become like him? Why not be the object into which he divested himself? An anonymous object of divestment rather than investment or identification. I'd rather side with Rosa's torso than with another hapless master, though of course it would be preferable that she had stayed alive.

**KUDA.ORG:** In what way could digital communication, an image with unrestricted circulation, be privatised? What do you think about fundamental questions such as the transformation of property in today's networked society? There is a contradiction if immaterial products (ideas, language, affects, images) are being privatised, their reproducibility is limited and they become less productive. Is property becoming a restraint on the capitalist mode of production?

**HITO STEYERL:** Great question. On the other hand: do we care about capitalism's problems?

**HITO STEYERL** is a filmmaker and writer in the field of essayist documentary filmography and post-colonial critique, both as a producer and a theorist. Her principal topics of interest are media and the global circulation of images. She has participated in Documenta 12, Shanghai Biennial, Rotterdam Film Festival, and Manifesta 5. She was the subject of a solo exhibition at Neurer Berliner Kunstverein, 2009.

Steyerl holds a PhD in Philosophy and is a visiting professor at the University of Arts Berlin. She has taught film and theory at (amongst other institutions) Goldsmiths College and Bard College, Center for Curatorial Studies.

different practices of actually participating in images in different ways, by channelling, sharing, or engaging with their velocity and their drives. Although I deeply enjoy these practices, of course the web is not communism or paradise. It is the place of accelerated original accumulation, precisely because it attracts and captures so much desire and affect.

**KUDA.ORG:** What are the paradoxes of artistic autonomy in present times?

**HITO STEYERL:** Look at the film *Yojimbo* by Akira Kurosawa. There is a remake by Sergio Leone under the title *A Fistful of Dollars* (*Per un Pugno di Dollari*) with Clint Eastwood, so you might know the plot. But make sure you watch Kurosawa's take on it. In his version, a ronin, a classical swordsman freelancer comes to a village that is terrorised by two clans. The opening shot says it all: a dog walks by, a human hand in his mouth. *Yojimbo* has no choice but to liberate the village by smartly pitting the clans against each other.

If you are an artist, an intern, a gallerist, designer or any other cultural freelancer, think of these two clans as the nation and the market, the gallery and the museum, or neo-liberal cultural industries versus poorly subsidised feudal and reactionary national culture. Then grab a sword and learn from *Yojimbo*. ✖

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**KUDA.ORG:** We don't have to. But then as you noted there is the question of 'reality', which should be emphasised while analysing, for example, a poor image – I wouldn't say it has no value assigned in 'audiovisual capitalism' and that a poor image could be analysed without looking into the 'creative symbolic capital' that produces it and all the controversies surrounding it. Its value is one of ability of connection, circulation, accessibility, isn't it?

**HITO STEYERL:** Yes, you are completely right. This value can be siphoned away. *Youtube* is based on capitalising on the joy of sharing and creating. But this ambivalent situation also enables

# OVIDIU ȚICHINDELEANU WHERE ARE WE, WHEN WE THINK IN EASTERN EUROPE?

Peter Sloterdijk once wittily noticed that philosophy knows a madness unknown to psychiatry, since it can ask with all seriousness, as Hannah Arendt did: "where are we, when we think?"<sup>01</sup> Indeed, when a 'philosopher' thinks with 'critical doubt', a curious realm unfolds and opens up, the imaginary domain of the 'substance of thought, the transcendental subject, the total freedom of subjectivity, the subject of history, being-in-the-world' etc., from Descartes to Kant to Hegel to Lenin to Heidegger and beyond. Even in more or less non-philosophical uses of philosophy, one can nowadays glimpse this special madness lurking in the recurring question about the disappearance of the subject of history after the fall of the East European socialist bloc. Time after time, people ask in all seriousness, pushing themselves beyond the margins of the world: who can now bring the revolution, who can change the world? Which is to say: what realm of inwardness will change the realm of the outside – otherwise known as the world? And then: is THAT subject 'particular' or 'universal'? Is that subject really 'free'? Is its 'reason' truly unrestricted? The more desperate the situation of the world, the deeper the question seems to plunge into the depths of the thinking subject. In other words, the crisis to which humans have brought the world is symptomatically translated in Europe more often than not in a self-consuming question of inwardness or innerness, which is haunted on its good days by the spectre of the proletariat if not by guilt or shameless narcissism, as can be noticed in the post-communist proliferation

of concepts such as multitude, cognitariat, precariat, the other's peasants etc.

For his part, Sloterdijk argued that Descartes' foundational critical doubt, the birth of the Western modern concept of the thinking subject, is nothing but a radical amputation of the body, operated in order to reach the pure realm of thought. Everything coming to the presence of mind by way of senses can be a deception: the world is not to be trusted and the world is certainly not where truth is. Thought is where truth can be found. And the desired realm of truth actually turned out to be a little inner voice hissing in Descartes' ear: "I think, therefore"... One can argue that Descartes' mind echoed and embellished (or rationalised) as part of the same movement, the history of colonialism and capitalism in the modern world, in which hearing inner voices has been the counterpart of killing bodies. The absolute freedom of the Ego was proclaimed in Europe as the Atlantic slave trade changed the world. From this perspective, critical doubt has released an enormous apparatus of denial within the body of modern history. As well as being a radical amputation of the body, Descartes' doubt is also a radical purging of geography in a world so deeply fascinated by new maps and cartographies that it could not see any contradiction in calling places on Earth 'new lands'. What is more, while it is true that the demonic ruses of the world are shunned in his meditations, not all exteriorities are banned: in fact, the place of his reflection – a closed room with low ceiling, candle, bed and window – occupies a central part in Descartes' discourse. (Maybe this is one of the reasons why Descartes' philosophy was never considered 'foundational' of anything before the rise of the European urban middle-class). The emerging 'house

<sup>01</sup> Peter Sloterdijk, *Weltfremdheit*, Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1993, p. 294ff.

of knowledge' of Western rationality kept reproducing this gesture in the following centuries, talking from a hidden, undisclosed and unassumed locality, purging geography as it expanded its innerness throughout the world. Such is the power of the 'coloniality of knowledge', that it became impossible for some of the most intelligent men of the Western world to give the obvious answer to the question "Where are we, when we think?" – Well, not where 'you' think.

To collapse the question of the world into the problem of an abyssal subject means to actively deny the locality of thinking by reducing it to an 'essentialist particularity', a gesture incessantly reproduced both by Eurocentric apologists and by Eurocentric critics of Western modernity. However, if there is something fundamentally wrong about 'modernity', about capitalism, the modern-colonial world and the hegemony of Western civilisation, it is precisely its conception of universality. Namely, in the Western 'abyssal thought', what is non-universal vanishes as reality: "becomes nonexistent, and is indeed produced as nonexistent."<sup>02</sup> The Western universal forbids unholy alliances and mixtures. If total subjection, the coloniality of power and the coloniality of knowledge, are deeply embedded in Western models of learning, education and in institutions, making certain 'bodies' and 'geographies' disappear, and turning the justification of their disappearance into "historical reason", then the necessary task for the renewal of leftist thought is to 're-orient' itself by way of according epistemic dignity to materiality/corporeality and location. Such a possibility emerges in the idea of developing decolonial thought in Europe, not only as a performance of deconstruction of the legacies of colonialism and coloniality, but by actually bringing into the picture narratives of non-Eurocentric exteriorities, non-Western knowledges and the 'darker side of modernity'. Such a differing perspective emerges not only from the "other continent" of Latin America, but also from within Europe, for instance from Black Europe,<sup>03</sup> not in the least by seeing the experience of modernity from the perspective of slavery rather than

triumphalist progress, and from that of Eastern Europe, the latter in the form of a critical theory of post-communism as the glorified return of North-Atlantic universals, at the intersection of decolonial thought and epistemic materialism. As Walter Mignolo and others emphasised, decolonial thought poses the challenge of moving from internal critique – such as it has been practiced in many forms of Marxism, postmodern theory and poststructuralism, not to mention liberal human rights and technocratic feminism – to a transformative knowledge, one could say from reactive critique to positive resistance. The accompanying unfolding vision is not of alternative modernities, but of an "other modernity"<sup>04</sup> based on intellectual commitment to the ecology of knowledges and the principle that political resistance needs to be premised on epistemic resistance. The problem of internal critiques is not that they are not right, but of where they stand, when they are right. Where are the postmodern critiques of Western modernity in the time of global crisis? Aren't they always in 'transition'? The challenge of thinking within the more or less invisible borders of West-Eastern Europe is to multiply and connect the options of localities of thinking, beyond the overcoding and enclosing possibilities of the mirroring Western-universal transitions, from capitalism to socialism (1917-1992), and from socialism to capitalism (1989-2009). And in relation to the particular question of the struggle against capitalism, the one legacy of abyssal thought that survived the fall of socialism is that of the 'fallacy of the weakest link', and as always it reveals a hidden geography: since the revolution in the peripheries of Europe and of the world system 'failed', so the story goes, in order for capitalism to be defeated, the revolution must be carried by subjects situated in the very centres of capitalism. The burden of the transformation of the world would fall yet again on the Western subject. Other localities of thinking and acting matter only secondarily. This is precisely why a border philosophy of transition, a critical conception of the intense transformations of the post-communist transition – a historical phe-



▲ FIGURE 1 The Post-Communist Transition of Europe. (OT)

nomenon which transported the changes of Eastern Europe throughout 'Europe' – and a positive epistemic conception of the 'historical experience' of Eastern Europe under 'real socialism' are decisive for the renewal of leftist thought beyond internal criticism.

#### WHAT IS EASTERN EUROPE NOW?

I take 'now' to mean that which has been called 'post-communist history', the period between 1989-2009, an intense historical transformation generally characterised by a symbolic and material shift of Eastern Europe into Western Europe, as the illustration (see below) inspired by Pedro Lasch's work on Latino/a America suggests.<sup>05</sup> This shift of localities, and firstly of the localities of enunciation, was clearly noticed by Mladen Stilinović in his work from 1992, *An Artist who cannot speak English is NO artist*. So the short answer to the question in the title would therefore be: 'Nothing'.

The longer answer would be that today Eastern Europe is so many things that it is more hope than presence, and more past than future. After the fall of the Iron Curtain, East Europeans moved en masse, minds and bodies, to Western Europe, and Western Europe in its turn redefined or reinforced its own triumphant conception of the self, both by surveil-

<sup>05</sup> Pedro Lasch, "Guías de Ruta / Route Guides, 2003/2006," in Lize Mogel, Alexis Bhagat, eds., *An Atlas of Radical Cartography*, the Journal of Aesthetics and Protest Press, 2008.

ling and limiting the movement of the people formerly behind the Iron Curtain, and by helping them become part of the "free and civilised world." As Marina Gržinić recently argued, the whole region of Eastern Europe has become a border.<sup>06</sup> One can add that the apparent disappearance of borders as part of the process of EU integration meant the unprecedented rise of an international web of policing throughout 'Europe', a gigantic industry whose size is visible in the imposing headquarters of FRONTEX, the European Union agency for exterior border security, situated not accidentally in Warsaw, Poland.

As far as the former socialist bloc is concerned, the post-communist transition can be understood as a process of internal colonisation: namely, the local actualisation and specious materialisation of long durée forms of global power in the process of integrating a new zone into the world system of capitalism and into the Western hierarchy of knowledge systems. Accordingly, the opened up future of 1989 has become a series of enclosures with each step reducing the paths of 'transition' to a process of producing, highlighting and following the footprints of Western modernity and North-Atlantic universality. Thus post-communist universality removed from reality a manifold of historical, cultural and political experiences. More specifically, the main ideologies of the post-communist transition, 'anticommunism, Eurocentrism and capitalocentrism',<sup>07</sup> combined the rejection of epistemic and political relevance of one's own historical experience within the former socialist bloc with the production of local forms of coloniality of power, imperial difference, and capitalist subjection. The development of 'democracy' turned into an exclusively top down administration of complex 'reforms' understood only by experts and technocrats; 'democracy' had to be developed through 'shock therapy' and war, by fighting to obtain unprecedented loans, by selling the common property, by 'supporting the just war', and through an increased specialisation and alienation of the formal political sphere from the general population. Capitalocentrism ('free market' fundamentalism, which is not the same as reductionism)

<sup>06</sup> Marina Gržinić, a comment made during the workshop *Critical and Decolonial Dialogues Across South North and East West*, Middelburg, The Netherlands, 7-9 July 2010.

<sup>07</sup> Ovidiu Tichindeleanu, "The Modernity of Postcommunism", IDEA arts + society, #24, Cluj, 2006. See also "The Post-Communist Colonization. A Critical History of the Culture of Transition", Cluj: IDEA, 2010, forthcoming.

<sup>02</sup> See Boaventura de Sousa Santos, "Beyond Abyssal Thinking: From Global Lines To Ecologies Of Knowledges", Review, XXX-1, Binghamton, 2007.

<sup>03</sup> See Kwame Nimako and Stephen Small, "Theorizing Black Europe and African Diaspora: Implications for Citizenship, Nativism and Xenophobia," in D.C. Hine, T.D. Keaton, and S. Small, *Black Europe and the African Diaspora: Blackness in Europe*, University of Illinois, 2008.

<sup>04</sup> Walter Mignolo, *Desobediencia epistémica: Retórica de la modernidad, lógica de la colonialidad y gramática de la descolonialidad*, Buenos Aires: Ediciones del signo, 2010. See also Walter Mignolo, "Dispensable And Bare Lives. Coloniality And The Hidden Political/Economic Agenda Of Modernity," in: *Human Architecture: Journal Of The Sociology Of Self-Knowledge*, VII, 2, Spring 2009, pp. 69-88, and Walter Mignolo, "Delinking", *Cultural Studies* Vol. 21, Nos. 2-3, March/May 2007, pp. 449-514.

and Eurocentrism (the epistemic privilege – and not reduction – of Western experience) have been naturalised in the post-communist transition as the organic principles needed for a ‘return to normality’ after the “communist deviation.” This happened in the discourse of the civil society, and for intellectuals even more than in the discourse of state apparatuses or of the common man. And so, the post-communist transition to freedom progressed by enclosures: the progressive ‘integration’, in gradual steps, of the proliferating states of the former Eastern Bloc into Western structures of power: integration through loans into the Western-led international finance organisations: the World Bank and IMF (loans as early as 1991 for Poland), WTO membership (1995), integration into the Council of Europe (Hungary through to Romania 1990-1993), into the Western military alliance NATO (Czech Republic through to Romania 1997-2004), and finally into the European Union (Poland through to Romania 2004-2007). The political meaning of transition/integration is therefore the top down alignment of East European governmentality into the order of Western governmentality, of local economies into the world system of capitalism, and of local knowledges in the global geopolitics of knowledge.<sup>08</sup>

Moreover, the West-bound integration was accompanied by East-bound internal differentiation. Arguably, the main principle of internal differentiation has been colonial difference – which is what still defines in common parlance whatever is considered ‘Eastern’ or ‘local’ as opposed to ‘Occidental’ or ‘Western’. For a part of Eastern Europe, the first task was getting rid of its Easternness. The idea of ‘Central Europe’ is a geopolitical identity promoted by prominent anti-communist dissidents and intellectuals such as Vaclav Havel and Adam Michnik, and arguably, in the early 1990s it represented an attempt to get closer to the West by removing the ‘Eastern’ attribute of the former socialist bloc during the Cold War. Central Europe identified, as it were, the ‘West’ within the former socialist bloc, the ‘more European’ populations who actually returned ‘more quickly’ to the Free World after the fall of the Iron Curtain: thus there emerged the curious reality of a region which is temporally more advanced than others in the linear philosophy of time of the post-communist transition. Symbols regularly awarded to Western figures of power were reinstated as Central Europe’s highest honours, as evidenced by the restoration

<sup>08</sup> See also Ovidiu Tichindeleanu, “Towards a Critical Theory of Post-Communism?”, *Radical Philosophy* #159, 2010.

of the Order of the White Eagle in Poland in 1992 and of the Order of the White Lion in the Czech Republic in 1994. Thus the emerging historical subjectivity cut through the new symbolical differences, opening a new era of allochry, self-orientalisation and colour-blind racism, complicit with the production of whiteness within the region of the former socialist bloc. Therefore, crucial to the gradual identification with ‘Europe’ from the inside of the former socialist bloc was the cultural construction of the whiteness of East Europeans, filtered firstly through ethnocentrism – a traditional and particularly vicious form of Eurocentrism,<sup>09</sup> and most interestingly a form of demanding the mis-recognition of the Other: ‘I want you to say that you are not me, but don’t say it, for only I can speak here!’ This process started with the geopolitical identification of less-European, less-developed, inferior, more retarded (temporally) and eventually less-white categories ‘within’ Eastern Europe, via the Eastern neighbour of each East European state, via the gypsy subjects or peasants within one’s own nation state, or, when the Eastern border did not work, via the derogatory identification with ‘gypsies’ within the population of certain areas within the same state (such as Southern Romania for North-West Romanians). What is more, dominant anti-communism incessantly produced the general category of ‘post-communist racism’, a form of identifying local inferior urban men, firstly as the ‘failed’ products of ‘communism’, the human rejects stuck in the retrograde past, who are ‘holding back’ the otherwise normal progress of transition, and who have to be eliminated from public life (from which develop projects such as the ‘lustration’ of former CP members or appeals to remove the voting rights of senior citizens). Corroborated with the stages of integration of the former socialist bloc into the financial, political and military structures of Europe, the post-communist transition thus gave a new material and corporeal reality to the fundamental Eurocentric myth that all non-Europeans can be considered pre-Europeans. The rise of social fascism and the quasi-universal and pluri-faceted phenomenon of racism among East European elitist intellectuals and the average post-communist middle-class is an effect of such deep

<sup>09</sup> See Anibal Quijano, “Colonialidad del Poder, Eurocentrismo y América Latina”, in Edgardo Lander, ed., *Colonialidad del Saber, Eurocentrismo y Ciencias Sociales*, Buenos Aires: CLASCO-UNESCO 2003, or Anibal Quijano, “Coloniality of Power, Eurocentrism, and Latin America,” *Nepantla: Views from South* 1.3, Duke University Press, 2000, pp. 533-556.

transformations. However, this myth was also transported into Western Europe, where it took the form of a narrative according to which real capitalism has only been developed ‘elsewhere’ (in the US), and the task of ‘Europe’ would still be to eliminate its ‘socialism’ and develop ‘civilised capitalism’. Even for the Western radical left, ‘communism’ has become a ‘hypothesis’ and not a historical experience. Eastern Europe has practically disappeared as a unit of analysis. Furthermore, the integration of Eastern Europe gave birth to a renewed cult for aristocracy and offered a new empirical platform for Western colour-blind racism, which has been raised to a new level of generality. Also, the fact that the culture industries, social sciences and academic humanities generally assumed the task of colonising dominant ideologies and narratives, building experts, or at least becoming capital-dependent or state-dependent, meant that the role of criticism shifted in great measure, in both East and West, to generalist domains of intellectual practice, such as art and philosophy.

Of course, this is the peaceful side of the post-communist transition. However, the horrors of shock therapy and primitive accumulation have been accompanied by the experience of direct war in the former Yugoslavia. Therefore ‘transition to democracy’ meant living in a war zone for Eastern Europe. Seen regionally, the darker side of the transition to modernity was sheer violence. War was an essential presence not only for the states emerging from Yugoslavia, but for the whole former socialist bloc. And I do not think that the war was perceived as purely ‘internal’ to “Yugoslavia” within Eastern Europe: it developed as war ‘with’ a defined Western presence. At the time the actuality of war and the sense of that presence made certain enduring choices of transition painfully clear, and yet most liberal historical accounts of transition now consider war as an exception to the development of democracies and a ‘thing from the past’.

What this complex but incomplete narrative of post-communist transition evidences is an increasingly monologic process of transformation for both East and West, pushed by a multi-faceted and very diverse underside dealing with disobedient epistemologies and historical experiences. In other words, the post-communist transition has produced a specific array of power formations: not only oppressive power, but also productive power that continues to redefine the regional and global meaning and being of Europe. Seen from the historical experience of the East European post-communist transition, the vision of the Europe’s struggles in the globalised world looks different: anti-capitalism is pointless

without the decolonisation of Eurocentrism. Western Europe also needs to decolonise its post-communist transition, but this thought has yet to emerge in epistemic dimensions. In the post-communist transition, Europe moved towards the political right and threaded a new path to Eurocentrism – and a Eurocentric Europe is a scary world of a multitude of ethnocentrisms. I do not want to be there when I think, and I do not want you to be there when you think. However, what would it mean to separate Europe as a whole and not only Eastern Europe, from anti-communism, Eurocentrism and capitalocentrism?

#### WHAT ALTERNATIVE REGIONALISM?

It’s no wonder that the distinction between West and East is increasingly deemed to be un-operational within Europe. One is able to talk about the ‘Former East’ and ‘Former West’. Power structures such as the European Union are developing policies focused on a region-by-region rather than country-by-country basis, and significant forms of resistance against global capitalism have emerged through regional actions protecting common resources such as land and water. Responding to these phenomena, an interesting development occurred in the discipline of International Relations, as the concept of ‘Alternative Regionalisms’ emerged in recent critical development studies, reportedly after an initial academic shift from ‘area studies’ to ‘regional studies’.<sup>10</sup> Thus, Rosalba Icaza pleaded for a new research agenda in alternative regionalisms, learning, among other examples, from the experience of the Chiapas. Icaza criticised both Western-liberal and neo-Gramscian perspectives on regionalism for the overcoding focus on ‘policy outcomes’ and ‘impacts’, which simplify structural conditions such as class, gender or international economic structures. Likewise the tendency to conceive civil society in functionalist terms, without taking into account the diversity and contradictions within the immanent field of ‘actors’, and without a developed criticism of the institutions of modern civil society. Icaza pointed to “an analytical space that has been largely ignored in debates about new or open regionalism, regionalisation and regional integration,” namely alternative regionalisms that emerged across the globe through non-traditional and less visible proc-

<sup>10</sup> Rosalba Icaza, “Alternative Regionalisms and Civil Society: Setting a Research Agenda”, in Daniel Chavez, ed., *The New Latin America Agenda*, Amsterdam: TNI/CordAid, 2009. See also [www.alternative-regionalisms.org](http://www.alternative-regionalisms.org)

esses and agents: not only through leaders or political and economic institutions, but also through the circulation of ideas or cultural trends, or other informal or less spectacular agents of regionalism. Indeed, how does a region speak – except through the voice of the state, of identity cards, of produced commodities, of commodified natural resources, or of the European Union?

Now, the historical experience of real socialism worked as a specific agent of regionalism for the former socialist bloc, in spite of the overcoding power of nation-states. In recent years I have experienced a curious thing: solidarity seems to be manifested more readily between East-Europeans from different states than between East-Europeans from the same state. Add to this that the historical experience of post-communist transition produced specific agents of regionalism at pan-European and intra-state levels. One can point immediately to a number of social movements or activist groups which took shape as trans-border regionalism, even if most originated in the West: the European Social Forum, ATTAC-Europe, EuroMayDay, the Charter for Another Europe, the No Border movement, PGA, the Global Balkans. One could also refer to the experience of the Clubture network within Croatia (but ‘outside’ the state), or to the anti-fascist networks in Eastern Europe, which are still the only explicit response against the specific phenomenon of post-communist racism. Compared to this otherwise very short list, the forms of presence of the Left in the formal political spheres of East European states prove to be a few fries short of a happy meal.

However, besides these more or less formal social movements, there are further informal networks of regional solidarity extending across borders through immigrant workers but also, beyond the immigrant experience, through forms of exchange and cooperation, which stem from the historical experience of real socialism and its repertoire of forms of cultural and economic organisation. Beneath state capitalism or consumerism in confidential communities, the historical experience of real socialism abounded in modes of producing non-capitalist value, in acts of resistance without infrastructure<sup>11</sup> and in what could be called radical tactics of co-existence with dominant forms of organising economy, culture



▲ IRWIN, *Map of Eastern Modernism*, 1990

and politics. If the work towards a transformation beyond capitalism can only start from the resistant past of actual historical experiences, real socialism provides for Eastern Europe a wealth of such alternative epistemologies – as opposed to but in relation to dialectical materialism. The fall of the socialist bloc also brought to Western Europe a dearth of alternative epistemologies and the reinforcement of Eurocentrism in conservatism and liberalism as well as the radical left. The disappearance of Eastern Europe also brought up in the West the utopian vision of purely alternative economies, as if capitalism could completely and homogeneously disappear from the scene of history in order to be totally replaced by something else. What disappeared with the rejection of the historical experience of Eastern Europe is therefore the simple idea that the radical thinking of alternatives to capitalism depends on the development of an epistemic space that identifies tactics of ‘resistance in co-existence’ with capitalism as the basis of anti-capitalist politics. There is no zero-moment of anti-capitalism. Or, alternative economies and tactics of resistance in co-existence can be precisely identified in a systemic (but not systematic) manner in the recent historical experience of real socialism during the Cold War and the post-communist transition. Only by considering the real lives and imaginaries of people as a relevant site of experience could one hope to develop an alternative regional-

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ism as a positive response to global capitalism, Western governmentality and dominant reason, and as a way of thinking from a non-capitalocentric position that one already occupies.

One can thus identify a radical task of critical post-communist thought and artistic practices in figuring the immanent spaces and inspiring imaginaries of such regionalisms: a locality of cross-border expression inbetween the empty utopia of a totalising global internationalist solidarity (manifested through yet another institution inevitably hosted by a state) and the ethnocentrism of socialism-in-one-country. As Foucault once remarked, the problem of the archeology of knowledge is not the secret formula holding together the whole of the episteme, but the particular nature and range of the series of equivalences

weaving a finite togetherness, in which we think.

In spite of the probable truth of critical rationalisations of capitalism as a regime that normalises crises and thus finds seemingly infinite ways of extracting value from its own limits, a global crisis is still a crisis, namely a weakness, and material value is always finite – even the virtual money of finance. Which brings us to the final questions: where are we, when we think of the weaknesses of capitalism as a world-system? Where are we, when we think of ‘modernity’? In modernity are we in transition to modernity somewhere else? I see the particular advantage of the regional locality of Eastern Europe in having had the experience of difference, and the rare historical experience of a radical crisis over a very short historical period of just twenty years. The historical experience of real socialism, the fall of socialist regimes and the post-communist transition compose such a radical history of transformation and total opening of radically differing paradigms, and such a quick enclosure of possibilities, that in light of it, the ongoing and slowly unfolding crisis of the world could be seen as an immense and immediate site of opportunity. ✖

<sup>11</sup> Gayatri Spivak, *Other Asias*, London: Blackwell, 2007. Spivak introduces the concept of “acts of resistance without infrastructure” by referring to the forms of resistance of the women in the Global South.



◀ Milan Trenc, *The Worker and the Capitalist*, Start, 1989

## RENATA SALECI POST-SOCIALIST ANXIETY & HYPERCAPITALISM

Capitalism has always wisely incorporated anxiety into an ideology that primarily tries to increase profit, as well as playing on various fears that people have about their well-being. In the way that people react to their fears there seems to be very little difference between the developed West and post-socialism. However, in post-socialism, there is often additional anxiety related to the desire to join the developed world. This anxiety<sup>01</sup> can also be observed in the art world, where artists from the developing countries who try to be recognised in the Western art world often fail in this attempt. Ilya Kabakov nicely described the tension between the Western art world and artists from developing countries by pointing out that the Western art world is like a fast train that travels through different countries. In these remote places, people stand on the platforms and hope that they will be able to board it. However, the train rarely stops, and even if it does, there is no space available. Nonetheless, some people succeed in climbing onto the train and then desperately look for empty seats. When, by chance, one becomes available and the person sits down, the fellow passengers look at the newcomer with disdain and comment: “Why didn’t you sit down earlier. And why do you look so desperate – you should have a smile on your face! We are always happy to have new people on board.” This is precisely the game that global capital is playing in today’s post-socialist world. In recent decades, post-socialist countries have very much wanted to be perceived as passengers on the right train. However, being on the correct train in-

<sup>01</sup> For more extensive analysis of anxiety today, see Renata Saleci, *On Anxiety*, London: Routledge, 2004.

volves the desire to be favourably treated by the drivers of the train – global capital.

The former Yugoslav countries, together with the rest of the post-socialist world are quickly transforming themselves into the type of consumerist society that is predominant in the Western world. Urban development has followed the ideals that American society introduced decades ago. In post-socialism we thus observe the demise of the old city towns and the emergence of huge shopping malls on the outskirts of the cities, where people now spend most of their free time.

In the post-socialist countries, capitalism *per se* has been embraced with a mixture of joy and anxiety. What is the logic of this anxiety? In the last decade when we were constantly told that we live in the new age of anxiety, our first impression was that perhaps this was related to the proliferation of possible catastrophes such as terrorist attacks, the collapse of the financial market, strange illnesses, ecological changes, the possibility of new wars, and new developments in science. However, it is arrogant to say that our civilisation actually experiences more anxieties than our predecessors. They too had to deal with wars and conflicts, poverty, and many more illnesses that radically shortened people’s lives. If, therefore, contemporary anxieties that relate to possible catastrophes are not so different to those of the past, then the anxieties that specifically pertain to contemporary society are linked to the new feelings of insecurity on which contemporary capitalism capitalises itself. Insecurities have always been the vehicle of the capitalist labour market, however, in the post-industrial society we can observe changes in people’s self-perception, which have in turn been affected by the transformations of the social symbolic order.



Consumerist society seems to be thriving on a particular feeling of inadequacy that people commonly experience today. To grasp the power of this feeling one only needs to look at any women's magazine or the style section of a daily newspaper. What we find in such publications, apart from advertising and reports on the latest fashions, cosmetics and celebrities, is advice. We live in times that are characterised by survival. It is not untypical to come across articles entitled: "The single girl's guide to survival"; a mother's secret diary on how to survive childbirth (since "Having babies does terrible damage, especially to the fashionably fortyish mother"), advice on how to survive being in or out of a relationship, advice on diet and exercise, etc. Of course, advice radically changes over time, so that, as one health advice column recently claimed, "we have become neurotic about getting enough sleep, but the new research now suggests that the less we have, the longer we'll live".<sup>02</sup>

In effect, such magazines offer a cocktail of advice and prohibitions that now tastes like guilt. If the ideology of the 1990s followed the commands "Just do it!" and "Be yourself!",<sup>03</sup> today it seems that the new motto promoted by the media is: "No matter what you do, you will do it wrong, but it is better that you follow our advice and try again." The "Just do it!" ideology relied on the idea that the individual is 'free' in terms of being a non-believer in authority, someone who could be fully in charge of changing his or her identity as he or she pleases. Today it looks as if we are living in times when people have woken up and acknowledged their limitations. However, it is not that we have finally realised that we are not self-creators who can reject old authorities (like religion or the state) and make out of ourselves a work of art that is not limited by cultural or even biological restraints; rather it is that the very ideology of "Just do it!" introduced a particular anxiety instead of offering unlimited optimism. This anxiety is linked to the very idea that today we have freedom to create an image in which we will appear likeable to ourselves. However, people are now experiencing an increasing number of traumas related to their body image,

<sup>02</sup> *The Sunday Times*, *Style Magazine*, 15 September 2002.

<sup>03</sup> For an analysis of how the ideology of 'new money and being yourself' was linked to the success and failure of the nineties dot.com business, see Thomas Frank, *One Market Under God: Extreme Capitalism, Market Populism, and the End of Economic Democracy*, New York: Anchor Books, 2000.

and as a result are suffering from anorexia, bulimia, excessive exercising, obsession with plastic surgery, and shopping addiction. What is so horrifying about the possibility of making oneself a work of art, that is, to be free to create our lives as we might want to? Why does the very freedom that we supposedly have in making choices in our lives result in increased anxiety?

When I visited Lithuania, I often heard people commenting that they feel that they are not accustomed to making choices in their lives and that, in contrast to American's, who seem to know how to handle choice, they are overwhelmed by it. This observation did not only relate to making decisions about consumer products, but also choices about the direction of one's life. However, American's are also talking about so-called 'tyranny of choice'.

How does this so-called abundance of choice<sup>04</sup> operate in contemporary society? The last twenty years were dominated by the ideology that people would be happier and more fulfilled if they were constantly shopping for the best deals. On the one hand there was the emergence of a huge number of new products, manufacturers and providers to choose from, but on the other, the idea of choice also became an end in itself. Some social scientists have started to talk about the 'tyranny of freedom' in today's world, since consumers are forced to make choices about things they never envisaged they could have (and did not even want to have) any power over. One such example is the choice of electricity provider. This choice<sup>5</sup> has made consumers anxious, since, as a *New York Times* article explained: "the anxiety over energy is exposing something even deeper in human wiring."<sup>06</sup> It is not only that people do not want to be perceived as autonomous, rational consumers: "when it comes to electricity, a mysterious and dangerous thing that is also the foundation of modern living, Americans are just a little afraid to be alone."<sup>07</sup> People are supposedly anxious for two reasons: first, it seems that there is no longer anyone in charge in society, and, second, freedom of choice does not actually give more power to consumers, but to corporations. A person shopping around

<sup>04</sup> The inability to make decisions is also referred to as *buridantis*, see [http://www.oprah.com/health/omag./health\\_omag\\_200101\\_reinven.jhtml](http://www.oprah.com/health/omag./health_omag_200101_reinven.jhtml)

<sup>05</sup> For a detailed analysis of anxiety related to choice, see Renata Salecl, *Choice*, London: Profile Books, 2010.

<sup>06</sup> See *The New York Times*, 27 August 2000.

<sup>07</sup> *Ibid.*

on the Internet for the best product price, for example, gives corporations a chance to collect valuable data about consumer desires and spending habits. What provokes anxiety for people, therefore, seems to be both that no one appears to be in control, and that those who do exert control (the corporations) do so in a clandestine way.

When people speak about anxiety, they invoke the idea that they are now being asked to make decisions about their sexuality, marriage and childbearing that were not regarded as choices in the past. Increased choice makes it appear possible to achieve an ideal result every time. This seems to be the case not only for people who are continually changing their long-distance telephone service in the hope that they will find the best deal, but also for those who are searching for a relationship. If we look at the proliferation of self-help books devoted to relationships, it becomes clear that love provokes particular anxiety today, and that people are searching for all kinds of guidance to alleviate this anxiety. In today's consumerist society, searching for a partner follows a similar logic to buying a new car. One needs to do extensive research in the market, then check all the qualities of the desired 'object', insure oneself with the pre-nuptial agreement, after some time exchange old for new, or in order to minimise the hassle, decide to go just for a short-term lease. While on the one hand, the individual is perceived as a self-creator (i.e. one who can make out of him or herself what he or she pleases, and who no longer relies on the old authorities of family, religion and state), on the other hand, the subject has lost the 'security' that the struggle with old authorities brought about. The shift that has taken place in individual perception of oneself and one's place in the social symbolic network, which incited new anxieties with regard to body image and one's role in wider society, are very much linked to the way that capitalism functions today. However, paradoxically, the ideology of consumerism is also offering 'solutions' on how the individual should deal with his or her anxiety. It even seems that anxiety is the very motor of the marketing politics that dominate today's consumerist society.

Psychoanalysis and marketing share the same knowledge that desire is always linked to prohibition. Freud was quite cynical about this fact, and pointed out that where cultural prohibitions did not exist people invented them in order to keep desire alive.<sup>08</sup> And Lacan was quick to follow, stating that the individual would never want to have the sublime Thing unless the symbolic law denied access to it. With regard to consumer goods, it is well known that we desire and cherish them more if they are expensive and hard to obtain. (I will never forget the pleasure in the eyes of the Serbian student whom I met in Belgrade who told me that he obsessively cleans his one pair of *Nike* sneakers as he hopes to have them for a number of years).

The new philosophy of the brand makers is that they do not try to prevent their logos being stolen and copied in the Third World. For example, if a Turkish manufacturer makes copies of *Nike* sneakers, *Nike* will not try to prosecute him for copyright violation. Since *Nike* is primarily concerned with the dissemination of their logo, they take the fact that someone copied their product as just another advertising campaign. Another well-known strategy in creating 'addiction' to consumer goods is that *Nike* and similar brands like to place their excess products into the poorest neighbourhoods, for example, the Bronx in New York City, and thus keep young consumers attracted to their goods.<sup>09</sup>

If desire is linked to prohibition, does the fact that some companies nowadays distribute products free of charge kill the desire? The paradox is that this does not happen, since contemporary capitalism does not simply rely on selling goods, but on the creation of a particular image with which people can identify. In this context, the aforementioned feeling of inadequacy plays a strong role in the way that marketing operates today. However, the issue is not that the media offers people images of success and beauty with which they want to identify, and since they cannot come close to this

<sup>08</sup> See Sigmund Freud, "Group psychology and the analysis of the ego", in *The Pelican Freud Library*, Volume X, London: Penguin, 1985. Paradoxically it was Freud's nephew, Edward Barney, who became known as the father of public relations. His book, *Propaganda*, published in 1928 promoted advertising as the primary mode of communication. As a representative of Lucky Strike, Barney became known as the person who helped to break the ban on women smoking in public. His marketing strategy was to organise a group of women to ostentatiously puff 'torches of freedom' during a parade.

<sup>09</sup> See Naomi Klein, *No Logo*, London: Flamingo, 2001.

ideal, they feel inadequate. For some time now the fashion industry, for example, has been convincing consumers that they should not follow fashion advice and try to make themselves into someone else, but instead should find what makes them unique, and with the help of fashion, simply accentuate this. Early twentieth-century advertising, which used psychoanalytic knowledge, often tried to promote consumer identification with authority. The advertisers guess was that the consumer “nearly always purchases in unconscious obedience to what he or she believes to be the dictates of an authority, which is anxiously consulted or respected”.<sup>10</sup> In those days, marketing thus tried to convince people to look and behave like someone else, i.e. to identify with authority. Today, people still look for role models (for example, in the entertainment industry), nonetheless, advertising is increasingly exploring the idea that the individual should try to find what is beyond him or herself and not simply follow the dictates of the market. However, this new marketing strategy creates much consumer unease, since what actually provokes anxiety for the individual is not their failure to be someone else, but rather that he or she cannot be him or herself.

How does contemporary consumerism channel this anxiety? A number of recent studies have analysed the change in capitalist production revealing that instead of material manufacturing being most important the marketing of a particular image has become the main concern. In this new culture of capitalism, it is crucial that suppliers and users have replaced buyers and sellers; markets are managing networks, and ownership is being replaced by access. Since contemporary production costs are minimal and the market is so saturated with goods, the economy depends less on the individual market exchange of goods and more on establishing long-term commercial relationships.

For companies, an ongoing relationship with the customer is crucial, so that they may become his or her supplier over a lifetime. Thus, manufacturers invest most of their energy in developing customer loyalty and in trying to work out what the future desires of consumers might be, without the customers knowing that they might actually want or need these things. The example here might be a manufacturer of baby diapers who provides home delivery of their product and soon after the parents get the first delivery of diapers,

<sup>10</sup> Jackson Lears, *Fables of Abundance: A cultural history of advertising in America*, New York: Basic Books, 1994, pp. 139-208.

they start buying all other baby goods from the same provider. When the baby grows up, the provider will then offer products for toddlers and later for adolescents. (One can imagine that the manufacturer might at some point also offer free psychological advice on how to raise children).

As well as establishing a trusting relationship, manufacturers are now increasingly concerned with selling an image or, better still, a lifestyle. We can use the example of so-called ‘designer coffees’ sold at *Starbucks* or *Coffee Republic*. In these places what is sold is not simply coffee, but a particular experience: well-designed environments, which offer a cosy, homely atmosphere with a politically correct intellectual touch. Thus, one receives ecologically informed messages on how the coffee has been produced and even an explanation on how buying this (expensive) coffee helps poor people in Colombia. On the one hand, the consumers of such expensive coffee are offered a symbolic space in which they appear attractive to themselves, but, on the other, they are protected from the outside world – especially from the poor.<sup>11</sup>

Today’s hyper-capitalist society is making a long-term shift from industrial to cultural production, in which cultural experiences are more important than goods and services. In his book *The Age of Access*, Jeremy Rifkin points out that we are entering a period of so-called hyper-capitalism, or better still cultural capitalism that relies on the ‘experience’ economy in which each person’s own life becomes a commercial market:

“Global travel and tourism, theme cities and parks, destination entertainment centres, wellness, fashion and cuisine, professional sports and games, gambling, music, film, television, the virtual world of cyberspace, and electronically mediated entertainment of every kind are fast becoming the centre of a new hyper-capitalism that trades in access to cultural experience.”<sup>12</sup>

In this context, businesses attempt to guess the ‘lifetime value’ of their customers, when they try to assess how much an individual is worth at every moment of his or her life.

<sup>11</sup> In the last decade there has been a boom of such coffee places in Japan. Consumers there explain that in the past, after work, they would frequent bars and tea houses in order to avoid going home, but now they go to Starbucks because it feels more like home. Of course, this fake home is a calm oasis without screaming children and a nagging spouse.

<sup>12</sup> Jeremy Rifkin, *The Age of Access*, New York: J.P. Tarcher, p. 7.

And economists speak about the change that has taken place, from the commodification of space and materials, to the commodification of human time. The prediction is that in the future almost everything will be a paid-for experience in which traditional reciprocal obligations and expectations – mediated by feelings of faith, empathy, and solidarity – will be replaced by contractual relations in the form of paid memberships, subscriptions, admission charges, retainers, and fees. The guess is that in the new era, people will purchase their very existence in small commercial segments since their lives will be modelled on films, so that “each consumer’s life experience will be commodified and transformed into an unending series of theatrical moments, dramatic events, and personal transformations”.<sup>13</sup>

Rifkin summarises these new trends by pointing out that:

“In the new network economy what is really being bought and sold are ideas and images. The physical embodiment of these ideas and images becomes increasingly secondary to the economic process. If the industrial marketplace was characterised by the exchange of things, the network economy is characterised by access to concepts, carried inside physical forms.”<sup>14</sup>

Once again *Nike* provides an example, as the company that only sells image. This company has no factories, machines or equipment, only an extensive network of suppliers, so-called production partners. *Nike* is only a research and design studio with a sophisticated marketing formula and distribution system.

It is also important to note that what mattered in the industrial society was the quantity of goods, but in the post-industrial society this is replaced by quality of life. That is why we no longer buy goods, but, for example, access them through leasing and franchising. It seems that capitalism is losing its material origins and is becoming a temporal affair, which is linked to the fact that customers require the function rather than the products themselves. In this context, the customer becomes a client and partner who requires attention, expertise and, most importantly, experience. (It is interesting how psychoanalysis is also replacing the name

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.* p. 29.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.* p. 30.

patient with client. And one wonders if some clients are doing analysis as some kind of a new experience that they want to buy.)

Another crucial element in today’s society is the new view of community, and companies are thus desperate to create communities for their clients. In many company manuals one can read about the four stages of how one deals with clients: first there is the so-called ‘awareness bonding’, which makes the consumer aware of the new product or service; second is ‘identity bonding’ when the consumer starts to identify with the brand; third is the ‘relationship bonding’ when the consumer establishes a particular attachment to the brand, and fourth is ‘community bonding’ when the brand maker keeps consumers satisfied by organising specific events and gatherings, or at least by sending birthday cards to clients. (In Slovenia, for example, the organisation *American Way*, which runs a chain of home-selling for various products, strongly encourages the building of new communities and thus organises family meetings for its members, etc.)

A particular marketing strategy employed by some casual clothing brands uses an illusion of equality, which helps to mask contemporary class divides. Poor people use such shops as *Gap* in order to appear middle class, and the rich shop there in order to appear more ‘normal’. Such brands also seem to erase gender difference in clothing, which closes the old divides about how men and women tend to choose their clothing. (As *Darian Leader* points out, women usually search for what no one else has, while men want to buy clothes that everyone else is wearing.)<sup>15</sup>

In effect, we are witnessing a transformation in the nature of commerce, from the trading of products to the selling of images and the creation of communities. The idea behind this change is that more than anything people want to ‘belong’ and appear likable both to themselves and to others. Now that traditional communities (families and cultural groups) are in steady decline, people are trying to gain access to a new type of community by becoming subscribers, members, and clients. However, behind this attempt to create new communities is the perception that the totality of people’s lived experience needs to be transformed into commercial fare. It seems that human life itself will become the ultimate commercial product. And some warn that when

<sup>15</sup> See *Darian Leader, Why Do Women Write More Letters Than They Send? A Meditation on the Loneliness of the Sexes*, New York: Basic Books, 1997.

every aspect of our being becomes a paid-for activity then the commercial sphere becomes the final arbiter of our personal and collective existence.

The rapid emergence of capitalism has thus provoked all kinds of new fears, which have replaced the ones that existed under communism. In many post-socialist countries, where global capitalism has mostly brought wealth to the elite, and misery to the majority of the population, fear about global capital has also opened old nationalist identification and paranoia about the intrusive Western system. Here, too, we can observe the phenomena that danger always seems to be coming from the outside.

In their perception of fear, East and West are not so different. If we look back to the times of the greatest tensions between America and the Communist states, we can observe how both sides understood fear in relation to external danger, and responded to this with various conspiracy theories. In 1950s America there was great fear of communist conspiracy, which was reflected in the horror films of that time. Communism was perceived as a parasite that could invade the social body or as deadly bacteria that might enter every pore of society. Horror films portrayed danger coming into society from the outside, either in the form of extra-terrestrials, or as some strange external phenomena that captures humans and replaces them with alien doubles as happens in the film *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* (Don Siegel, 1956). Similarly, social paranoia of that time focused on the fear of being brainwashed by communist ideological indoctrination, which would involve various forms of psychological control. At the same time, the communist East feared the infiltration of foreign spies and the ideological control coming from the West in the form of bourgeois consumerism and entertainment.

In the late 1970s and early 1980s, there was a marked change in the perception of fear, when the object of fear was increasingly located within society and especially inside the human body. Communists started to be afraid of the enemy within in the form of dissidents and members of the youth movement. In the West, the emergence of the HIV virus radically changed the perception of danger, and the human body became the ultimate place of enemy attack. In the last two decades, immunology has gained enormous power, and studies of the dangers of bacteria and viruses attacking the human body often use the military jargon of the 'wars within'. Similarly, one can observe a change in Hollywood horror movies: such films as, *It Came From Outer Space* (Jack

Arnold, 1953), have been replaced by *They Came From Within* (David Cronenberg, 1975).

In the last decade it appeared that the virus had replaced the bomb as the ultimate danger for humanity, and the body was perceived both as potential victim and great warrior against this internal danger. But after September 11, the virus and the bomb seemed to act together and follow a similar pattern. Terrorists appear to be similar to viruses and bacteria – at first they are invisible, then they suddenly erupt in one place or another; afterwards they hide again and one never knows how they multiply or mutate after coming under attack. Just as bacteria becomes resistant to antibiotics, so terrorists seem to resist the warfare that is supposed to annihilate them.

This simultaneous danger coming from both outside and inside has been reflected in a particular way in the struggles that shattered the former Yugoslavia in the last decade. The initial paranoia about alleged Albanian separatists (who were renamed terrorists under Milošević's regime) centred on stories of Albanian's trying to poison army food. Milošević's great ideological victory was in successfully gaining support for his nationalist policies by continuously inventing new enemies and keeping alive the fear that there was some ultimate threat against the Serbs. The perception that violence is like a virus, which unexpectedly attacks a community, was the theme of the film *Before the Rain* (Milce Manchevski, 1994), which depicts nationalist tensions between Albanians and Macedonians. Here the idea of violence as a virus ultimately covers up the political dimensions of the conflict.

Since September 11, the American government has been keeping the fear of possible new attacks alive by continuously reminding the public of the unpredictable danger presented by hidden terrorists. Some have even observed a pattern in the way the government uses hints about possible new attacks. In the first months after September 11, new warnings came every three weeks just before the weekend. One is tempted to think that some psychologist advised the government to keep the public alerted to possible danger as a way of maintaining patriotic support for American foreign policy. One can also discern a particular pattern in the way the media speculated about probable new targets for attacks, a competitiveness about identifying the location of a potential attack. One of the early ideas was that Disneyland might be a symbolic target, and since this represents the ultimate American fantasy, it is not surprising that the US imagines that such an attack would inflict a particular

symbolic wound to American identity. However, other places of attack have all focused on the body as the target of violence, through contaminated water, air ventilation, food poisoning etc.

If at the time of the divide between capitalism and communism, the enemy was clearly perceived as an outsider, now, with globalised capitalism, the enemy is like a wandering terrorist (that in its elusive character resembles the anti-Semitic image of the dangerous wandering Jew), while at the same time the inner antagonisms that mark Western capitalist societies are perceived in the guise of viral dangers. Here we need to remember that in the former Yugoslavia, Milošević retained power for so long precisely because he was able to constantly invent new national enemies. At the time of The Hague trial, Milošević and other Serbian politicians successfully played the roles of anti-American heroes who condemned NATO's military actions in the Third World and presented themselves as the politicians who have always been fighting terrorism.

Returning to the problem of the former Yugoslavia, one can observe that some perceive the rapid introduction of Western capitalism as a success, while others see it as failure. However, in this distinction between success and failure, corporations seem to have once again outsmarted the public, with the introduction of a new marketing logo: Success in failure. We learn how wonderful success in failure can be, for example, in the *Coca-Cola* advertisement enti-

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tled 'Life tastes good!'. In the TV clip we see a boy visiting his grandfather who asks him how his studies are going. The young man responds that he is taking a year off. Then the grandfather enquires about the last girlfriend, and the grandson admits that he already has a new one. The grandson then asks how his grandmother is doing and the grandfather informs him that she has moved

in with their friend from the bridge club. At this point both men salute themselves with *Coca-Cola* and we are reminded that life tastes good.

This advertisement accurately depicts the reality of today's family life where stable relationships are a thing of the past. Things have changed for both young and old. Advertising depicts what used to be perceived as failure (not studying at school, relationship break-ups) simply as change and continues to remind us that life is good anyhow. Contemporary consumer ideology is constantly convincing us that the individual is a work of art, that 'being' has given way to 'becoming', and that the new self is just an unfolding story continually being updated and re-edited. One can also observe such re-editing among corporations who today struggle for continuity and therefore want to create an image that will pass into the future and be present in as many places as possible. Individuals and corporations are trying to achieve a kind of immortality. However, we should remember Kierkegaard's famous saying that the possibility of immortality is actually more horrible than death. ✘



## BORIS BUDEN GETTING OUT OF HERE

**G**oran Dević's short film *Imported Crows* tells a very simple story about various attempts by the residents of the small town Sisak, Croatia, to get rid of the crows that inhabit its parks. The crows are considered to be 'foreign'. They were imported in the 1950s to control the insects that infested the forests around the town and are known as 'Veber's crows', after the Communist government official, who allegedly brought them from Russia – or China, or Serbia, or... No one knows today. The birds have since multiplied and flourished, becoming Sisak's 'problem' and the object of irrational hatred by the town's residents. Obviously, the film is a metaphorical portrayal of a small, troubled society that obsessively – and violently – tries to exterminate its Other.

*Imported Crows* can also be understood as a perfect allegory for the phenomenon we might call primal, or 'old fear'. However, if there is an old fear, there must be a new one too, as well as a historical change that has brought about the difference between both forms of fear.

In his *A Grammar of the Multitude*,<sup>01</sup> Paolo Virno named this historical change quite precisely – the emergence of a historical novum in what has been traditionally experienced as fear. Above all it is a change that concerns the way we build communities – how we organise our social life, form collectives or establish social and political institutions, like the state.

This is of crucial importance in understanding the phenomenon of fear. For fear doesn't have an exclusively psychological meaning, but also, or even primarily – and this is what Virno focuses on – a social and historical meaning. It possesses a community building quality and it is precisely this quality of fear that defines its historical character. In

other words, fear becomes a historical phenomenon and undergoes historical changes because of its social character. Logically, this implies that we can also think about our social and political institutions (like the state, for instance), as being crucially affected by fear; or, to put it bluntly, as being, in a way, an effect of fear.

This is, for instance, the case in the famous concept of the social contract, which still informs the hegemonic ideology of social order and state. Thomas Hobbes' theoretical fairy tale of individuals who – living originally in a sort of state of nature, i.e., in a permanent war of one against other (the famous *bellum omnium contra omnes*) – decide to sacrifice a part of their freedom and delegate it to the sovereign for security and peace in return. This narrative has decisively informed the major political form of modern social life, the notion of the people, the concept of people's sovereignty, as well as the predominant political form of this sovereignty: the institution of the modern nation state.

Long ago Hobbes recognised that sovereign rule relies on fear, that for effective domination "the Passion to be reckoned upon, is Fear".<sup>02</sup> For Hobbes, fear binds and ensures social order, and can therefore be understood as a mechanism of domination and what is now more appropriately known as a mechanism of social control.

In short, the idea of social order or its particular political form, the notion of 'the people', is intrinsically tied to the dialectics between fear – or broadly speaking, the experience of danger – and the search for security. In other words, the quality of being a refuge or shelter, of providing protection from some sort of danger, is a binding element of society and thus an essential quality of the very notion of the people. According to Virno, this dialectics between fear and the people as refuge no longer functions. We are neither able to expe-

◀ Chto Delat?/  
What's to be  
done, *Builders*,  
2005

<sup>01</sup> Paolo Virno, *A Grammar of the Multitude*,  
For an Analysis of Contemporary Forms of Life,  
Los Angeles, New York: Semiotext(e), 2004.  
See also: <http://www.generation-online.org/c/fcmultitude3.htm>

<sup>02</sup> Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, C.B. Macpherson,  
ed., London: Penguin, 1968, p. 200.

rience fear in its traditional forms, nor is the concept of the people capable of providing a refuge, as in earlier times.

To understand the collapse of this dialectic we must go back to the very origins of the modern experience of fear. Its crucial moment is the absence of a consistent and uniform feeling of fear. In other words, the experience of fear dissolves into two different forms.

Kant introduced the distinction – and Virno draws on this distinction<sup>03</sup> – between a particular danger (such as the concrete danger of being killed in a traffic accident or of losing one's job, etc.), and, on the other hand, a sort of absolute danger associated with our very being in this world. Two different forms of risk and fear, or dread, also correspond to these two forms of danger.

In fact, this distinction comes from Kant's definition of the Sublime – an experience that is based on a deeply contradictory and ambivalent feeling. Kant describes this feeling very concretely: for instance, when a person observes a terrifying snow slide, while in a place of safety, he or she is filled with a pleasant sense of security. However, this sense of security is mixed with another feeling – with the perception of his or her own helplessness, a sort of a basic human insecurity. The Sublime is precisely the name for this twofold and ambivalent feeling.

However, this feeling raises the question: how can we protect ourselves from this danger? There is, of course, an empirical answer to this question – a particular empirical danger implies a corresponding protection – in the case of a snow slide one can simply keep away from the mountains in winter, etc. But the question is, how can we protect ourselves, not from any one given danger or another, but rather from the risk inherent in our very being in this world; what is it that might provide absolute protection for our existence, where can we find unconditional refuge? For Kant, this is moral. The transcendental moral laws protect us in an absolute way, since morality places its inherent value above empirical, finite existence.

In short, there is a major bifurcation in what we experience as fear: on the one hand a fear that develops from relative dangers that have a 'first and last name', and on the other hand, a fear from an absolute dangerousness with no exact face and content – a fear from existence itself, from our being in the world.

This Kantian distinction between two forms of fear within the dialectics of dread and refuge was developed later in Martin Heidegger's *Being and Time*.<sup>04</sup> He introduced different names for these two forms of fear: 'fear' and 'anguish' (*Furcht* and *Angst*). The fear is always a fear from this or that; on the other hand, anguish (*die Angst*) is the basic existential orientation of human beings ("die Grundbefindlichkeit der menschlichen Existenz"). Anguish is a fear of being-in-the-world itself. It is only through anguish that we can experience the world as world. Again: fear is circumscribed and namable; anguish is ubiquitous and never connected to a distinctive cause.

Virno has translated this distinction into social narrative. He finds it operative in what he calls 'substantial communities' that have developed a consolidated ethos – a set of repetitive and therefore comfortable usages and customs. For this reason, such a substantial community is always experienced as a refuge; it gives its members the feeling of security. In this sense, such a community is itself a response to the feeling of fear, meaning fear from a concrete and named danger.

This is the fear we experience inside the community – within its fixed, stable forms of life and communication, or (as we would rather say today) inside its culture. But outside the community this fear loses its concrete, recognisable cause and becomes ubiquitous, unforeseeable and constant. In short, beyond the community our fear is always anguish-ridden. Therefore, anguish is fear that has distanced itself from the community to which it belongs, from the shared habits and well-known 'linguistic games'. Anguish is the fear that has penetrated the whole world.

The difference between fear and anguish is based on a clear separation between a habitual 'inside' and an unknown 'outside', between a substantial community, such as the people for instance, and the exterior world.

Only within this context can we understand why Goran Dević's film *Imported Crows* is an allegory of the old fear. It depicts the feeling of fear that is directly bound to the dialectics of 'inside' and 'outside'. Concretely, this is the fear of a particular strange element, one that comes from the outside and threatens the community, its alleged normality, its customs, its stable, unchanging way of life – its (cultural) identity. The crows in the film are not 'our crows'; they behave differently, they jeopardise our way of life and like the birds in

Hitchcock's film *The Birds*, they might easily attack us. The cause of this fear has a name: foreign infiltration. As such, it automatically activates a protection mechanism, the act of exclusion – concretely an act of extermination. This fear is also expressed in the form of its mobilising drives – xenophobia, ethnic hatred, racism, etc. In a metaphorical way the film shows how a substantial and closed community protects itself from intruders, how irrationally it identifies them and how cruel – in a blatant contradiction to the moral and religious principles it allegedly relies upon – it deals with those who do not belong to the community.

In fact, the film tells a far more horrible story. What we see happening to the crows in the film had happened only a few years earlier in the same town to human beings, to fellow citizens who were suddenly declared intruders from the outside. The film is a clear allegory of both the war in Croatia (1991–1995), and of similar political situations in which a particular fear – of foreigners coming from the outside – is used as a tool for political mobilisation, such as the recent election campaign in Switzerland: the story about the community of good white sheep getting rid of the bad black sheep.

Although this allegory points directly to the current political situation that we experience in everyday life, the political (mis)-use of the so-called 'immigrant question', we might still argue that it actually depicts an old form of fear – or more precisely, an old form of society that is already dissolving.

Just think of the usual answer to the issue of the political (mis)-use of xenophobia: the hope that we can bring it under rational control through an open and well-functioning public capable of generating so-called 'communicative rationality', etc.

However, the problem is that this fear and its political effects are not an irrational and pathological expression of an otherwise healthy community, but its constitutive element, both politically and socially. It is an intrinsic part of the very



▲ Goran Dević, *Imported Crows*, 2004

idea of 'the people', respectively of "people's sovereignty". In other words, the problem lies in the very concept of a substantial community, the idea of the people itself.

In an interesting way, the film explicitly acknowledges this fact. The closing credits of the film are accompanied by Lou Reed singing his famous song *Small Town*. We hear the refrain:

*There is only one good thing  
about small town*

*You know that you want to get out*

Rather than being about crows, the film concerns provincialism or the stupidity of life in small towns. It is about humans and fear as a social phenomenon; and it concerns life in closed, substantial communities. Metaphorically speaking, the small town in Lou Reed's lyrics evokes precisely this: the notion of an identitarian community, of nation, or politically, of people in terms of sovereignty. The film is about the only way to escape the horror (including the fear and its social and political consequences) of this closed community: to leave it forever!

But how?

Virno argues that our sense of fear has already left the community. It is not at home any more. While finally departing from the substantial community that is its home, and leaving the traditional, repetitive forms of life, it has also lost its quality of fear. Its distinctive cause has gone, a particular danger to which it was a response, and therefore it has lost its content and its name. In other words, it has become anguish, or more precisely, what has been lost forever is the clear boundary between fear and anguish, between relative and absolute dread.<sup>05</sup>

However, this is only an effect of a more substantial loss – the clear separation between a habitual 'inside' and an unknown and hostile 'outside' is gone. Finally, Virno is talking about the loss of the community itself.

<sup>03</sup> Virno, *ibid.*, p. 31.

<sup>04</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 32.

<sup>05</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 33 ff.

Once again, beyond the community, all fear is anguish-ridden, or, more precisely, there is a complete overlapping of fear and anguish. Even if we experience a well-known danger, which gives rise to a specific kind of fear, for instance, the loss of a job, Virno claims that from the outset this experience will be coloured by an unidentifiable anguish. It is fused with a more general disorientation in the world, with absolute insecurity and the general risk of being in this world. This is a new aspect of our experience of fear – namely its disconnection from a particular danger and community, and its becoming a sort of free floating fundamental experience of the world itself.

Virno argues that today all forms of life have had the experience of ‘not feeling at home’, of being out of a stable and habitual social environment to which one is accustomed. We have become used to the reality of sudden change, which is constantly innovated, and where we are permanently exposed to unusual and unexpected experiences. In today’s world we are always already out of what the Greeks called *ethos* – an accustomed place.

Of course, one could respond: It is quite the contrary, the separation between ‘inside’ and an ‘outside’ still belongs to our fundamental experiences of the contemporary world. If we use an extremely important example, the new Schengen borders of the European Union? Isn’t it fear of foreigners – a fear similar to the one depicted in Goran Dević’s film – which keeps Europe together today, making out of different nations, cultures and religions a united community?

Virno would probably respond that Europe is not a substantial community. It doesn’t claim a common language, culture, history, or a historical narrative that all Europeans agree upon; in political terms Europe has not been established according to the concept of people’s sovereignty; in short, Europeans are still not ‘a people’. And, one could add – neither are they a society.

Again, one could argue that Europe is neither a society nor a people, simply because it is an ongoing project of a new, emerging society, the construction site of a new type of sovereignty, of collectivity, citizenship, culture, democracy, etc. In short, a sort of social and political *work-in-progress*, as Etienne Balibar suggests.<sup>06</sup>

Let us leave this question open. We know very well that

<sup>06</sup> See Etienne Balibar, *We, the People of Europe? Reflections on Transnational Citizenship*, Princeton & Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2004.

Virno cannot accept this teleology because his concept of multitude – and this is what is at stake in his reflections on the contemporary feeling of fear – is not concerned with the idea of building a new home for society that would be able to protect it from all sorts of danger.

The concept of the multitude has nothing to do with the famous tale of three little pigs that build homes to protect themselves from the big bad wolf. Virno’s multitude is not a political synonym for the most clever pig that builds the brick house. It doesn’t refer to a new political subject that is more clever than the people from Hobbes’ fairytale about the social contract and the institution of people’s sovereignty. Accordingly, Virno’s anguish is not an equivalent of the Hobbesian ‘passion of fear’, the strongest brick in the people’s home that is able to stop all intruders. Instead his anguish results from the feeling of not having a home, of a social and political homelessness. Multitude is not a pig that builds its home from straw, sticks, or bricks, but a ‘pig without home’ that can only protect itself by always being on the run.

However, the real problem with Virno’s anguish is that it can be neither perceived – nor articulated – in terms of social experience. For there is no society to make this experience. Instead, there is a social groundlessness, essential for the experience of anguish. It is an expression of what Brian Massumi calls the general condition of being on uncertain ground.<sup>07</sup>

Anguish is not a symptom or cause of a particular community, but the syndrome of a lost community. For Massumi, ‘syndrome’ is “a complex of effects coming from no single, isolatable place, without a linear history, and exhibiting no invariant characteristics”.<sup>08</sup> In short, it is something akin to global warming.

This is the reason for the difficulty in making a clear and easily recognisable picture of anguish. It is almost impossible to present it visually, to offer a picture and claim – what we see is anguish. One can visualise this or that particular danger but how do we show the picture of emptiness itself? In fact we can never face it directly but rather through some sort of discursive mirroring.

Let me suggest an example of such a mirroring of this new

<sup>07</sup> See Brian Massumi, “Everywhere You Want to Be: Introduction to Fear”, in B. Massumi, ed., *The Politics of Everyday Fear*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 1993. [http://www.anu.edu.au/HRC/first\\_and\\_last/works/feareverywhere.htm](http://www.anu.edu.au/HRC/first_and_last/works/feareverywhere.htm)

<sup>08</sup> *ibid.*

form of fear, of the anguish of which Virno speaks – a work by the Russian collective *Chto delat* (‘What is to be done?’) bearing the title *The Builders*.

This is a re-staging of a well-known Soviet painting from the 1960s made in the socialist realist style: Victor Popkov’s work *The Builders of Bratsk*, that shows a group of workers who are heroically building the Siberian city of Bratsk.

*Chto delat*’s remake – a video showing the members of the group in the same pose as the workers in Popkov’s painting – concentrates on questions of building, social belonging, social motivation and community, as well as the question of their own relation to the future.

We hear: “For us, the feeling that we are building something is important. So we try to find out what we are building.”

What the workers in Bratsk were once building is clear: a city, a society, a new life – in short, a home for the new society and therefore also a refuge from the dangers of life, the dangers of the wild Siberian nature; but also from the dangers of capitalist exploitation. In this context, one can also say that they were driven by a very clear set of fears.

However, the members of *Chto delat* cannot identify with a similar task. They don’t know what they are building, what they are doing: “Shit! What the fuck are we doing here?” they openly ask. Still, alone on a cold night they don’t seem to be scared. This is a picture of anguish. In contrast: the determined poses and faces of the real builders of Bratsk – heroically dedicated to their common task, and driven by the same fears – is the visual presentation of the old fear. The builders of Bratsk beam with courage, for they must be really brave in order to face all those dangers. Their bravery, which is so obvious in the old painting, is also a symptom of fear.

However, in *Chto delat*’s *The Builders*, we are explicitly confronted with the question of community, that is, with fear as a community-building quality. It is clear that the old builders of Bratsk represent a community, a new socialist society of their time; but what do the young artists – the members of *Chto delat* represent? “There are thousands of workers behind the builders of Bratsk, but who is behind us?” They are already beyond any identification with a social role or the social task of their artistic practice: “I can derive some aes-

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thetic pleasure from this painting but it doesn’t move me socially.” Or more directly: “What is community, I don’t like the word ‘community’.” This is anguish: confronting the empty place of community, or better, confronting community or society as an empty place. This is the social groundlessness that is essential for the experience of anguish. It is what Brian Massumi calls the general condition of being on uncertain ground.

In short: this new fear, or anguish, or, as Virno also suggests, this uncanny feeling, is the syndrome of a historical passage from the promise of a society

without classes to the reality of a class without society. This is something we feel when we face the empty place of society. For it is not only socialism that has collapsed, society as such has also gone.

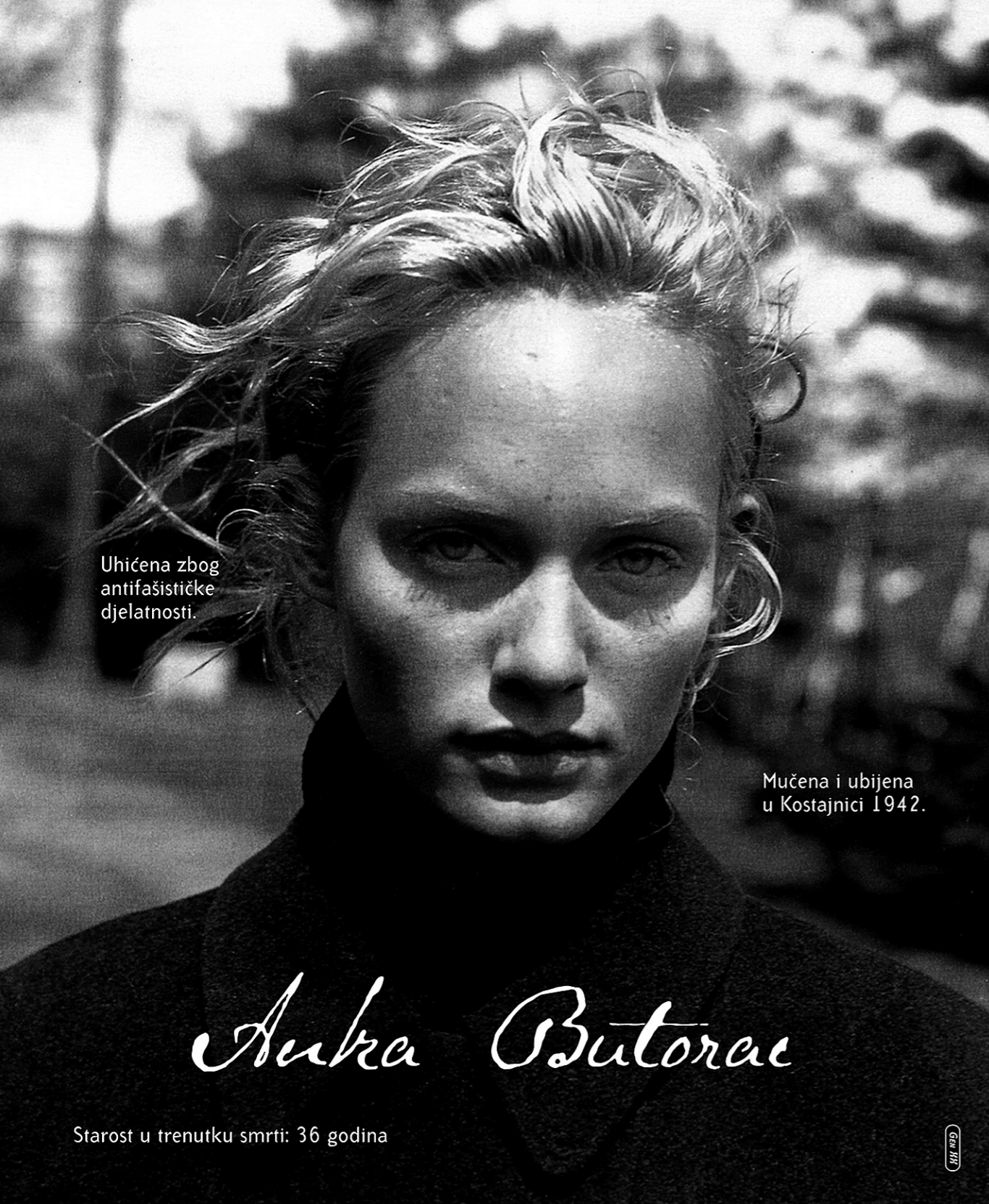
If Goran Dević’s *Imported Crows* depicts the fear following the collapse of socialism, *Chto delat*’s *The Builders* offer us an image of the fear – the anguish – after the collapse of society.

Commenting on Victor Popkov’s *The Builders of Bratsk*, the artists of *Chto delat* state: “It turns out that the place at which they stand and look to the future has been vacated,” and they add: “And we have the same right to look to the future and hope.”

At this point we can try to reconnect the two experiences of fear that we have described: the one articulated in Goran Dević’s *Imported Crows*, and the other portrayed by the artists of *Chto delat* in their work *The Builders*. It is the necessity of finding a way out, that is, of a radical break with the community we live in. In fact, in Lou Reed’s *Small Town* there is another refrain, which explicitly addresses the relation of the *Chto delat* artists to the former socialist Builders of Bratsk:

*My father worked in construction  
It’s not something for which I’m suited  
Oh, what is something for which you are suited?  
Getting out of here. ✖*

BORIS BUDEN, “GETTING OUT OF HERE,” IN *DON’T WORRY – BE CURIOUS! 4TH ARS BALTICA TRIENNIAL OF PHOTOGRAPHIC ART (EXHIBITION CATALOGUE)*, DOROTHEE BIENERT (ED.) (PORI: PORI ART MUSEUM PUBLICATIONS 2008), 9–19.



Uhićena zbog antifašističke djelatnosti.

Mučena i ubijena u Kostajnici 1942.

Anka Butorac

Starost u trenutku smrti: 36 godina



## OZREN PUPOVAC PRESENT PERFECT, OR THE TIME OF POST-SOCIALISM

**H**ow can we characterise our time – the time of us, inhabitants of the epicentres of the capitalist restoration that unfolded after the year 1989? Above all, the time that we inhabit is an odd time. The year 1989, it is difficult to conceal this, opens an odd chapter in history: a chapter of historical oddities. What is it exactly that begins with 1989? If we look at the question a bit more carefully, we cannot but be struck by the paradoxical play on time that history presents us with here. Every beginning is difficult, as one philosopher famously remarked, but the beginning of the so-called ‘post-socialist’ situation seems to be particularly neuralgic. For what we have here is a very peculiar beginning: a beginning that already seems one step behind itself, already one step in the past. How does post-socialism begin? The troubles of the post-socialist beginning begin at the level of nomination. As its name already shows, the post-socialist situation bears an immense mark of the past. The mark of an end. The beginning of post-socialism, its historical inception, immediately presents itself as an end, a beginning in and through an end: the end of socialism, the end of communism. This end is an exhilarating one: the end of a perceived disaster, the liberation from the torments and horrors of a ‘deadly illusion’ to which Cold War ideology attributed the criminalising name of ‘totalitarianism’. But is this projection of an end, this negativity, all there is here? Is post-socialism simply an announcement of something that has ended, something that has passed? Because one might also ask: what is it that begins, properly speaking, after the end? Is there something that post-socialism can claim as its own, beyond the simple fact of the negation of its anteriority? Then again, is there a beginning here in the first place?

If we look even closer, we can see that it is not simply the past that haunts the beginning of post-socialism. It is also the future. For there seems to be no end to the beginning of this situation. If it is already displaced in the past, if it is already behind itself, post-socialism seems also to be immediately ahead of itself: in a state of anticipation, a state of suspension. Before we can see it being properly formed, before we can see it taking a shape of its own, the historical essence of the post-socialist situation seems to run ahead of the eye’s gaze. Its entire consistency is projected into a certain future tense, into a promise of the future. The social scientists have aptly demonstrated this fact – not without a certain dose of embarrassment – when they meticulously measured the vectors of the post-socialist ‘transition’, thus providing the scientific bases for the ideological constructions of neoliberal capitalism.<sup>01</sup>

Not anymore, not yet: post-socialism presents itself as a temporal caricature. It presents itself as a floating historical state, stranded between negation and anticipation, between

<sup>01</sup> Drawing its origins from the turbulence of the Latin American context of the 1970s, ‘transitology’ has established itself as a specific scientific domain after 1989. Transitology places the social sciences in direct service to neoliberal capitalism – measuring the ‘adequacy’ of the transformations towards market economy, as well as the adequacy of the introduction of forms of parliamentary democracy which support the former. Nicolas Guilhot, in his 2005 book *The Democracy Makers: Human Rights and the Politics of the Global Order* (New York: Columbia University Press) provides a meticulous study of the conjunction of the scientific and the ideological in the expansion of transitology and ‘democratisation theory’ after 1989.

◀  
Sanja Iveković,  
*Gen XX*,  
1997-2001

ANKA BUTORAC  
Charged with anti-fascist activities  
Tortured and executed in Kostajnica in 1942  
Age at the time of execution: 36

the past and the future. We are all familiar with the catchwords here. On the one hand: the ‘escape from communism’, the collapse of authoritarian apparatuses, the end of stagnating economies. On the other, that irresistible desire for ‘liberalisation’, for ‘privatisation’, for ‘democracy’, the teleology of economic growth and social stability under the auspices of the *laissez faire* market model – but also the promises of ‘Europe’ and of the inclusion in the global circuits of the capitalist economy.

But what can we say about the post-socialist present? How can we talk about the actuality of this historical situation? The problem here is that post-socialism, from within itself, in terms of its own ‘self-consciousness’, seems unable to offer any positive responses. As soon as it is interrogated about its present, about the actuality of its condition, the post-socialist consciousness starts playing an endless game of displacements, constantly shifting the question backwards and forward, constantly pointing either to what it no longer is, to its supposed break with the past, or to what it is not yet quite, to what it ought to be. This misplacement in time reveals an important feature of the historical situation that we are facing: its unconsciousness. Between the ideological promises of its future and the traumatic encounters with its past, no less ideological in their form, post-socialism is a state marked by a stark ignorance of its own present.

And yet it is exactly this present that addresses us, and does so in a disturbing manner. For this is a present of destruction, regression and humiliation, a present of the dramatic exacerbation of contradictions. One of the central theses of the *Communist Manifesto* – that the state is but the bearer of the political power of capital – acquires a remarkable breath of new life in a situation where the processes of ‘transition’ patently reveal the state as the primary instrument of the primitive accumulation of capital, with various post-socialist governments trying to auction off, under the rubrics of ‘denationalisation’ or ‘privatisation’, the entire productive capacity of their societies, as if the race for profit is the sole ingredient of the social bond, as if the enriching of a small minority presents the only thinkable conception of the Good. Post-socialism thrives on what Badiou would call a moment of an *avowal*:

“The organic link between the private property of the means of production – and thus structural, radical inequality – and ‘democracy’ is no longer a theme of socialist polemic, but the rule of consensus.”<sup>02</sup>

In this general uncertainty into which the capitalist restoration has thrown the post-socialist societies, there is at least one stable point: a rapid decline of all the social and political manifestations of equality. As one commentator recently pointed out, if we stick to purely statistical numericity, the empirical data collected across the post-socialist realm exhibits only two stable parameters: the increase of poverty and the rise of inequality.<sup>03</sup> Amidst the chaos of the restoration, the only tangible point is that of a destructive impoverishment, which pushes the majority of the population to the margins of social existence, whilst creating an unbridgeable divide between wealth and poverty. The drama of this process is exacerbated by a hasty dismantling of the entirety of the institutional inscriptions of the struggles for equality which were won in the past century by the working masses, as well as with a general vassalisation of these countries vis-à-vis the global nexuses of economic and political power. Such are the immediate ‘costs’ of the imposition of capitalist relations of production, of the free market model and its ‘shock therapy’, upon situations that were once defined, for more than half a century, by the spirit of egalitarian political passion.

In order to confront the bleakness of these processes, post-socialist ideology has to borrow from religion. Ideology here works like a poor-man’s eschatology: stranded between the projected horrors of the past and the glorious promises of the future, the present, or actual existence, is a nullity in itself. Its worth is only measured with regard to the expectation of a promised goal, the inevitable parousia of ‘freedom’ inherent to liberal democracy and the ‘progress’ accorded by the development of the capitalist market. Thus, one must endure the torments of this world, one must accept the present as it is, even if this present presents itself as suffering, even if it involves the naked reduction of the human subject to

<sup>02</sup> Alain Badiou *Mračni raspad/Of an Obscure Disaster*, Jan van Eyck Academie/Arkzin, 2009, p. 34.

<sup>03</sup> See Rastko Močnik “Tranzicija in družbene spremembe na Balkanu” (Transition and social change in the Balkans”) in: *Teorija za politiko* [Theory for Politics], Ljubljana: Založba \*cf, 2003, especially pp. 70-73.

the animality of capitalist exploitation, for such suffering is nothing compared to the redemption of the anticipated future. Beneath the promise of the liberal-capitalist utopia, the existing state of affairs receives a benediction, whilst the entirety of the mechanisms of exclusion, domination and exploitation that structure this existence vanish before our eyes.

We should pause for a moment at these procedures of obscuration. For in fact the obscurantism of the post-socialist ideology reveals a dual structure. If the dimension of ‘unconsciousness’ – the severing of the link between thought and the present, in the sense of the prevention of any critical grasp of the actuality of the situation – represents what one might term the *objective obscurantism* of the post-socialist condition,<sup>04</sup> there is also a subjective dimension to this obscuration, a specific *subjective obscurantism* inscribed in the post-socialist situation. Besides the present being ideologically occluded in its structure of actuality, besides the occlusion of the points of exclusion and contradiction-producing mechanisms, besides, in short, systemic violence, there is also an additional subjective surplus to this operation. This surplus concerns our own subjective dispositions towards history, our own attitude –through our thoughts, volitions, decisions and actions – towards the making of history. The consciousness of history that post-socialism nourishes in this regard falls perfectly under Mallarmé’s verdict: “Un présent fait défaut”. That the ‘present is lacking’, as Badiou’s forceful interpretation of the phrase tells us, means that we have lost our subjective disposition for the mastery of history – and we have lost it precisely by losing the conception of

<sup>04</sup> It is far from exaggerated to claim that this objective obscurantism thrives upon a *Denkverbot* imposed on Marxism after the year 1989. The result of the discrediting not only of Marxist politics, but of Marxist theory as well – which, it is claimed, has become out-of-sync with regards to ‘new’ societal and historical developments – was precisely a forceful impoverishment of our capacity to relate to the present critically. Fredric Jameson has lucidly dismantled the arguments of this discrediting: “Marxism is the science of capitalism, or better still, in order to give depth at once to both terms, it is the science of the inherent contradictions of capitalism. This means [...] that it is incoherent to celebrate the ‘death of Marxism’ in the same breath with which one announces the definitive triumph of capitalism and the market. The latter would rather seem to augur a secure future for the former, leaving aside the matter of how ‘definitive’ its triumph could possibly be.” Fredric Jameson, “Five theses on actually existing Marxism”, in: *Monthly Review*, April 1996, 47 (11), p. 1.

the present as the practicability of a project of radical change in the here and now.<sup>05</sup> A moment without the ‘present’ is a moment in which our own subjective grip on history, our own relationship to historical time and historical change, seems completely divorced from the creative and disruptive passion for the present, divorced from our subjective capacity to reject the alignment with the way of the world and to create the possibilities which strictly speaking seem impossible from within the logic of the situation. Presentless times are those times which are voided of an idea of radical change, times in which a qualitative transformation of our social conditions seems not only improbable but impossible: a foolish utopia.

Post-socialism is indeed a privileged historical place: a place where an intimate subjective relationship to the present, inscribed in the revolutionary and emancipatory politics which oriented the communist and socialist projects, is replaced, in the first place, with an overwhelming affinity for the past. Witness the excessive fascination of post-socialist consciousness with nineteenth-century nationalisms and with all the identitary ideologies that have followed this historical doctrine of politics.<sup>06</sup> It is as if post-socialism, evoking the ‘certainty’ and simplicity of nationalist imaginaries, had finally come to reverse the curse of Alexis de Tocqueville, who, following the unstoppable development of ‘democracy in America’, lamented the fact that “[t]he past has ceased to throw its light upon the future, and the mind of man wanders in obscurity”.<sup>07</sup> But Tocqueville errs: what is obscure is precisely such a wholesale absorption of the present by the past, this specific temporality of the *present perfect* that we see installed in post-socialism – the present of an anachronism. Instead of establishing a relationship to the living present, the sole orientation that such an operation can offer is a mortifying repetition of tradition, the ceaseless re-inscription of a dead past, whose only present function

<sup>05</sup> Badiou has discussed the Mallarméan phrase at a lecture at the Palais des Beaux-Arts in Bruxelles, entitled ‘Présence et Présent’, 28 March 2007.

<sup>06</sup> Balibar and Wallerstein have perhaps produced the most lucid critical inquiry into the resurgence of nationalist ideologies in the decades that marked the birth of post-socialism. See their 1988 book *Race, nation, classe: Les identités ambiguës*, Paris: La Découverte.

<sup>07</sup> Alexis De Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, New York: Knopf, vol. 2, bk. 4, 1945, p. 331.



is that of preservation: the continuous confirmation and assurance of our supposed communal identity with ourselves. One should not be surprised that the apex of the subjective relationship to history that we discover here takes the form of commemoration: the relishing of historical personae excavated from the dark pages of national history, the resurgence of medieval mythologies, the parading of the bones of martyrs and despots. Commemoration envelops the community with the certainty of its particularity, but it also serves as a cover for mindless violence and destruction beyond its borders. Tradition always functions both as a pillar of identity and as the imposition of an unsurpassable barrier to it: this is why it can so easily legitimise the violent exclusion of those who do not enjoy the same relationship to the past, of those whose symbolic structuring of communal enjoyment proceeds from different traits of particularity.

But if we see the obscurity of the post-socialist consciousness of history springing from an immersion of the present in the past, its other side implies a specific coupling of the present with the future. The other modality of *present perfect* that post-socialism installs implies an obscurantist depiction of historical change itself. It is no longer a matter of making peace with the dead in an eternal unfolding of tradition, but of depicting the structures of the living, the parameters of the existent situation, as the only possible and desirable world. Given the inevitability of our situation, given that we have already achieved the ‘end of history’, it is time to approach our historical becoming, the transformation of our worldly affairs, under the infinite task of *perfection*. The only thing to do, in other words, is to ponder the perfection of the extant; the only question is how to manage the world of possibilities: possibilities that are structured in advance by the present conjunction of liberal democracy and capitalism.

Change is ultimately a matter of piecemeal modifications that are normed and ruled by an already discovered form, by an historical end that we already achieved – such is the wisdom of limited minds interpreting Hegel. And yet, what is most important here is the peculiar positioning of the subject with regard to history. For when grasped under the modality of perfection, change seems to be entirely divorced from collective decisions, from our subjective inventions and experimentations, and reduced to the rule of putatively objective laws. Everything changes, to be sure, the world is a buzzing present of objects in motion, of commodities enticing our enjoyment in new ways, of technological inventions transforming the very parameters of our biological be-

ing – but such change is only ever a matter of abstract processes. In the last instance, it is a matter of the deployment of the rhythms of the capitalist market and of the development of the institutions that regulate the competition of human groups. Standing under such detached determinations, change is a matter of technocratic involvement, and not of our collective subjective acts. Post-socialist consciousness separates our sense of being in history from the subjective intensity of the present, in order to deliver it to a radical desubjectivation: to an administrative managing of the effects of the vagaries of the market, to the parliamentary alleviation of the destructive cycles of capitalist production and circulation. This is what Rancière terms the logic of *consensus*:

“Consensus knows only: real parts of the community, problems around the redistribution of powers and wealth among these parts, expert calculations over the possible forms of such redistribution, and negotiations between the representatives of these various parts”.<sup>08</sup>

What is lost in the consensual ruling of the present is the inherently conflictual nature of our collective life, the tension in the present between its being and its unpredictable becoming. This is why the sole subjective attitude that we have left vis-à-vis historical change is one of conformism: how better to align ourselves to the rhythms of the capitalist economy, how to conform to the uncertainties of the speculative play of the market, how better to organise our desires for fleeting commodity objects under the protective layer of property laws.

But what about politics and its relationship to history? The other side of *perfection*, we should note, implies an imposition of a peculiar temporality to politics itself: the temporality of finitude and accomplishedness. Politics is divorced from the experimental register in order to be reduced in its entirety to the question of the *res finita*, to the accomplished fact – whose substance is always the preservation of *res privatae*. In the register of the *present perfect*, the ends of politics are always immutably in the service of both the foundation and preservation of a totality that is closed in upon itself and the regulative variations that this totality is capable of producing. Post-socialism removes politics from the present and its infinitude, from the capacity of egalitarian impulses to produce a hole in existence, in order to bring it under

<sup>08</sup> Jacques Rancière, ‘Introducing Disagreement’, in: *Angelaki*, 2004, Vol. 9, № 3, p. 7.

the ideal of the finite and finished nature of a whole – it is only as a closed totality that politics reaches its normative dimension proper, its universality can only ever be that of a formal order. In a paradigmatic textbook of post-socialist political philosophy, Raymond Aron expresses the essence of politics and of democracy as “the organisation of peaceful competition with respect to the exercise of power”.<sup>09</sup> Politics is thus confounded with the state, and with its formal core: juridical regulation. In the end the sole norm that the post-socialist ideology wants to measure politics against is the norm of functionality: the norm of mechanical functioning, which seeks to fashion political life as a machine of administration of the parts of the community and the circulation of goods. Such a machine, like all machines, should function like perfect clockwork. Its time is the time of universal measurement: where all parts can be ordered according to a pre-determined scale, where calculation and efficiency rule supreme, where the future is a matter of patent predictability, and where time always unfolds linearly as a ruled succession of moments.

Within the post-socialist context, no one has provided a better formulation of this specific conception of politics and this specific conception of time than Zoran Đinđić, who before his tragic career as a statesman distinguished himself as one the principal philosophical mouthpieces for liberal-democracy. The syntagm through which Đinđić formulated his final judgment on Yugoslavia – “Yugoslavia as an unfinished State” – reveals precisely this: an obsession with finitude and *res finitae*.<sup>10</sup> Đinđić has nothing but aversion for the coupling of politics with infinity. Once communism, with its idea of the ‘withering away of the state’, strove to subvert the statist order through the dialectical introduction of infinity, it was only capable of producing a functional disaster:

<sup>09</sup> Raymond Aron, *Introduction à la philosophie politique. Démocratie et Révolution*, Paris, Livre de Poche, 1997, p. 36. The quote is taken from Daniel Bensaïd’s fiery little article on democracy: “Le scandale permanent”, in: Agamben, Badiou, Bensaïd et al. *Démocratie, dans quel état?*, Paris: La fabrique, 2009.

<sup>10</sup> Zoran Đinđić, *Jugoslavija kao nedovršena država* [Yugoslavia as an Unfinished State], Novi Sad: Književna Zajednica Novog Sada, 1988.

“One of the basic consequences of this separation [of sovereignty from the state] is that sovereignty has in principle become infinite. But a part of the dialectical characteristic of this principally infinite sovereignty, brought about by its dissociation from its status in the state, is also the permanent possibility of its complete impotence.”<sup>11</sup>

According to Đinđić’s juridical calculus, the tragedy of the Yugoslav conflicts of the 1980s and the 1990s was due to nothing else but this conception of infinite politics inherent to the idea of communism. Having divorced sovereignty from its coupling with the state, and thus collapsing the possibility of its own self-identity, communism could only lead towards political disaster: towards a proliferation of particularistic claims and eventually towards the disintegration of order as such. The prescription that Đinđić envisaged for Yugoslavia, on the very eve of its existence, was to reintroduce the principle of juridical clarity: the clarity of a constitutional status, the clear articulation of sovereignty and the political community, which Đinđić imagined as a combination of Kelsenian positivism and Hobbessian metaphysics.<sup>12</sup> The only solution, in other words, was to ‘complete the Yugoslav state’. This is why, in the end, Đinđić would see the disaster of communism as much worse than the perils of nationalism: at least nationalism, as inscribed precisely in the destructive political decisions burgeoning before Đinđić’s eyes, proceeded from a principle of identitary clarity, from an idea of a closed and accomplished whole.<sup>13</sup>

The post-socialist ideology here imprints a transcendent form upon politics, which limits both its time and its scope. The fetish of Law ensures that the ultimate aim of political decisions and gestures can only ever be the establishment of the rule of law itself. This logic is tautological, for these

<sup>11</sup> Ibid, p. 12.

<sup>12</sup> Read, for example, the following argument: “What is it that makes the creation of significant political decisions through constitutional procedures possible? An unambiguous answer is: the unity of the political community, which precedes the constitutional procedure and enables its functioning. This unity is the frame, the common definition of the common situation, the horizon of common values” (ibid, p. 105).

<sup>13</sup> I have analysed elsewhere Đinđić’s relation to Yugoslavia in more detail. See my text “Ničesar ni bilo – razen kraja, kjer je bilo: Đinđić in Jugoslavija”, *Borec*, No: 648-651, Ljubljana: ZAK, 2008.

gestures and decisions are only possible within a prior context of rationality and normativity provided by the juridical framework. But the tautology has determinate temporal effects: it nullifies all exceptional moments; it seeks to extinguish all instances of the present, all singular political inventions, all the declarations of non-alignment with the way of the world. From within the logic of the whole, strictly speaking, nothing ever happens outside of it: nothing but the insignificant singularity of the place or the disastrous contingency of disorder.

★★★

The now of post-socialism is an odd time, a time turned on its head. Putting it on its feet constitutes one of the principle tasks of thought today. The problem we face seems precisely to be that of the present as the time of the constitution of the subject. Politics can only begin when we insert a cog into the *present perfect*: with an affirmation that the situations that politics treats cannot be represented as closed totalities, that such situations are necessarily marked by incompleteness

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and openness. Every situation is incomplete because it can be interrupted by the emergence of the present as *kaïros*: by an infinite temporal opening that breaks apart the circular movement of time. In opposition to Đinđić's amnesiac logic, the very idea of communist politics, inscribed in the Yugoslav project, can serve as a guide in this regard. If something took place in the year 1943, when the project of Yugoslavia was born out of the Partisan struggle, this was precisely a radical manifestation of the present: the emergence of a practice of equality (of classes, nations, genders) that was capable of reaching

beyond the coordinates of possibility of the existent situation and initiating an open process of political invention. As an egalitarian project, a project of emancipation, Yugoslavia represented, since its very inception, an incompletable, unfinished state. This is why the example of 1943 speaks to us today as a paradigm of a specific subjective construction of time, as a paradigm of its necessary infinitude. For communism is nothing but this: an attitude towards history that incessantly seeks to divide the present from itself in order to affirm novelties that seem impossible within it. ✘

OZREN PUPOVAC, "PRESENT PERFECT, OR THE TIME OF POST-SOCIALISM," IN FILOZOFSKI VESTNIK, LJUBLJANA (3/2009), SARAJEVO NOTEBOOK/SVESKE 27-28 (2010) AND IN EUROZINE (12-5-2010), [HTTP://WWW.EUROZINE.COM/ARTICLES/2010-05-12-PUPOVAC-EN.HTML](http://WWW.EUROZINE.COM/ARTICLES/2010-05-12-PUPOVAC-EN.HTML).

## maciej gdula two critical arts

Critical art in Poland has long sought recognition, and it has now reached a point at which it occupies an important position in the art world as a valid genre of creative practice. Recognition has been accompanied by criticism of critical art. It seems that the misunderstandings related to challenging its position, or even the rationale behind critical practice, go beyond the usual matter of confusion, as is usually the case in such situations. In order to dismiss at least some of these accusations, I would like to make a distinction between two types of contemporary critical art, both developed in opposition to propagandist art. The first of these focuses on the process of sociation and how this takes place. The other highlights the diversity of social actors, perceiving change as the transformation of the rules that make up the social realm.<sup>01</sup>

### AGAINST PROPAGANDA

The aim of all critical practice is to produce forms of knowledge capable of challenging the existing social order; this is what we know about critical art in general. The approach to social order and the tools for its understanding and change, as well as the means of effecting social change, differ according to a given perspective. Propaganda art, the most oft-quoted example called upon to denounce contemporary artists as the new totalitarians or cultural commissars, has its origins in emancipatory meta-narratives.

Human emancipation from the unjust social relationships in these meta-narratives is expected to take place by means of the universal laws of history. Popular interpretations of

<sup>01</sup> The differentiation between two types of critical art is homologous to the distinction running across the contemporary reflection on the society which is measured either by sociation (eg. P. Bourdieu, S. Žižek, S. de Beauvoir) or composition (E. Laclau, M. Foucault, B. Latour).

Marxism offer adequate examples of such meta-narratives. Seen as the core of capitalist order, freedom merely conceals unjust social relationships founded on uneven distribution of property. However, the principle of the accumulation of capital as the actual essence of capitalism, will eventually lead to its downfall and the collectivisation of the means of production. This will be accomplished as the result of the universal law of history and the succession of socio-economic formations. The existence of these laws allows for making a clear-cut division between the progressive and the reactionary, between the content that buttresses the system and that which leads to its transformation.

Propaganda art can serve as a means for exposing the ideology that conceals unjust social relationships and, if possible, inspire the masses to hasten the inevitable. But such art is subordinate to more fundamental processes; it belongs to the superstructure and, at best, can enjoy only relative autonomy. That said, propaganda art has limited power and, more importantly, limited responsibility. The laws of social development define and justify the content of the artistic message, relieving artists of the duty of asking questions about the direction of change.

Embedded in the realm where the meta-narrative has come to an end, both types of contemporary critical practice distance themselves from propaganda. The direction of social change is neither predefined nor guaranteed. One can no longer harmlessly maintain the division into progressive and reactionary content. Society cannot be seen as an edifice with ideally fitting tiers. Contemporary critical art addresses issues of domination and the politics of emancipation in a situation defined by a lack of faith in the existence of universal laws, which would ensure the setting up of a just social order. From being service-providers artists turn into actors asking questions about contemporary forms of domination, and defining the course of change. Instead of propaganda, we are dealing with an ongoing process of ne-



gotiating the essence of oppression and developing means and ways for substituting it.

#### SOCIATION

The first type of critical art poses questions about supremacy and domination, identifying their sources and mechanisms in the principles of sociation – the process through which individuals enter social life. Sociation allows us to speak, through it we know how to categorise the world as well as what to expect from it. It also shapes our identity and self-image, so that we become women, Poles, gay, ‘exceptional individuals’, Catholics or artists. Sociation is an ambivalent process, on the one hand it is a necessary prerequisite for any order, on the other, it instils individuals with knowledge, reflexes and expectations, making them accept inequalities, subordination and oppression.

Disguising its own mechanisms is one of the effects of the sociation process. Individuals shaped according to a particular pattern perceive their dispositions, categories and knowledge as the only ones possible. The world they inhabit seems natural and self-explanatory. Accordingly, those who are dominated perceive their situation as the only plausible order, and are unlikely to take up actions aimed at change. Change requires moving beyond categories and identities that seem natural, and, to a certain extent, appealing. For

example, exploited factory workers can perceive themselves as citizens of a small town, or as males, and refrain from launching any effort towards changing their wages or working conditions. Change is possible if they will start defining themselves as workers sharing a common interest *vis a vis* their fellow employees.

The fundamental prerequisite for social change is a situation in which natural human dispositions and cognitive categories are destabilised. If individuals lose their sense of direction in the world they are also more likely to perceive its negative aspects and think of change. Crisis, which challenges the stability of reality, might be an example of such a situation, yet similar effects can be brought about by participation in practices stemming from social movements, such as strikes or demonstrations, or from confronting a piece of writing or an artwork. The borders of social change are defined by the readiness of people to abandon their habits, identities, anxieties and dreams. The fundament of emancipation consists in changing the position from which an individual perceives him- or herself and their role in the world. However, this does not mean that all changes are purely ‘internal’. Rather, it should be said that change requires working through the effects of the process of sociation.

There are a number of significant aspects that vary the perspective of sociation from that of the meta-narrative.

▲ Artur Żmijewski, *Them*, 2007. COURTESY OF FOKSALL GALLERY FOUNDATION

Firstly, the latter assumes a coexistence of various forms of oppression and domination. Neither economical nor political or cultural facets are treated as fundamental aspects of reality. Questions concerning domination revolve around exploitation, exclusion and arbitrary hierarchies. Rather than asserting, for example, that patriarchy is an offshoot of existing relations towards the means of production, emphasis is placed on power relations between males and females and asking questions about specific conditionings taking place in the realm of economy, sexuality, cultural traditions and political history, which support the non-symmetrical relations between both groups. Secondly, criticism is not used with the conviction that ‘history is on our side’. Social processes are not determined by the universal logic of change, its ultimate aim being the emancipation of all humanity. Such a perspective makes critical art accept greater responsibility, both in the field of defining the zone of domination as well as actual engagement in determining the direction of social change.

Artur Żmijewski’s practice offers fine examples of this type of critical art. His work focuses on examining various aspects of domination. Żmijewski addresses such issues as disability, anti-Semitism, nationalism and patriarchy. The video

*Them (Oni)*, 2007, presented at the last Documenta exhibition in Kassel, brings together different aspects of Żmijewski’s interests in the recording of an experiment.

The project featured a confrontation between four groups of participants who agreed to act as representatives of one of four categories proposed by Żmijewski – the members of Radio Maryja, Jewish youth organisations, the All-Polish Youth, and freedom activists. The participants were first asked to produce an image of Poland reflecting their beliefs. Radio Maryja representatives drew a church, the freedom activists created Poland with a rainbow flag, the All-Polish Youth portrayed Poland with a *Szczerbiec* (a historical sword used in coronations), while the Jews produced the outline of Poland with the word ‘Poland’ in Hebrew. The next stage consisted of performing an action on the symbol created by one of the other groups. And so, the Jewish group decided to cut open the church door, as a representative of the All-Polish Youth erased the rainbow from the freedom activists’ image saying ‘it’s better grey, at least it’s uniform’. The following days brought more activities carried out by group members wearing t-shirts with their own designs. The atmosphere grew tense. During one session, the All-Polish Youth group, accusing the freedom activists of murder,

displayed a doll representing a dead foetus. Soon after, the freedom activists returned the doll labelling it as the corpse of a woman who had died during an illegal abortion. The event reached a climax with one of the participants setting Poland on fire and, in effect, refusing to take part in the game proposed by Żmijewski. *Them* traces the messages and practices which accompany important identifications of socio-political life in Poland. Żmijewski arranges a clash of salient approaches, creating a laboratory of conflicts and dispositions. What remains noticeable throughout the experiment however, is the conventional nature of responses and the ritualisation of conflict. All parties chose easily discernable symbols, deploying them in a predictable way in order to uphold the impression that the groups are divided by unbridgeable differences. Further communication did not lead to change; instead, it reproduced the conflict based on incommensurability of perspectives. This took place until one participant decided to go beyond the predefined positions and identities. Setting Poland on fire was a form of radical breach aimed at allowing all participants to abandon their roles.

The radical breach and the cleansing that follows are the prerequisites for change. Their aim is to open up possibilities for autonomous decisions concerning one's life, which go beyond the range of predefined identities and ritualised conflicts. The goal of criticism is to create a situation in which people make their own choices, without resorting to prosaic, naturalised identities.

## COMPOSITION

If the previous approach focused on the process of introducing individuals to the social order, the other kind of critical art begins with questions of complexity and composition. Of paramount importance here is the assumption that we are dealing with a multiplicity of actors with various interrelations. What we call order is a process aimed at minimising multiplicity and stabilising relations between actors.

Here, the fundamental question refers to the rules that define which actors are recognised as creating the order. Stability of relations is achieved by making the identity of a limited number of participants more rigid, as a result of which the system as a whole remains predictable. Critical practice asks questions about the number of actors officially recognised as valid players, as well as the underlying principles of relations between them. For example, for decades it was be-

lieved that politics is the area in which nations or, according to a different approach, social classes, clash. As a result, other actors could be marginalised as unimportant, uninteresting, or weak. Yet from the 1960s onwards we have witnessed the growing activity of social movements, which have not only fought a successful struggle for specific solutions to particular issues, but have changed the political landscape as such. The political stage is now inhabited by sexual minorities, ecologists, prisoners or ethnic groups (Indians, Aborigines). Recently, more and more questions are being raised about non-human actors, such as machines or animals, and their role in establishing social order.

Composition-based criticism can take the shape of various practices. It is played out by questioning the number of actors taken into consideration in the process of constructing the system. It also consists of developing new principles for calling upon or exposing the actors, as well as redefining relations between them so as to forge new alliances and change the balance of power. The difference between the two types of critical art can be highlighted by a comparison of how each of them approaches the politics of identity. As far as criticism based on sociation is concerned, emancipation requires a radical change of identity, or at least a complete change in the mode of its functioning, from natural to the individually chosen. Composition-informed criticism on the other hand, approaches identity as a linking tool, which makes it possible to change alliances between actors, and establish new connections between them. The issue of rejecting one's own identity or changing the subjective approach to it is not so much at the heart of this as the construction of reciprocal dependencies and broadening the scope of participation.

Joanna Rajkowska is an artist whose practice successfully explores the second type of criticism. Her works expose social actors omitted by the official order; the artist brings them to the fore by means of unconventional, seemingly neutral, objects, which allow that which is concealed or potentially existing to come into being.<sup>02</sup>

Rajkowska's 2002 project, *Greetings from Jerusalem Avenue* (Pozdrowienia z Alej Jerozolimskich), consisted of placing a replica of a date palm in Warsaw's de Gaulle Circle.<sup>03</sup> According to the original plan, the palm was to trigger associations with

<sup>02</sup> Rajkowska. *Przewodnik Krytyki Politycznej*, Wydawnictwo Krytyki Politycznej, Warsaw, 2009.

<sup>03</sup> For more information about the project see <http://www.palma.art.pl/?language=en>

absent actors – the Jews, whose colony on the other bank of the River Vistula provided the name for the road leading to the settlement. The project had a surprising outcome for the artist and brought forward actors who were not accounted for in the original proposal. City officials connected to the right-wing politician Lech Kaczyński, the then president of Warsaw, opposed the palm tree, demanding its removal. The project served as a linking element for a number of left wing groups who organised a protest movement. Later, during a massive nurses strike held in front of the prime minister's office, the palm was dressed in a white nurse's cap as a sign of solidarity with protesting trade unions demanding higher wages. In the long run the palm proved victorious in the conflict with the officials, and still stands in one of the key locations in the cityscape, without a doubt its mission of forging alliances between actors is not yet finished.

The *Oxygenator* (Dotleniacz), 2007, was a pond in Grzybowski Square fitted with a fountain that spread ozonized air. The original concept was aimed at highlighting the concealed content that would emerge during spontaneous interactions on a site where various historical layers and aspects of urban life converge. Grzybowski Square is part of the former Jewish neighbourhood, home to a bookstore which operated in the cellar of a nearby church throughout the 1990s selling anti-Semitic publications, as well as the destination for many construction workers and DIY-enthusiasts who purchase their hardware supplies, the district of glitzy skyscrapers, the location of banks and insurance companies, as well as kebab shops run by immigrants from Egypt and Syria. Indeed *Oxygenator* brought people together, but it did not invite them to open up to each other. Instead something else happened – the piece exposed new actors, elderly people who treated it as a place for relaxation. The commercialised downtown area offered them no space to spend their time, and time by the pond proved very appealing. As the project was drawing to a close those people organised themselves and became involved in the process of social consultation demanding that *Oxygenator*, or a similar structure, be placed in the square following its renovation.

Rather than questions concerning autonomy, composition-informed critical art focuses on issues of alliances and participation. Breach and cleansing are less important than producing new links and broadening the possibilities for access to socially important areas. Here, the aim of criticism is to expand democracy and remodel power relations, allowing a maximum number of actors to inhabit a common world.

## CRITICISM OF CRITICISM

Most accusations levelled at critical art concern issues of instrumentality, morality and effectiveness. Critical art is accused of betraying the autonomy of art and reducing it to a political tool. Critical artists are attacked for their approach to people, showing a lack of concern for the 'ordinary person'. Other complaints include the limited influence of critical art on reality and its lack of effectiveness in triggering social change.

Often such accusations are being made against propaganda art that is mistaken for contemporary critical practice. However, considering the aforementioned arguments in relation to both types of critical art can help highlight their differences, and eliminate misunderstandings that occur between the supporters and opponents of this area of artistic practice.

The argument concerning the instrumentalisation of art draws its strength from the widely accepted conviction about the autonomous character of artistic practice and the neutrality of pure art. When viewed from this perspective alone, the loss of independence or reduction to politics can be viewed as an actual loss. Traditionally, the conflict takes place between the adherents of autonomy and its denouncers who expose the entanglement of pure aesthetics and the illusion of artistic autonomy. Interestingly, critical art that takes sociation as its point of departure does not enter the dispute with the defendants of artistic purity in a foreseeable way. If art is autonomous, it also possesses its own tools for voicing a variety of issues, including those related to domination, politics and power. Therefore, refraining from using these tools is not a proof of autonomy but of an unconscious censorship, which limits artistic freedom.<sup>04</sup> Yet if critical practice is to be seen not as agitation, but a process of recognising non-symmetrical and arbitrary social relations (a process that cannot be effected by others, simply because they are unable to use artistic tools), there is very little threat of instrumentalisation.

As far as critical art that takes composition as its point of departure is concerned, the accusation of instrumentalisation is somewhat inadequate, for here, autonomy is not seen as being of particular interest. If the expectation of social change is related to the forging of alliances, it is difficult to consider independence as a fundamental virtue. Artistic practices are successful as far as they manage to expose new

<sup>04</sup> Artur Żmijewski, *Spoleczne sztuki stosowane*, "Krytyka Polityczna", issue 11/12, Winter 2007, pp. 14–24.

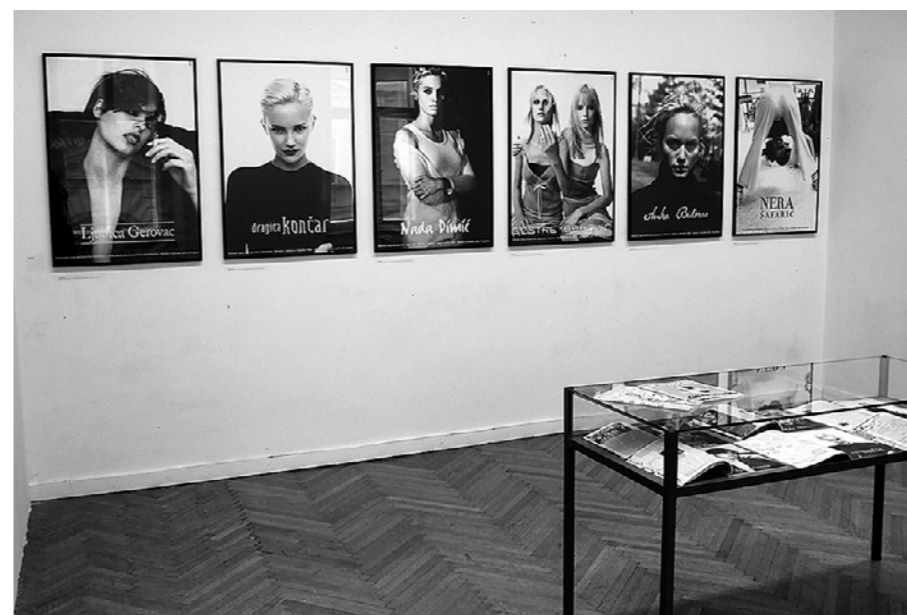
actors and broaden the scope of participation, while the subsequent 'dirtying' of art testifies to its ability to enter into broader alliances and, consequently, its success. This is why accusations of immorality levelled at critical art founded on composition miss their target. Disturbing the routines and criticising the beliefs of 'ordinary individuals' can be considered scandalous given that those individuals are seen as well-defined and specific people. Yet if they are viewed as actors equipped with various properties, changing particular aspects of their identity no longer seems so dramatic. Since actors cannot be reduced to a set of relationships in which they exist, it is possible for them to take part in work about their identity, as it allows for establishing new links and alliances.

For critical art based on sociation the issue of morality is resolved differently. In this case, artists openly admit that they possess a particular kind of power, which could be used to disassemble rational and arbitrary constructs that maintain non-symmetrical social relations. Through interventions that disturb widely accepted moral norms, the artist operates in the name of autonomy and is therefore relieved from responsibilities that bind ordinary members of a community. Even if the process in which people gain control over themselves is painful, the reward is worth the sacrifice. Viewed in this way, artistic practice is not necessarily agreeable, but neither is the surrounding world.

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The accusation that critical art is inefficient refers to extremely important issues, even if it is often made by those who claim that critical artists are a threat to pure art. Critical art based on sociation has a tendency to define its stakes using 'all or nothing' categories. The radical breach is either successful or remains a mere hope for the future. Either change takes place or the world remains stuck in its tracks. Importantly, when the project for radical change does not take place, radicalism is easily replaced by melancholy or defeatism – if fundamental changes cannot take place, no transformation is good enough. Critical art based on composition is in a completely different position, as it chooses not to express high expectations and thus limits possible disappointments. The issue here is whether gradual changes hold enough transformative potential in the face of existing social relations.

In speaking about critical art in general makes it impossible to give a full account of the complexity of artistic practices or to reasonably participate in a debate. Introducing the aforementioned distinction between the two types of critical practice proves that employing art in the process of social change is characterised by more than the level of its engagement, but is also related to varying assumptions and differently formulated goals. It seems that critical art today stands firm and has both feet on the ground. ✘



▲ Sanja Iveković, *Gen XX*,  
 ◀ published in *Arkzin*  
 magazine. Exhibition  
 view at *Art Always Has Its  
 Consequences*, Zagreb, 2010

gal Kirn

# anti-Fascist Memorial Sites: Pure Art or the Mythologisation of Socialist Yugoslavia?



## 1. POST-SOCIALIST EFFECTS: ANTI-TOTALITARIAN IDEOLOGY AND NOSTALGIA<sup>01</sup>

**a**fter the 'democratic revolutions' hit Eastern Europe at the end of the 1980s, post-socialism became a privileged signifier that described the new social reality and proclaimed the start of the necessary transition of the socialist states towards European-Atlantic integration and democracy.<sup>02</sup> Post-socialism stood as a magic umbrella of transition studies, which formulated 'laws' and goals of transition that needed to be fulfilled; the master-signifier seemed to cover all historical processes at work in post-socialist societies. Transology research procedures were circular, since they bureaucratically affirmed the formulae of pre-supposed changes that needed to be implemented in young democracies. If we draw up a summary of the last two decades we can easily detect how transology's conceptual frame was not neutral, or ideologically free, but was inseparably linked to neoliberal ideology. Transition studies did not only perform a certain ideological description of the new reality, but functioned as an indispensable supplement to a general political prescription, which praised the sacred mechanisms of the free market, the withering away of the welfare state and the embracing of Europe.<sup>03</sup> It became a think tank; pragmatic intellectual machinery immanently connected to governmental policies. The 'end of history' discourse based its model of time on a linear and romantic conception, where nation and market were the 'alpha and omega' of any research, its hidden 'telos' and the ultimate

goal.<sup>04</sup> The transitional neoliberal ideology, which targeted the socialist state's economic management and social relations, was accompanied by its rightwing partner in crime. The dissident plea for human rights, launched in the name of parliamentarianism and the democratic public sphere, was invoked against the 'gloomy totalitarian past'<sup>05</sup>. The search for national glory and reinvention of tradition became a part of the critique of the totalitarian past. Becoming a democrat meant to pass a cathartic purification from the socialist past, notwithstanding how undemocratic the political practices of the new ruling class were: the destruction of the welfare state, nationalist outbursts, the exclusion of minorities, wars, the Church's return to tradition...<sup>06</sup> Being anti-communist seemed to fulfil the Western criteria for democracy. To be sure, this ideological conjuncture was not simply imposed from outside, it was not a mere copy of the neoliberal agenda taking place in the West, which would be applied to the East. The transition was formed and framed in the context of local ideologies and new class coalitions taking place in the 1980s, which produced ideological surplus value: the East witnessed the rise of national-liberalism, which became one of the most central ideologies of the ruling class, moulding the terrain of the democratic transition.<sup>07</sup> The socialist beast from the East had to be beaten, if not forgotten, then memorialised in a decent way, prescribed by the new ideologies. How to return the communist genie to the bottle?

**01** This is a thoroughly revised and extended version of my forthcoming article on the transformation of memorial sites in the post-Yugoslav context. See bibliography.

**02** As Boris Buden lucidly observes, the West patronisingly claimed that there was a lack of political culture and democracy in the East, that the East needed to start the transition despite the historical fact that social movements and labour politics had been much more vibrant in the East during the 1980s. As such they could bring down the rule of the Communist Parties (2009).

**03** For a detailed overview of transition ideology in the Balkans, see Močnik (2003).

◀ Vojin Bakić, Monument at the Petrova Gora (finished 1981), present condition, PHOTO: DEJAN KRŠIĆ

**04** We should not overlook that the neoliberal agenda in Yugoslavia was already dominating the realm of politics at the beginning of the 1980s. One of the main reasons was the implementation of IMF programmes, which meant a gradual introduction of private property and austerity policies. For an analysis of the detrimental effects of the IMF on Yugoslavia, see Samary (1988), Magaš (1993) and Woodward (1995).

**05** For a detailed and lucid critical analysis of dissident discourse see Rastko Močnik (2003) and Boris Buden (2001, 2009). Miško Šuvaković shows very well how Art became instrumentalised in the anti-totalitarian framework, substituting socialist realism with something I would call national realism (2006).

**06** Tomaž Mastnak lucidly described how the civil society itself can become a sort of 'totalitarianism from below' (1987).

**07** I have analysed the capitalist restoration and the class struggle on another occasion (2010).

One of the answers to this question was found in the nation-building processes that finally realised the model of one nation in one state. This demanded a new interpretation of history, which entailed a new politics of memory.<sup>08</sup> Once in power, dissidents started demanding moral and legal responsibility for crimes committed by the totalitarian regimes<sup>09</sup>. Apart from the anti-totalitarian ideology, which demanded a final settlement and complete erasure of the socialist past, there was also a more liberal, ‘reconciliatory’ account of the past. Following the end of socialism we can at least have a decent goodbye with crocodile tears in our eyes or in the form of a resistant subculture. Displaying or using museum approaches became quite fashionable and was often accompanied by a commodification of socialist iconography and material culture.<sup>10</sup> In the post-Yugoslav context a whole range of cultural practices appeared, ranging from ritualised visits to Marshal Tito’s grave and his birth village of Kumrovec, to films, performances, books of his life... Increasingly these cultural artefacts idealised the good old times, they confirmed *Goodbye Tito*<sup>11</sup>, which drove the last nail into the coffin of communism. *Yugostalgia* is carefully analysed by cul-

tural studies, which participate in a mosaic called a memory boom. Many of these researches focus on the layers of ‘socialist’ culture, which were not supposedly permeated by dirty communists, the Communist Party, or communist ideology; they put forward the thesis that people lived a normal life even in times of socialism. This argument boils down to the statement: now that socialist times are over for good, we can at least assert that people lived decent lives.

It is not difficult to detect that both mainstream ideological narratives of the socialist past – the anti-totalitarian (‘gloomy past’) and the liberal (‘good old times’) – have specific political effects: ‘demonisation’ or ‘depoliticisation’ of the past, which in the last instance neutralises the revolutionary nature of socialist Yugoslavia and blocks any emancipatory politics, any discussion and political action that would strive for a real alternative to the present conjuncture of ‘capitalocracy’. Also, in the light of the contemporary ruling ideology of national reconciliation, new memorialisation has major consequences in legitimising the ethnic divisions in former Yugoslavia, its’ imagined past and future. The question that seems crucial today is how to return to Yugoslavia, how to think about its novelty, if the ideological horizon is being sutured by anti-totalitarian nostalgia? If we are even more precise, we can detect two different politics of memory taking place in the contemporary post-Yugoslav context: firstly, the destruction of anti-fascist monuments (e.g. in Croatia the majority of them have been destroyed) and secondly, a more subtle technique of the construction of new memorial sites that commemorate fascist collaborators from WWII: Croatian Ustashi, Serbian Chetniks, Slovenian Home Guard. They all become part of a new nation that needs to be reconciled, even if the price being paid for this is the rehabilitation of fascism.<sup>12</sup> The anti-fascist legacy is being brutally undermined by historical revisionism and a new culture of memory in the post-Yugoslav context.

To affirm the novelty of the Yugoslav revolution and anti-fascist struggle in the post-Yugoslav context does not mean to be Yugo-nostalgic and to blindly repeat what is evidently not here any more (to re-enforce Yugoslavia as a result of its heroic past), but to repeat the ‘communist’ gesture, to continue and repeat the communist politics that were at work in precise historical periods. Thinking about the novelty, and understanding its uniqueness, forces us to start

12 I worked extensively on the post-Yugoslav politics of memory in the Croatian and Slovenian context in another article (2009).

thinking about Yugoslavia from its interiority, that is, immanently, with the whole set of contradictory tendencies that ran through its development. That is why this essay will be primarily focusing on the politics of memory in socialist Yugoslavia, which in itself is full of ambivalent tendencies and accounts. We will suggest a different reading of the past, which maps out complex inter-relations between ideology, art, and politics. We will critically depart from a contemporary revisionist reading of the anti-fascist memorial sites in Yugoslavia. In the second part we will demonstrate a closer analysis of official Yugoslav politics of memory – the project of the memorialisation of the People’s Liberation Struggle, which we will then juxtapose with the internationally renowned modernist sculptural work by Vojin Bakić.

## 2. THE LIBERAL MISSION: TO UNDERSTAND MODERNISM IN YUGOSLAVIA – TO RESCUE THE PURE ART

The rise of modernism in the Yugoslav context did not happen as some kind of heroic resistance by artists to the dogmas of socialist realism. Modernism emerged as part of the official cultural policy of the Yugoslavian League of Communists, which, as early as 1949, had already publicly announced the withdrawal of the Party from the realm of culture. This new cultural policy openly criticised Zhdanovism and its prescription for a socialist realist doctrine for artists. In 1952, Miroslav Krleža, one of the most important writers in Yugoslav history, made an important speech at the Writer’s Convention in Ljubljana, which drew the coordinates for humanist socialist realism, for a socialist third way, also in the realm of art.<sup>13</sup> But it was only during the 1960s and 1970s that the Yugoslavian artistic context shone in its full light; the unprecedented emergence of modernism, which did not only exist in cinema (the ‘Black wave’), but was a much broader art movement. As Sergio Germani claims there was “a general creative swing in the theatre, literature, fine arts and music” (2010: 280), I would add to this list the movement of modernist sculpture, graphic art, body art and performance. Never before or after did Yugoslav art flourish in such a way. Surely, this cannot be reduced to the effect of official

13 Pavle Levi correctly asserts that the end of socialist realism in Yugoslavia had already come with the critique of Stalinism in the 1950s (2007). Artists could practice a relative freedom of expression and that was also affirmed by the large production of alternative films, graphics, sculpture works. For a more detailed view, see Djurić and Šuvaković (2003), Komej (2009), WHW (2008).

cultural policy, but likewise, it cannot be interpreted as the product of artistic genius standing like a beacon in the midst of a totalitarian society.

WHW has correctly argued that modernist artists had difficulties when asserting critical and political messages within their artworks, thus there was a specific and, at times, insurmountable tension between neo-avant-garde artists and the political authorities. But what some opposing revisionist readings stress is that this conflict between art and politics, was a mere individualistic, bourgeois critique of socialist realism. When liberal art historians talk about modernist sculptures and extol the beauty of abstraction in Bakić’s work, they offer a naïve understanding of him and his art. WHW is correct in this regard, when arguing that mainstream interpretation sees Bakić:

“as a propagator of abstraction who struggled for freedom of artistic expression, and his use of clean abstract forms is interpreted as a victory of art not only over socialist dogma, but over ideology in general. What such an understanding fails to comprehend is the fact that modernism is not monolithic construction nor is it ideologically empty”<sup>14</sup>

Leaving the abstract level of theorisation, we will take one typical example of revisionist defence of ‘pure art’ that promotes *a priori*, the bourgeois autonomy of art. The argument can be found in *Damnatio Memoriae* (2001), Bogdan Žižić’s documentary on memorial sites. This film is very important in terms of its informative and historical value since it opens up a topic that is of vital importance in the post-Yugoslav context, namely the destruction of anti-fascist monuments and the rise of new memory politics. However, Žižić’s politico-aesthetical message boils down to a multiplicity of liberal commonplaces and mystifies the position of the artist in the Yugoslav society. When Žižić analyses the recent destruction of anti-fascist memorials in Croatia, he puts the perpetrators of monuments on trial. His verdict consists of two propositions: the first thesis points out that destruction is a morally intolerable act. Monuments must be respected, since they bear witness to the future. This ethical claim calls for respect for the dead and is a visual sign in the landscape. The second and more problematic thesis can be summed up in the following way: it is true that many of the anti-fascist

14 *Kein Punkt, sondern ein Komma, Wechselwirkungen im Verständnis der Moderne – am Beispiel des Bildhauers Vojin Bakić*, Springerin 1/2008.

08 If the countries of the former socialist bloc found their ‘natural’ enemy in the Soviet Union and simply equated Soviet imperialism with communism, the situation in Yugoslavia was slightly more complicated due to its specific development. The most developed parts of the federation, Slovenia and Croatia, launched a critique of centralism, whereas other parts like Serbia launched their nationalist campaign at the expense of the autonomy of the regions of Vojvodina and Kosovo. Nationalism started to become a primary ideological site only in the mid-1980s. How nationalism was linked to the political and economical field is a very important question that is still to be answered. We have to add that nationalism was not only a project from above, since it was happening in everyday life, embracing the masses.

09 Lustration was the clearest process for dissident politics, which comprised of cleansing Communist Party members from official posts. In other words, lustration brought about the ‘recomposition’ of the political class. We have to acknowledge the differences in scale and intensity of these processes within the socialist bloc. In some states, these anti-communist policies were extremely fervent (Baltic states, Poland, Czech Republic...), while in other states, the former communist parties democratised and participated in the reconciliation and transition processes.

10 For the emergence of museums across the East European context see Mēhilli’s analysis (2009). For a case study of Serbian politics of memory and commodification see Radović (2009).

11 For an excellent study of Titostalgia see Velikonja (2009).

monuments were ideological (that is communist) and moreover had no aesthetic value, but a number of internationally recognisable monuments emerged. They were true works of art and managed to sidestep the ideology of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia. Aesthetically significant works, in which Vojin Bakić's sculptures played an important role, should be viewed strictly from an artistic perspective. The fact of their destruction testifies to the barbarism and ignorance of the perpetrators. Although Žižić makes a general plea for the protection of all monuments, he obviously deems some among them more privileged. According to him the 'pure art' of Bakić's monuments has nothing to do with the real struggles and ideological coordinates of the existing art. When the filmmaker was faced with a crucial problem 'to rethink the connections between ideology, politics, and art', he simply renounced it. The fact that some of the monuments were real works of art does not make them any more worthy of protection. By dispensing with political ideology, Žižić's argument leaves the way open for another kind of ideology: aesthetic ideology. Žižić intervenes in reality through the aesthetic discourse, which allows him to avoid getting his hands dirty with ideology, either communist or fascist. The unspoken assumption that ideology-free thinking and remembrance are only possible through works of art is an ideological assumption *par excellence*. Behind this assumption lies a naïve idea about the authenticity and purity of the artistic position that is divorced from social reality. Thus, the acuity and the message of the documentary film end up hanging in mid-air. On the one hand, it fails in thinking through the fascist politics of monument destruction and its vital role in the constitution of Croatian ethnic community, but on the other, it does succeed in mystifying artistic practices in Yugoslav modernism and suturing memorial sites with transhistorical morality.

### 3. THE OFFICIAL POLITICS OF MEMORY: THE MYTHOLOGISATION OF THE PEOPLE'S LIBERATION STRUGGLE

The question of memory in Yugoslav politics is crucial for understanding the ambivalent relationship between modernist art, official cultural policy and its political demand (ideology) to represent and promote the *People's Liberation Struggle* (PLS) after World War II. Are there any means by which we can launch an interpretation that could advocate aesthetic novelty or artistic autonomy in the case of anti-fascist memorial sites? At first glance the answer is a definite

no. There was a strong connection between the construction of monuments and different dominant political groups with a clear political purpose: to evoke the memory of the past struggle. It seems that there was no room for any artistic experimentation in memory politics, since it political message was already prescribed.

The mass production of anti-fascist monuments and memorial sites began in the period between 1947 and 1965. The Association of Veterans of the Peoples' Liberation War (SUBNOR), with the significant help of federal and local authorities, launched a project of memorialisation and glorification of the PLS. It consisted of the construction of minor symbolic plates, statues of different sizes, huge sculptures, murals, paintings, graveyards and memorial parks. In terms of form, the majority of anti-fascist memorial sites did not differ much from the canon of war memorials in other countries. What was slightly different was their reference to three fundamental dimensions of liberation: victory over fascism connected to revolution; victims (the suffering of civilians or fighters during the fascist occupation); and historically important sites (the location of particular anti-fascist acts, the sites of offensives, the foundation of political and cultural organisations...). Anti-fascist memorial sites performed the normal functions of monuments: commemorating the past and teaching young generations about the heroic deeds of the partisans. This political process could be arguably defined as a paradigmatic socialist state art project, which had a clear objective: strengthening the social ties among the Yugoslav population, thus interpellating working people into proper Yugoslav subjects.

A typical liberal argument would claim that this type of memorialisation was merely an ideological project that had nothing to do with art. Art was reduced to a mere ideological function, instrumentalised by the League of Communists and SUBNOR. Art only represented the partisan struggle, which would in turn expand and 'culturalise' the official Yugoslav ideology, catapulting its glorious foundational myth: *the People's Liberation Struggle*. As some anti-totalitarian authors maintain, this 'official memory', the official mythology was constructed by repressive ideological means. It is, then, very easy to understand that a fast dissolution of the anti-fascist ideology came with intellectual opposition in the 1980s (DENICH 1994, HAYDEN 1994, HÖPKIN 1999). Undoubtedly, we can agree with these authors that the function of these memorial sites was clear and ideological: anti-fascist monuments played a direct and important role in instituting

rituals.<sup>15</sup> All school children had to visit particular sites and learn about the historical background of anti-fascism and World War II. People learned about the emancipatory past of Yugoslavia. The role of education was of immense importance for the communist leadership both during and after the war, and they knew that it was only through the ideological struggle that 'fidelity' to the event could continue. The Yugoslav monuments cannot be regarded just as expressions of pure aesthetics, but should be analysed as being internally linked to the revolutionary events of the partisan struggle, which was based on international anti-fascist solidarity and socialist revolution. The communist leadership struggled to continue the revolutionary process following the revolution. This is also the point at which the fields of politics and ideology come extremely close and expose the fact that Yugoslav memorialisation was part of a complex historical process that linked ideology, art, and politics.

Nevertheless, contrary to this anti-totalitarian view that Yugoslav society was repressed and that memory was a simple reflection of Party directives, which were imposed on the ordinary people from above, Max Bergholz (2007) lucidly shows that the everyday rituals of ordinary people contested these same memorial sites. As he points out, people reacted to monuments in many ways: indifference (tying horses to them or letting grass cover them), subversion (telling jokes about them), and direct confrontation (smashing them, preventing people from visiting them). By the 1950s and 1960s, memorial sites were already places of ideological struggle, which dismantled a unitary conception of the Yugoslav revolutionary event and its continuation. This argument can be supported by a general evaluation of the historical situation during the 1960s. For the first time after the Liberation, the legitimacy of the ruling class was severely undermined. The contradictory and negative consequences of implementing a market mechanism in the economy, of unemployment, the first workers' strikes, the internal struggles between bureaucrats and technocrats for political power, the rise of neo-avant-garde art, student revolts, these processes were all signs of the political contestation of the ideological and political coordinates of socialist Yugoslavia. The politico-artistic

<sup>15</sup> As Althusser eloquently shows, ideology is not merely a world of false ideas, an imaginary representation, but should be seen as practice. Here, ideological rituals (everyday or symbolic ceremonial repetitions) are of crucial importance. See his text *Ideological State Apparatuses* (2008).

modernist explosion is far from any 'anti-totalitarian' narrative of the gloomy past. It was in that historical moment that the demand for ideological cohesion became crucial for the socialist leadership. The question of the mobilisation of the masses came onto the agenda, which seemed to strengthen a specific culture of memory: promoting the production of epic partisan films (*Red Hollywood*) and continuing with the construction of monuments.

It is therefore necessary to detect what went wrong, and to problematise the ideological effects of this gesture. One of the most negative effects of partisan memorialisation was the over-saturation of the partisan topic. It resulted in the emptying out of the anti-fascist struggle, which became an ossified official ideology without any power for mobilisation, and proving extremely dangerous in the following decades. The beginning of the 1970s saw the first rise in nationalistic outbursts since the Liberation, where the socialist leadership offered only political repression. In that historical period, deviation on the left and the right was silenced; it was time to take things further. However, the socialist leadership failed to recognise an immanent danger from memorialisation: the mythologisation of the PLS translated emancipatory politics into a simplified politics of memory. The question of how to reinvent ways to re-mobilise 'working people' according to the non-national criterion, which was one of the major achievements of the partisan struggle, was not endorsed or practiced by any political agent in Yugoslavia at that time.<sup>16</sup> This brief historical evaluation points to the slow but insistent exhaustion of the Yugoslavian revolutionary event, and also signals the upcoming historical defeat of the Left in the 1980s. Dissidents claim that the dissolution of the official memory took place because Yugoslav society in the 1980s was no longer so repressed.<sup>17</sup> It was as though the Yugoslav façade of 'brotherhood and unity' collapsed with the death of Tito and the rise of the intelligentsia. Apart from crude psychologising, and the elitisation of history, which reduces complex historical processes to individual traits, the dissidents and liberals forgot the fruits of their own labour: it was the dissidents themselves, and other national political forces, that started the ideological battle, fuelling and suturing the

<sup>16</sup> The role of the Yugoslav People's Army and the federal authorities is not discussed here, but we should mention that they both fell into a deep political crisis and started to react to the situation rather than formulating their own politics.

<sup>17</sup> See Jovanović (2007).



ideological coordinates of nationalism. There was a giant leap from universal socialist emancipation to the topics of civil society, democratisation and national substance.<sup>18</sup> The dissidents, liberals, and parts of the communist elites succeeded in repressing the historical memory of the anti-fascist legacy, while other national stories of eternal hatreds resurfaced ('we cannot live together') and declared that Yugoslavia was only an artificial entity condemned to die. The prison-house of nations had to be ended and its prisoners released.<sup>19</sup> The politics of anti-fascist memory was transformed into one of ethnic memory, and reconciliation with the fascist past, which prepared the ground for the bloody break-up of the country. The dissident medals of honour were awarded with post-Yugoslav independence, wars, and transition.

It is right to claim that official Yugoslav memorial politics mythologised the revolutionary past of the PLS, but it is certainly not correct to say that the doctrine of 'socialist realism' existed and that we witnessed a great repression in Yugoslav society. As we have already mentioned, even the official memorials were sites of ideological struggle. Even though we can agree with the judgment that their aesthetic dimension is poor, they cannot be dismissed as being the custodians of the Yugoslav leadership's repression.

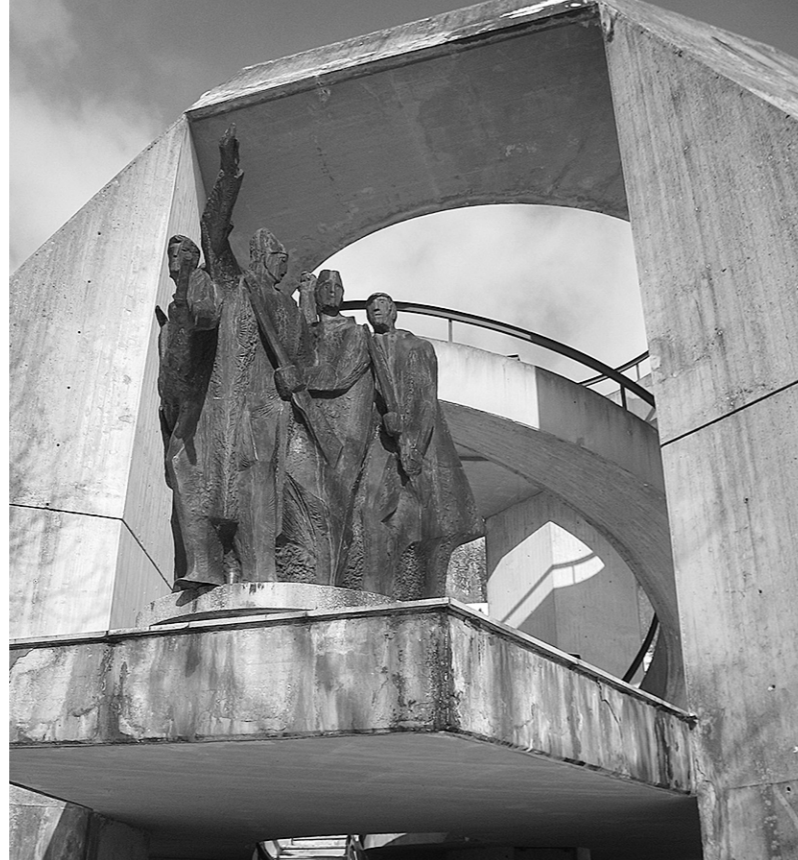
One paradigmatic example of an 'official' memorial site should illustrate key features of Yugoslav memorial politics.

FIGURE 1 shows part of the large memorial site made in 1976 by Boris Kobe and Stojan Batič, in collaboration with Ivo Šubic who made the mosaic murals (FIGURE 2).

The work is located in Dražgoše, Slovenia, and commemorates the historical site of the first open battle between Cankar's small battalion of 200 partisans and a massive German military force of 3000 soldiers. At the end of 1941, partisans in the Northern parts of Slovenia were engaged in political and military resistance activities, they proclaimed a people's republic in Dražgoše and held different political and cultural events. When occupying forces learned of their activities, they launched an offensive. After a three-day battle, which lasted from 9 to 11 January 1942, the German army conquered the village. The takeover of the village was followed by the complete destruction of the houses, the execution of the

<sup>18</sup> See Pupovac (2008).

<sup>19</sup> Since we do not have enough space to discuss the break-up of Yugoslavia, let us just mention a summary of the literature and arguments presented by Ramet (2005).



▲ FIGURE 1 – *Dražgoše's partisans*, Boris Kobe and Stojan Batič, in collaboration with Ivo Šubic, 1976

majority of the villagers and the deportation of survivors to concentration camps. Partisans succeeded in fleeing to the forest and subsequently strengthened their political and military activities in that region.

This memorial site has all the characteristics of a typical war monument. The concrete construction is a massive presence intervening in the space, and we observe the partisans with boldly sculpted hands and weapons ready for use. Figure 1 shows an archetypal depiction of partisans in strong and active poses. We can imagine them discussing their plans for defending their position and attacking the enemy, or how they could get away from the besieged area. They are portrayed as being disciplined in their fight against occupation and for the liberation of the territory. This decisiveness is very common in the representation of the partisans. Partisan discipline and strong political convictions were held as the most important characteristics of the People's Liberation Strug-

gle. Without a clear belief in political goals leading towards national liberation and social revolution, it is impossible to understand the zeal and resilience of the partisan struggle in the context of repressive occupation and local collaboration. The monument frames the heroic zeal and sacrifice to warn the following generations that the partisan struggle guaranteed their existence.

The sculpture with partisan groups is located on a larger memorial site, which comprises a path, a large sculpture, and a mural site, where anti-fascist slogans appear. It is quite common for partisan monuments to bear such slogans, referring to the historical circumstances of the occupation and the war. Inscriptions refer mainly to the victorious dimension of the partisan struggle ('To the people's heroes'), but also to the suffering that resulted from the occupation ('To the victims of the fascist occupation'). As is the case with this memorial, the majority of these canonical monuments remained bound to the ethics of mourning and heroicism. This memorial site is still one of the most visited in Slovenia, with an important difference; the new ritual consists of celebrating the liberation struggle as the constitutive element of Slovenian nationhood and with this it eliminates references to the 'Yugoslav' past.



▲ FIGURE 2 – *Dražgoše's partisans*, Boris Kobe and Stojan Batič, in collaboration with Ivo Šubic, 1976

#### 4. THE POLITICS OF AESTHETICS A LA BAKIĆ: THE EXAMPLE OF MODERNIST ANTI-FASCIST MONUMENTS

In the preceding section we outlined some characteristics of official anti-fascist memorial politics, which produced a certain canonical aesthetics and communicated a pedagogical message about the heroism of the struggle and the ethics of mourning. However, at the same time there was a whole array of modernist anti-fascist sculptures that broke with the mainstream canon of memorial sites and forged a movement of modernist sculptures. Their task was not easy: how can one show aesthetic novelty and the autonomy of art in a field that is saturated by politics, ideology and established art monuments? Could the field that is heavily marked by morality (the figure of suffering) on the one hand, and the state politics of bearing witness and instituting myth on the other, produce emancipatory effects? Isn't the memorial site the most regulated aesthetic form and as such a project doomed to failure from the very start? In order not to fall back into the bourgeois autonomy of art advocated by Žižić's documentary, we should strive for a certain non-bourgeois autonomy of art. We will show how the effects of Bakić's work can help us to reveal differences in thinking about autonomy.<sup>20</sup> We are not interested in his artwork for its seemingly pure artistic form, or even less so in order to detach his art from revolutionary politics. On the contrary, we will show how emancipatory politics intervened in his artworks, although not in a direct way: it was neither materialised as a prescribed programme (socialist realism) nor as an academic modernism, some kind of individualistic response to socialism. Our thesis will be that Bakić's interventions reconfigured the established relationship between politics and aesthetics in the realm of memorials<sup>21</sup> and should be seen as an example of Yugoslav neo-avant-garde art.

Vojin Bakić was one of the most important Yugoslavian sculptors, working from the 1950s to the 1990s. He conceptualised and constructed a series of anti-fascist monuments,

<sup>20</sup> There were other important artists, such as Bogdan Bogdanović and Miodrag Živković, who also worked on different forms of memorialisation from the 1960s onwards. See the interactive map: <http://fzz.cc/issue02PART.html>. As Robert Burghardt comments on the webpage: "those monuments have an abstract, often monumental, but always unusual and peculiar formal vocabulary in common."

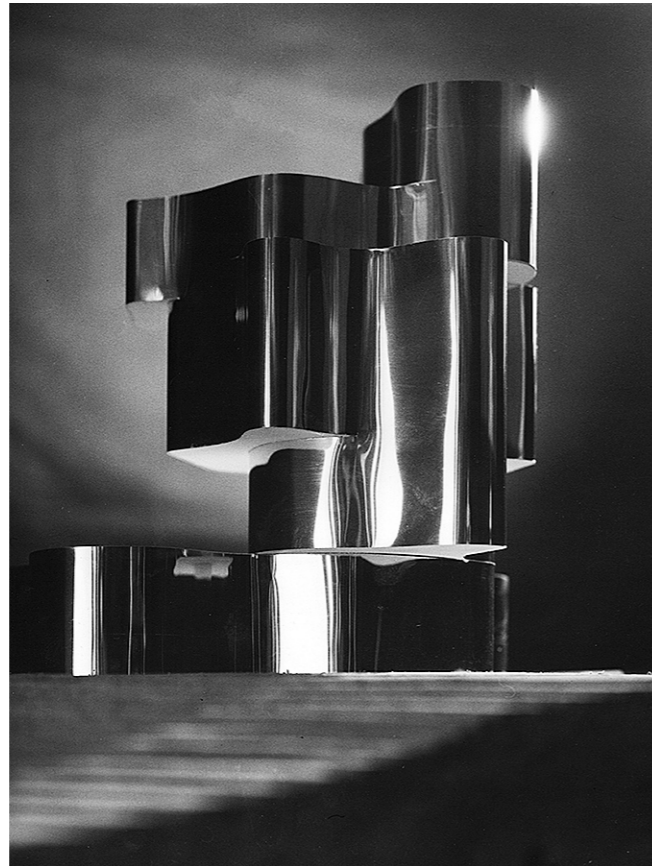
<sup>21</sup> We are indebted to the arguments in Miklavž Komelj's analysis of the autonomy of partisan art (2009) and Jacques Rancière's rethinking of the relation between aesthetics and politics (2006).

which are today in a poor state, sad sites of slow decay, places of memorial forgotten by the time, covered by rubbish and nature. Furthermore, explosives destroyed a great number of them signalling the advent of a new historical time in Gudovac, Karlovac, Bjelovar, Čizme, ... One of his masterpieces, which is largely preserved was realised in 1981 and is located in Petrova Gora (see FIGURE 3). The Petrova Gora monument commemorates partisan struggle and the battle of 1942 in which two hundred Serbian villagers were killed by Croatian Ustashi forces that were located on the top of the mountain.

At first glance the monumental structure is not recognisable as a typical anti-fascist monument. What we see is a massive construction of steel and concrete, which is thirty-seven metres high. Oval structures with rounded shapes rise from the massive platform. These are constructed in four storeys that grow asymmetrically from one another. The sculptural work, or rather building, reminds us more of a space station or a space shuttle, which apart from a platform does not have any specific hierarchy that would imply a top-down pyramidal structure. The sculpture looks as if it emerged from a different world. Its precise meaning is unclear. What we want to point out is that the monument is not a typical representation of suffering victims or anti-fascist victors. There are no idealised partisan figures in Bakić's monuments. The sculptural form is anti-figurative and abstract. It completely negates the humanist moment of suffering or victory, but at the same time strategically touches on the question of representation and how the partisan struggle might be imagined. Robert Burghardt draws attention to this extraordinary dimension of Yugoslav modernist monuments:

They open the scene for numerous associations; they could be ambassadors from far-away stars, or from a different, unrealised present. The openness which originates in the abstract language of the monuments is a visual manifestation of the emancipation from the Stalinist dominance of socialist realism in the eastern bloc, in which the future is represented only in a happy-overreaching form of the present. The monuments invoke a utopian moment, stick to aniconism, and translate the promise of the future into a universal gesture<sup>22</sup>.

We can agree with Burghardt, when he highlights the futuristic and universal character of Bakić's monuments.



▲ FIGURE 3 – Vojin Bakić, *Petrova Gora*, model, 1975  
PHOTO NENAD GATTIN

Perhaps we could relate the fundamental thrust of Bakić's monuments to Tatlin's unrealised *Monument to the Third International*. It seems that Bakić wants to repeat the fundamental avant-garde gesture of that work: forcing the spectator to recognise a particular striving for the future, for the new world, but at the same time it reasserts the utopian character of the anti-fascist community that formed and realised the event in Yugoslavia. What we cannot agree with is the other part of Burghardt's thesis, namely that Bakić's monument should be seen as emancipation from Stalinist dominance. As we showed before socialist realism as a prescribed doctrine



▲ Vojin Bakić, *Petrova Gora* (finished 1981), present condition

did not exist in Yugoslavia.<sup>23</sup> This could play too easily into the revisionist argument that sees Bakić and other modernist sculptors merely as representatives of abstract art. Bakić's work cannot be seen as a mere application of abstract principles to memorial sites. To be sure, there is a particular ambiguity at work in these memorial sites, one might say they

<sup>23</sup> We do not want to argue that socialist realism did not exist. It was present, in its 'negative' form as socialist kitsch (partisan films/comedies) or in its 'positive' innovative form as the depiction of "reality in its revolutionary development" (Bowl, 1991, p. 293). One of the greatest Yugoslav film-directors, Živojin Pavlović, is one of the last representatives of the 'positive' part of socialist realism. I developed this thesis in my lecture at the JvE Academy (25.05.2010).

assume a specific paradox: their colossal dimension and style betrays their direct adherence to modernism, while on the other hand their ignorance of direct political slogans suggests an inclination to the tradition of 'counter-monument'. The latter is famous for conceiving memory as something dynamic and unfixed, thus not playing a typical role in the modern nation-building process.<sup>24</sup>

What is noteworthy is that Bakić's monumental work opens up a crucial question about the link between politics and aesthetics: how can we relate this boldness, this aesthetic novelty to the politics of partisan struggle? The partisan struggle produced something radically new in the situation. It broke with the pre-War situation of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, dominated by the Serbian royal family and semi-peripheral capitalist mode of production. From the perspective of old Yugoslavia (also from the contemporary post-Yugoslav context) the anti-fascist struggle was something unimaginable, a rupture that created a new political community, which was based on internationalist, non-ethnic criteria. The people's liberation struggle was a national liberation from the Nazi and fascist occupation and socialist revolution, which broke with capitalist social relations. Anti-fascist solidarity, socialist revolution and as Miklavž Komelj has shown us in his excellent text, also cultural revolution, constituted the triple dimension of the partisan struggle. Partisan art was equally important for the development of the struggle and cannot be reduced to straightforward instrumentalisation by the Party.<sup>25</sup> What happened during World War II was a revolutionary encounter between politics and art, of communist subjectivity and the masses, which is not a simple fusion of everything. The explosive encounter between art and politics meant dealing with the transformative dimension, the 'not-yet-realised', 'not yet there', the handling with Real *a la Lacanese*. This transformative encounter targeted the pre-supposed criteria of existing ideologies, artistic bourgeois autonomy or nationalistic politics, while this revolutionary encounter itself practiced the political axiom of equality. It was this equality for all, forming the egalitarian partisan

<sup>24</sup> For an excellent analysis of the counter-monument, see Young (1992).

<sup>25</sup> For a more detailed account of Yugoslavia's socialist revolution, where art recomposed the ideological coordinates, but also redefined the status of art itself, bringing the masses to the realm of culture, and struggling for a different non-bourgeois criteria of art, see the study by Komelj (2009).

<sup>22</sup> See <http://fzz.cc/issue02PART.html>.



▲ Vojin Bakić, *Monument to the Victory of the People of Slavonia*, Kamenska, building process (1968) and present condition

community that fought against fascism and capitalist exploitation.

Bakić's monument evokes the craziness, boldness and novelty of the revolutionary anti-fascist struggle<sup>26</sup>. He thus re-opened the challenge for every avant-garde project, namely how to transform reality and strive for a new world? Moreover, in socialist times, during the 1960s, this new world was being undermined, and how to repeat the avant-garde gesture in times of 'restoration' became a matter of necessity. It posed the question of how to represent the partisan struggle beyond the ubiquitous mythologisation and simple consolidation of socialist power? Not only modernist monuments, but the whole neo-avant-garde movement and progressive political groupings from the 1960s and 1970s addressed a crucial political question: how to organise politically against the 'partisan generation', a power that publicly declares the emancipation of man and the advancement of socialism? How to struggle for the same axioms and ideas that are declared by the Party? Apparently there was no straightforward answer; it could not be done in a directly political way, as this was already the dominant strategy of the ruling class. The politicising of Bakić's art equates with a key idea of Jacques Rancière (2004), that art becomes art only when it is identified with something that is not art. Art becomes Art through non-Art. At that time the memorial site in Yugoslavia was the privileged locus of state politics, the genre of war memorials was interwoven with a meta-narrative of victory or suffering suturing art to ethics. Most war memorials testify to the existence of this presupposed form, which instituted a specific

artistic canon; it established a memorial genre<sup>27</sup>. But as far as Bakić's work is concerned, his monuments cannot be related to any canonical glorified image of the partisan or the suffering of victims of fascist violence. The example of 'Petrova Gora' refers to a transformative political community that was operative during, but also after the Second World War. Through the impossible (trans)figuration of this partisan and communist community Bakić succeeded in reframing the sensorial experience opened up by Yugoslav modernism. Bakić's artwork produced a double effect: firstly, his sculpture broke with the already established canon of memorial production in Yugoslavia. What was seen as the normal 'distribution of the sensible' was subverted by a discomfiting presentation of anti-fascist struggle, by a spatial construction that triggered many ambivalent responses. Against the etatist art that represented the figure of the partisan, Bakić invented an abstract form with a clear anti-humanist layer. This aesthetic novelty of memorial points to a resemblance with other works by Živković and Bogdanović, who together formed an art movement of modernist counter-monumental sites. Only through the production of a new aesthetic regime, with a new sensorial experience and understanding of the past, can we argue about a new autonomy for art. It was not only via an arbitrary declaration of autonomy for art (bourgeois gesture), but through the insistent labour of the modernist movement that a different sensorial experience, a different regime of seeing, doing and saying was instituted. Modernist sculptures presented a clear break with

<sup>27</sup> Komelj shows how after the Second World War cultural circles started to slowly impose the bourgeois criteria of art and advocated a bourgeois autonomy of art. Communist party hardliners fought against this tendency with a revised socialist realism. Both positions tended to erase the legacy of partisan art rupture (2009).

the existing memorialisation and thus succeeded in asserting the dimension of that which is 'not yet existing'. In this manner they re-articulated the relationship of artworks' to the world and to audiences.

Apart from the devastating critique of the official ethical-mythical canon we should highlight the political-symbolic dimension, which addressed spectators in new ways. They continued to deal with the topic of the partisan struggle and some of them also became sites for school excursions and visits. However, spectators started to consider these monuments from different perspectives; what they represent, or how this is related to the anti-fascist struggle, where can you see the 'partisan'? Its abstract nature brought to the fore a crucial political element. Memorial sites were not in any way assigning the primacy of partisan struggle to the Communist Party of Yugoslavia. If there is a figure of political subjectivity implied in these memorials, it is the mass of anonymous partisans that fought against the occupation and collaborators. This collective anonymity is a common feature of new modernist aesthetics and cannot be reduced to a simplistic heroism or victimhood explicit in the official canons. What Rancière's conception enables us to see in Bakić's monument is the productive tension between aesthetics and politics, which happens only *a posteriori*, in its effects.

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Against the moralisation and humanisation of memorial sites, modernist sculptures brought the revolutionary politics of aesthetics. A lesson to be learned from the memorials, which is supported by Rancière's theoretical position, is the following: artistic rupture always brings something new into the world; it breaks with the existing 'distribution of the sensible' and with existing artistic canons. New memorial sites produced a particular aesthetic break. However, we should not 'idealise' the art form as the only form of life that is able to conserve the emancipatory promise. Artistic autonomy is not the protector of the failure of emancipatory politics, which sooner or later will be consolidated into state power, as Adorno seems to suggest (Rancière, 2006). That would lead us to a lapse in the mythologisation of the aesthetic gesture. Bakić's work did not create a utopian community, rather it created a particular interval, a gap between official state ideology and mainstream artistic expression, a gap between socialist kitsch and bourgeois art autonomy, which made visible what was previously invisible. What was not reflected and

visible was precisely something that was so much on everyone's mind: the events of the partisan struggle. Modernist sculptors and architects worked seriously on this material and asked themselves: how can we represent something that is so difficult to represent? Here the universal partisan

gesture and the universalism of aesthetic gesture seem to come together.

Only through the abstract presentation of the partisan masses, using the sculptural (non-representational) form, does the work of Bakić and his fellow modernists succeed in re-animating the truth of the Yugoslav event. Revisiting the past in an unusual, non-orthodox way, they opened up the vision for the future: an insistence on the emancipatory past event was there to force us to act in the present. But this engaged artistic autonomy only reached its position through artistic labour, that is, without being directly political and without ascribing a presupposed 'artistic' dimension (the existing canon of ethics and socialist kitsch). It was only through a brilliant detour that Bakić was able to produce the *thinking partisan monument*. The monument is not an ethical herald for the future; it already claims the future, which wants to re-affirm a historical partisan gesture of international solidarity. Its reference to the past is to continue this

contingent, emancipatory moment of struggle, which always already propels us into the future.

#### INSTEAD OF A CONCLUSION

We have demonstrated how, after the Second World War, Yugoslav politics of memory entailed a complex relationship of political, ideological and artistic practices. Against the revisionist readings of memory politics, we put forward an argument that the construction of monuments dealing with events in Yugoslavia were not simply imposed from above; memory politics was not a mere Party repression. From the outset memorial sites were places of ideological struggle and can tell us much more than a straightforward account of the level of repression. In contrast to official memory politics we revisited influential modernist memorial sites and launched a re-interpretation claiming that these artworks had manifold effects: they succeeded in redefining the status of memorial sites, to break with the official canon and also striv-

ing to preserve the moment of contingency, the contingent character of events in Yugoslavia. The revolutionary politics of aesthetics in new memorial sites (Bakić) proclaimed anti-fascism and introduced a new aesthetic canon, new ways of seeing and doing. In this way modernist memorial sites participated in opening up a different temporality: intervening in their present constellation, they were visualising the emancipatory past in a much more complex way than official monuments. This aesthetic gesture was already marked by a particular vision of the communist future. Modernist anti-fascist memorial sites in Yugoslavia thus answer the initial question of the title: they are neither pure art – art's autonomy always needs to be acquired – nor were they a mere mythologisation of the partisan struggle. Modernist memorials can be seen as a continuation of the revolution using other means. They continued a critical dialogue with Iztok, the partisan, who, during World War II wrote a poem on the difficult legacy of the partisan struggle:

*One day, in millions of years,  
maybe a geologist will write,  
how people lived in these days.*

*He will curve his lips into a bitter smile:  
yes, yes, at that time the human being was only an animal,  
that is why his acts should not be measured as sins.*

*If he could only know,  
how our hearts were beating warmly at that time,  
that comradeship was to us more than we were to ourselves,  
maybe he would then have another opinion about us,  
and then also understand our great pains.<sup>28</sup> ✘*

28 The translation is mine, I took the poem from Komelj's book (2009, p. 283).

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▼ 3rd Floor, Hail to the Union of Artists from the Other World! or The Formal Art Has Died, 1988



## HEDWIG SAXENHUBER GREETINGS FROM THE NETHERWORLD a PHOTOGRAPH FROM YEREVAN, 1988

*“If you take a close look at Warhol’s oeuvre today, you realize that it is precisely this that constitutes one of his achievements: the total exploration of hitherto unseen and invisible aspects of changing reality.”<sup>01</sup>*

**m**y remarks on the first steps in the performative dissolution of fixed gender norms in a former socialist country have their source in a documentary photograph taken in 1988. The picture was shot in Yerevan in the Caucasian Soviet Republic of Armenia. A black and white print, the photograph is high in contrast and exhibits a chiaroscuro effect in the foreground. It shows a gathering of people in a gallery with numerous pictures on the wall. The camera zeros in on two people in the foreground. On the left, beneath a half-broken umbrella, we see the painter Kiki, bearded and wearing sunglasses, and then Arman Grigoryan standing with eyes closed half under the canopy of the umbrella. Both faces are painted white, with traces of the greasepaint still visible on their clothes. Grigoryan wears a cardboard sign around his neck bearing the slogan “Greetings from the Netherworld”. However, the local press would later communicate this sentence as “Official Art Has Died”.

In retrospect, the complexity of the situation and the historical significance of the performance, entitled *Hail to the Artists’ Union from the Netherworld / Official Art Has Died*,

allows us to identify numerous associative links, which, while certainly present at the time, could only later be recognised for what they were. Gender theory was still in its infancy at the time, while its positions and the belief in gender as a self-invented concept are known today in all their facets – subject as they are to varying evaluations from different perspectives, including the political – both as instruments of minority self-empowerment and as ideologies dictated from above.

Almost always, when we in the West start talking about conditions that prevailed in socialist systems, we focus on the core question of how much their artists knew about the international context of art from the West and about international policies and theory. The answer is that they were often very well informed. The very efforts of the regimes to suppress information triggered the formation of inventive and swift channels of knowledge transfer. And there was no shortage of time or of willingness to engage in discussion. Those who possessed knowledge were considered privileged, but we know from the reports of Arman Grigoryan and others that it was dangerous to use this knowledge.<sup>02</sup> It was wisest to feign ignorance or play the clown, as in the film *The Color of Pomegranates* (1968) by Sergei Parajanov. When Grigoryan references the figure of the clown, he subliminally

<sup>01</sup> Enno Patalas, *Andy Warhol und seine Filme*, Munich: Heyne, 1971, p. 64.

<sup>02</sup> Arman Grigoryan, “Informed but Scared: The ‘3rd Floor’ Movement, Parajanov, Beuys and Other Institutions,” in *Adieu Parajanov: Contemporary Art from Armenia*, Hedwig Saxenhuber and Georg Schöllhammer, eds., Springerin, Vienna, 2003, pp. 10–12.

refers to the biography of Parajanov. Although today Armenia boasts a museum in his honour, in 1973 or 1974, Parajanov was charged with propagating homosexuality and sentenced to many years in the Gulag.<sup>03</sup>

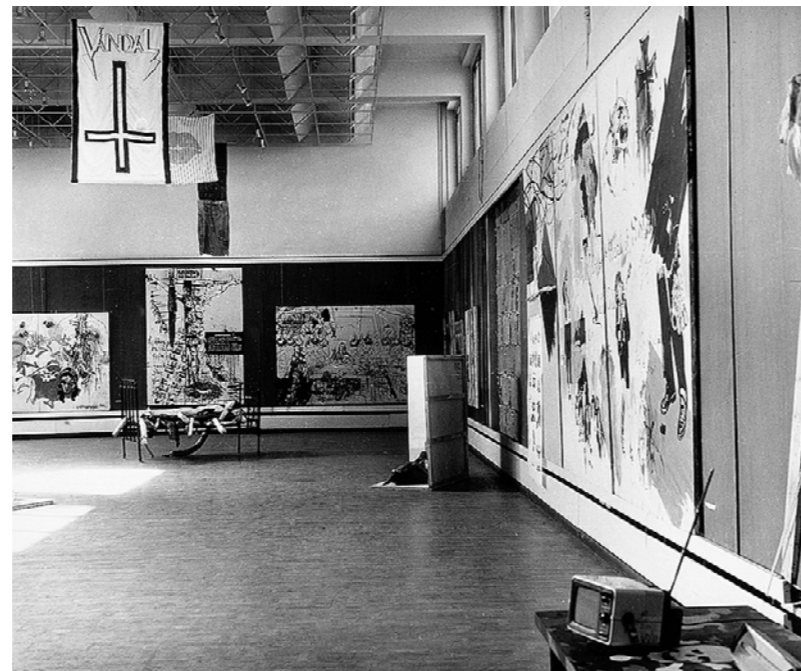
In 1988, the concept of glasnost, which means ‘transparency’ and which stood for the Soviet Union’s first experience of freedom of opinion, became the watchword of the next few years. The policy of perestroika, which was introduced by Mikhail Gorbachev and went hand in hand with a neo-conservative free market policy, also had an impact on the art world in Armenia.

One of its effects was to facilitate the first publicly demonstrated, free meeting of Armenian artists outside the official organisations dominated by the state and the communist party. Arman Grigoryan was the conceptual strategist of this movement. The impetus for this meeting was a ruling that banned these artists from exhibiting their works in the Museum of Modern Art. The ban came after the group, whose most prominent members also included Karine Matsakyan and Gagik Vardanyan, staged the performances *Happening* and *Exit to the City*.<sup>04</sup> The Museum of Modern Art opened in 1972 as the first institution of its kind in the Soviet Union. Henry Igityan, who served as its director until his death in the spring of 2009, severely criticised this new movement in the art world. He stated that Armenian artists “did not need experiments” and banned all the participating artists from exhibiting in all official institutions, such as the Artists’ Union, galleries, and the museum.

The censored artists then came together to form the ‘3rd Floor’ movement, named after their new location in the conference centre, a disused space owned by the official national Artists’ Union. They took possession of the centre to create the first autonomous artists’ space in Armenia. Even then, Armenians were symbolically and almost openly celebrating the rebirth of their nation with the decline of the Soviet system. The beginning of a strong nationalist movement also

**03** Sergei Parajanov became a victim of the general hostility towards liberalism in the art of the 1960s. He was arrested in 1973. The rumours and confusing reports about the charges against Parajanov set the tone for the list of ‘crimes’ (homosexuality, incitement to suicide, receiving stolen goods) for which he was ultimately sentenced in 1974 (other reports say 1973) to six (other reports say eight) years in the labour camps. When he was released four years later and returned to Tbilisi, his house was kept under police surveillance.

**04** Grigoryan, “Informed but Scared” (see note 2), p. 10.



▲ The first 3rd Floor exhibition, 1987

led to the unrest in Nagorno-Karabakh, a predominantly Armenian region in the southeast of the Lower Caucasus. The separation of the Armenian enclave from Azerbaijan took place a short time later, with a three-year war from 1991 to 1994. The national euphoria and smoldering conflict coincided with a second disaster. In December 1988, a devastating earthquake near Gyumri, the old capital in northern Armenia, left 25,000 people dead and many thousands homeless. The art critic Vardan Azatyan describes the end of the 1980s in Armenia as “a period in which agony was indistinguishable from life”. In the late 1980s, when the aforementioned photograph was taken, Yerevan became an “arena of restless spirits and ghosts, of ardent nationalists who found a diversion in the bustle of preparations for war and amid the streams of refugees. At the same time, the coffins of the earthquake victims passed by on the streets, strapped to the roofs of cars.”<sup>05</sup>

**05** Vardan Azatyan, “Art Communities, Public Spaces and Collective Actions in Armenian Contemporary Art”, in *Art and Theory after Socialism*, Mel Jordan & Malcolm Miles, eds., Bristol and Chicago, 2008, pp. 43–53.

So much for the background.

3rd Floor was a male-dominated movement. It was not a collective, but rather a cluster of different individuals who favoured their own heroes. Only the male members were listed and quoted in its first manifesto in 1988, even though women artists had played a central role in the founding of the movement.<sup>06</sup> This patriarchal behaviour corresponded to the typical image of 3rd Floor. “We were often criticised for being aggressive. Perhaps this attitude is triggered by the posters of the 3rd Floor, which often depict shameless punks or males shooting at the audience. Or perhaps it was due to our direct attitude freed from psychological complexes or our appearance that challenged conventions, as well as our statements intolerant of any denigration. But to me, one of the guys of the 3rd Floor, this criticism does not sound convincing since amazement and the desire to amaze lies at the foundation of art.”<sup>07</sup> As a result of this masculine image, one of the women protagonists of the movement, Karine Matsakyan, appeared each month as one of the ‘guys’ of the 3rd Floor in Mshakuyt. The actions of the 3rd Floor artists took place amid this optimism and euphoria. One of these actions was the legendary procession of group members wearing white greasepaint, which is documented by our photograph. There was a ghost-like quality to the procession, which gave the impression of it being a movement of dead people. It was modelled on the heavy metal band Black Sabbath – which, incidentally, consisted of musicians with long hair, no longer considered effeminate, and which instead became the embodiment of masculinity. The cover of their LP *Sabotage* was copied by the artists and used as a poster.

The myth of masculinity was alive and well and firmly entrenched in this resurrection of the anti-hero, as can be seen in excerpts from Arman Grigoryan’s Manifesto in 1988: “Authors feel the time, the space, when they put their lyrical, philosophical world into psychological form. The art that we produce is not art but, rather, a declaration of war. We want to change the world, but we no longer have any hope. We find no support or help and almost no solid ground. We don’t have a big name but we aren’t afraid as we fight off the ghosts.”<sup>08</sup>

**06** “3rd Floor,” in *Adieu Parajanov*, Saxenhuber and Schöllhammer, eds., p. 14.

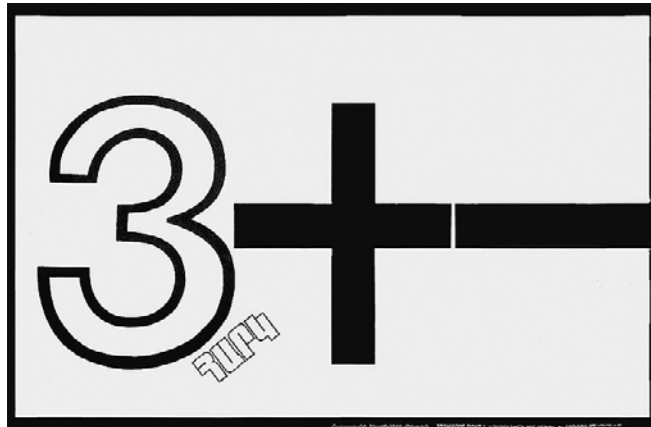
**07** Azatyan, “Art Communities, Public Spaces and Collective Actions in Armenian Contemporary Art,” p. 48.

**08** “3rd Floor”, in *Adieu Parajanov*, Saxenhuber and Schöllhammer, eds., p. 14.



▲ Members of the 3rd Floor group

These were fighting words. Masculinity was displayed in the stylistic abbreviations and the sheer technical dimensions of the 3rd Floor exhibitions, especially in the oversized format of the paintings. The advent of pop art (and of abstract painting) was still considered dangerous, Western, and decadent in Armenia’s official academic circles. Kiki’s two-metre canvas was simply painted a uniform black. This caused one artist a great deal of distress: “But there’s nothing there! I was hoping to find masculine art here.” In this case, even the monumentalism that is so often taken as a criterion for strong, masculine art was unconvincing. The disappointment and dismay over the black canvas ran too deep. And this attitude of denial was echoed by the many dark events of 1988. Some of the pictures dealt with the theme of vandalism, while others showed bulls and sharks, and Kiki presented a ‘gestural-ejaculative performance’, all of which bear witness to masculine fantasies being given free rein. During one of the endless debates about pop art, Arman Grigoryan himself was asked by an artist about his motives for painting a Cadillac even though there were no Cadillacs in Armenia. He answered in a way that is known in Armenian as hamasteghtsakan: “When we were students, my friend told me that he had dreamed he was watching a Led Zeppelin concert – although he could never have seen more than a photograph of a Led Zeppelin concert, because



▲ Arman Grigoryan, Logo design for the 3rd Floor gallery, 1987

films and videos were usually inaccessible in those days.<sup>09</sup> For the artists of the Soviet avant-garde, *Led Zeppelin* and *Cadillac*, different though they are, fulfilled the same function as pop art. They served as a counter-model that cynically appropriated the capitalist symbols of freedom. They stood for Soviet dreams.

During the second half of the twentieth century there was no art movement more popular throughout the world than American pop art, which, by glorifying consumerist fetishes, exemplified the victory of capitalism. Warhol's Campbell's soup cans and Brillo boxes achieved an unprecedented popularity, and the stylistic worlds of American capitalism were frenetically welcomed as an alternative to 'Stalin-style' socialism.

Even the new order of perestroika simply continued the masculine discourse. Culturally speaking, this was the consequence of the spirit of the neoliberal reforms that were initiated by an influential group of economic policy-makers and that served as a springboard by which the first patriarchs of private enterprise and entrepreneurship emerged from the constraints of the old regime. The effect of neoliberal economic policies on the traditional patriarchal social hierarchies was simply one of reinforcement.

The 3rd Floor movement advocated the 'death of the Soviet avant-garde' and directed its 'parasitic' strategy against

those who were once again prophesying 'socialism with a human face'. In contrast, Arman Grigoryan and his group considered Beuys's ideas about capitalist and socialist unification potentially feasible. In his view, the hardcore Stalinists were the only obstacle to these ideas. The group also affirmed Beuys's brand of mysticism, which was interpreted as a search for religious roots. In Armenia, where religion was closely associated with the idea of the constitutive people, this quest had an emancipative dimension in 1988. However, from today's perspective, the idea accomplished nothing except the promotion of nationalism. 'Multiplicity and plurality against uniformity' was the watchword of the hour. In 1993, Arman Grigoryan wrote in *What is Hamasteghtsakan Art*: "HA once and forever liberates the work of art from the chains of high and low, old and new, ours and others', objective and subjective, figurative and nonfigurative, expensive and cheap, accepted and unaccepted, styles and schools, technique and technology."<sup>10</sup> Thus the group's quest for identity was not concerned with identities that were fixed, but emphasised their constructed nature. They were in search of diversity in all areas – this was the goal of the artists.

What does this mean for our photograph? The picture is all the more noteworthy because of the group's artistic appropriations and their advocacy of masculinity. We have noted that masculinity was favoured within the group as a positive category. Even women artists submitted to this constraint, and being as good as a man was considered an accolade of the highest order. In the midst of this heated phase of the cult of masculinity, this photograph, which shows the effeminisation of one of the group's heroes, stands for a contrary desire and the freedom to express that desire. Even though this homoerotic desire is shown in only one image from the whole photographic series, this shot still makes an unconscious (or conscious) statement.

But to return to the procession of the ghosts. This happening was one of the first examples of a collective artistic action that took place in a public space, a space representing the state, in Armenia. The artists appear in the scene like characters from a phantasmagorical play. One of the actors played a blind man with nutshells on his eyes; another of the white-faced protagonists wore face paint in the style of the rock band Kiss. The procession of these 'heroes of the abyss' (a metaphor for oppressed culture in the Soviet sys-

<sup>10</sup> Ibid. p. 46.

tem) moved silently through the exhibition. After looking at the pictures, the ghostly procession vanished. The message was quite explicit: In a moribund system, the appropriate viewers of an official exhibition are the dead.

Mikhail Bakhtin, whose works found a strong echo among intellectuals in the latter years of the Soviet Union, says that the carnivalesque represents a means of inverting the world and thus suspending the established order and all the forms of fear, awe, respect, and etiquette that arise from it. The carnivalesque element of this procession aimed at just such an inversion of the normal world, with the subversion of conventions and social codes. In Bakhtin's words, it was "a play without a stage," a moment of de-hierarchisation that was utopian and liberating in the face of the serious and repressive nature of the dominant culture. In this sense, it can be said that the '3rd Floor guys' saw the carnivalesque as a highly political act of resistance.

Arman Grigoryan also plays with the principle of the masquerade, even to the point of critically and ironically reconstructing fetishist perspectives. With his closed eyes -irrespective of the extent to which they might be attributable to the dazzling camera flash – and his air of savouring the situation to the full, with an inward-looking gaze, he subtly succeeds in suggesting a relationship of feminised subjectivity along the axis of the body and the space and to hint at a point of view that goes beyond the two options of repeating traditional patterns or deconstructing them.

Grigoryan focuses on famous examples of feminisation in the history of Western art. These include one of Marcel Duchamp's most influential pictures, showing his alter ego, Rose Sélavy (Duchamp himself, in makeup, with fur collar, jewelry, and a hat with an art nouveau band), and also the famous photograph of Andy Warhol by Chris Makos titled *Altered Image* (Warhol in a blonde wig, makeup, jeans and tie, his hands bashfully covering his crotch), which was intended as a homage to Duchamp. Robert Mapplethorpe also referenced these two pictures in a dreamlike self-portrait. As the son of an artist couple whose paintings were influenced by Cézanne and modernism, Grigoryan included Warhol, Du-

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champ, and Mapplethorpe in his repertoire of visual references. "Certainly Warhol comes from Duchamp, which is the opening up of a way of thinking, of possibilities."<sup>11</sup> For Duchamp, Warhol, and Mapplethorpe, the figure of the transvestite – or of the artist as a transvestite – stood for this opening up of a specific way of thinking, the unlocking of possibilities. At this time, in the Factory and in underground films, transvestite culture was a broken and fragmented culture. This must have tempted Grigoryan to explore new possibilities for rupture and the reconfiguring of cultural imagination, even if this process involved some loss of ground for the newly attained model of the masculine hero.

In the 1970s, the anti-patriarchal message of the feminist movements was accompanied in the West by the feminisation of rock bands (Alice Cooper, Frank Zappa, and others), and androgynous men began appearing everywhere in life, pop music, and art. This phenomenon was seen partly as a reaction to the hippie and feminist movements, and manifested itself as part of the anti-establishment: "For the first time in many years, these men became aware of their feminine side – and this awareness made them attractive to women. Women had been waiting for centuries for something like this to happen again."<sup>12</sup> All these references were circulating in the post-punk and rock milieu of the meagre Armenian underground culture of the perestroika years and were available to the newly developing countercultures for citation as templates of subversion and critical activity.

<sup>11</sup> Janet Kardon, "Robert Mapplethorpe Interview," in Robert Mapplethorpe: *The Perfect Moment*, ed. Janet Kardon, ed., Philadelphia: Institute of Contemporary Art, 1988, p. 28. Cited from Marjory Garber, *Vested Interests: Cross Dressing and Cultural Anxiety*, London: Penguin Books, 1992, p. 161.

<sup>12</sup> According to a former member of the girl band GTOs – Girls Together Outrageously, Pamela Des Barres, in an interview with Mike Kelly. "Pamela Des Barres, Girls Together Outrageously, Interview", in *Texte zur Kunst*, 35, Cologne, 1999, pp. 103–117, here: p. 110.

<sup>09</sup> Azatyan, "Art Communities, Public Spaces and Collective Actions in Armenian Contemporary Art", p. 45.

It was undoubtedly an echo of these pictorial worlds that helped to shape Arman Grigoryan's gestural and expressive repertoire in the group action that is documented in our photograph. He presents his feminine side despite his affinity for powerful slogans, punk, hard rock, and the rhetoric of the manifestos as well as for pop art as the model for his own individual art. To an eye trained in the contemporary history and art of the West, his image also fleetingly evokes the aforementioned *Self-Portrait* made by Robert Mapplethorpe in 1980: a painted face, similarly strong lighting, and curly hair. However, the context of the image's creation could hardly be more different. On the one hand, there was Mapplethorpe's fully lit photographic studio, with a solitary artist and no more than a few chosen people present during the session. On the other, there was Grigoryan as part of a group engaged in a historic performance and a picture that was taken for documentary purposes. There are points of reference between the two, but the way they were staged could hardly be more dissimilar. One was an artist with a famous name, producing art for the market and for collectors all over the world; the other, also an influential figure in his own right, was imagining a gender transformation in a moment of exaltation and abandon, surrounded by many individual seekers: a collective that expresses itself in carnivalesque protest in search of adequate transformations in art. The result is a photograph that captures this situation – the ambivalence in the expression of Arman Grigoryan – in a snapshot.

Although it took place at a different time, this situation, this moment, this brief flash of a gender perspective is relevant to a broader context that would be available in Armenia from then on and that would be referenced more frequently than the conceptual and critical procedures of the international avant-garde in many of the works of Grigoryan's circle and the artists of the next generation. Diedrich Diederichsen described this context for the West as follows:

“The emancipation of cross-dressing or drag had a variety of consequences from the early 1970s onwards; it ranged from the adaptation of drag acts and camp routines, from otherwise stable heterosexual rock bands to the feminization and the heightened appreciation of bisexual and homosexual lifestyles in hitherto ambiguous or asexual hippie artists like David Bowie; from the spread of bisexual and pansexual motifs in mainstream and art cinema to the rather comprehensive popularization of all sorts of motifs of the homosexual subculture within the

heterosexual-turned-bisexual-or-pansexual subculture. This ‘emancipation’ and nascent normalization, however, contained still another motif – a much more general experience of the plasticity and malleability of sexual identities beyond the confines of the bipolar paradigm or the rebellion against marginalization and stigmatization.”<sup>13</sup>

It is tempting to read these words as a description of the potential for developing emancipative and hedonistic life plans that had been imagined by the actions of the 3rd Floor group, and which caused Grigoryan's experiments with the possibilities of sexual desire beyond the heterosexual norms that dominated Soviet life to coalesce into an image in one dreamlike moment.<sup>14</sup> Much of what Diedrich Diederichsen describes would have been unthinkable elsewhere in the south and east of the corroding empire in 1988. Warhol's shadow, Duchamp's role playing, Parajanov's clownesque disguise, and productions influenced by rock and punk: In Yerevan, they traced their iconic patterns into a single face, a single moment. It was a first step in the world of art towards addressing lifestyles outside the bipolarity of gender – lifestyles that had hitherto been ignored or regarded as nonexistent in the countries of the Soviet Union. ✘

HEDWIG SAXENHUBER, “GREETINGS FROM THE NETHER-WORLD – A PHOTOGRAPH FROM YEREVAN, 1988,” IN *GENER CHECK: FEMININITY AND MASCULINITY IN THE ART OF EASTERN EUROPE* (VIENNA: MUMOK, 2010).

<sup>13</sup> Diedrich Diederichsen, “Permanenz der Projekte, Selbstdarstellbarkeit und Transformierbarkeit”, 2001, at <http://juergenklauke.com/main/texte.html>. Accessed 10 July 2009.

<sup>14</sup> I proceed exclusively from the impact of the photograph, which has fascinated me enormously since the first time I saw it. The ambivalence it expresses became even more interesting for me when I learned about the masculine power of the ‘3rd Floor’. I have taken the liberty of making this assumption without knowing the sexual preferences of the protagonists in the picture.

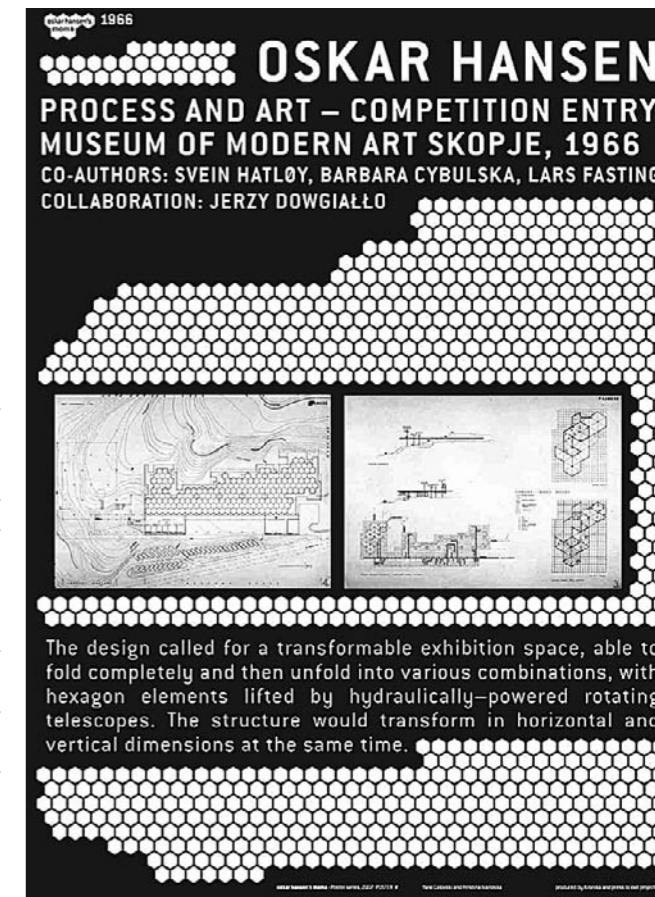
# ELENA FILIPOVIC THE CONDITIONAL PERFECT MUSEUM

*The identification of the immediate with past experience, the recurrence of past action or reaction in the present, amounts to a participation between the ideal and the real, imagination and direct apprehension, symbol and substance...Thanks to this reduplication, the experience is at once imaginative and empirical, at once an evocation and direct perception, real without being merely actual, ideal without being merely abstract, the ideal real, the essential, the extratemporal.*

—SAMUEL BECKETT, PROUST (1931)

The ‘conditional perfect’ is an odd grammatical tense. Speaking in the complex future-past-potential temporality of the ‘would have been’, the conditional perfect designates an action or event that has not yet occurred but might have, if only another event had happened first. One could say that it ‘defies’ history. For if language can give voice to things that slip out of time's neat continuum, it can do so because language goes around the rules of unflappable forward progress – past to present – thus allowing the ‘would have been’ to sit on the sidelines of history's straight and narrow path. How else could one speak of what Samuel Beckett calls the “ideal real” except as something ‘extratemporal’, something that lies between past and present, imagination and empiricism? And how, more specifically, might one do so in relation to the museum, that archetypal site for the collection of history and narration of past time? Yane Calovski and Hristina Ivanoska's poster project, *Oskar Hansen's Museum of Modern Art* (2007), speaks in just such a temporally convoluted tense.

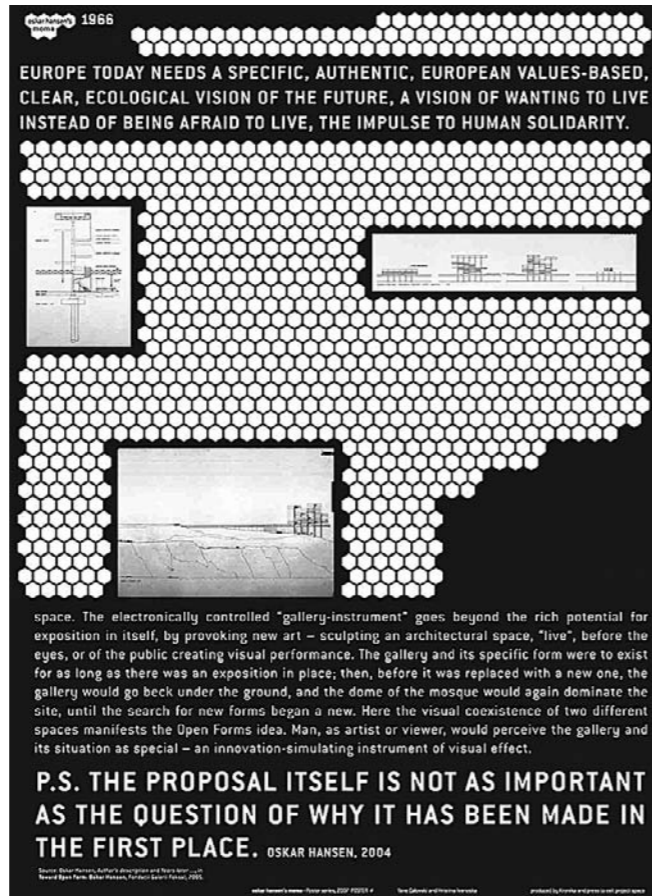
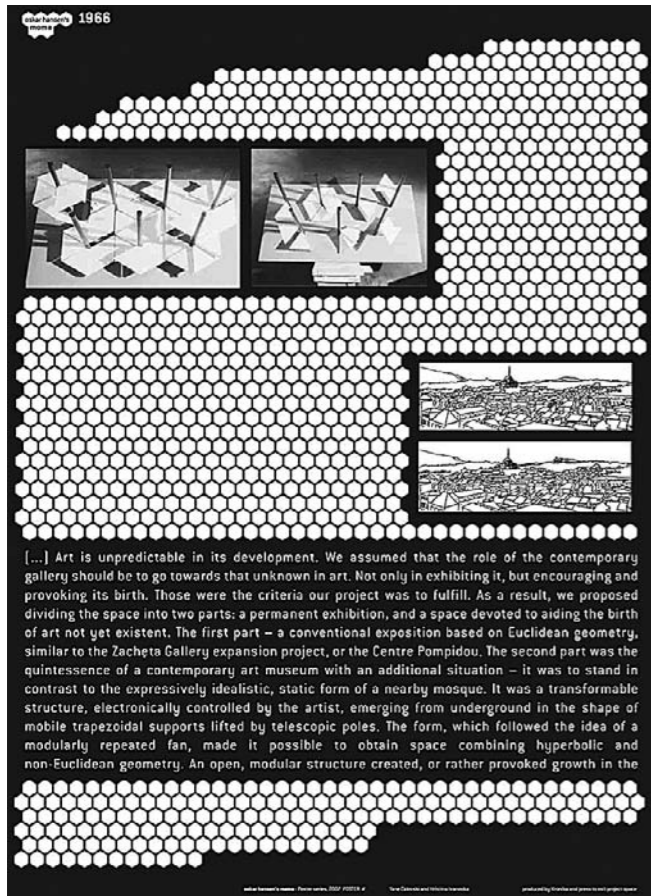
The project announces, via twelve posters, a fictitious series of museum exhibitions spanning 1966 to 2008. This hypothetical exhibition programme ‘takes place’ in the artist duo's hometown in a building designed by Polish architect Oskar Hansen in 1966 but never built. Showing ‘docu-



The design called for a transformable exhibition space, able to fold completely and then unfold into various combinations, with hexagon elements lifted by hydraulically-powered rotating telescopes. The structure would transform in horizontal and vertical dimensions at the same time.

▲ Yane Calovski & Hristina Ivanoska, *Oskar Hansen's MoMA: Process and Art-Competition Entry, Museum of Modern Art Skopje, 1966, 2007*, COURTESY OF THE ARTISTS AND ZAK BRANICKA GALLERY





▲ Yane Calovski & Hristina Ivanoska, *Oskar Hansen's MoMA: Process and Art-Competition Entry, Museum of Modern Art Skopje, 1966, 2007*, COURTESY OF THE ARTISTS AND ZAK BRANICKA GALLERY

A clarification should be made: A Museum of Contemporary Art does exist in Skopje, and was built in 1970, but the exhibitions and other events announced on Calovski and Ivanoska's posters were not meant to be held there, for 'that' place is an altogether different one from Hansen's. The Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) devised by Hansen was one of several architectural proposals responding to a competition open to Eastern European architects to provide Skopje with a new museum as a sign of Eastern Bloc solidarity after

mentary' traces of a past, present and even a future (since the posters were printed a year before the 2008 exhibition would have opened) that never 'was', the posters indicate what 'might have been' at twelve selected moments in time and are rooted in their specific imagined or real cultural circumstances. Thus constructing what Ivanoska calls the "physically impossible and conceptually real", the project is premised on a conundrum: How to imagine the exhibitions of a museum that never existed to hold them?<sup>01</sup>

<sup>01</sup> Ivanoska in "Imagining the Museum: Sebastian Cichocki talks to Hristina Ivanovska and Yane Cavolski" in Yane Calovski and Hristina Ivanoska, *Oskar Hansen's Museum of Modern Art* (Bytom/Skopje: Kronika/Press to Exit, 2007).

an earthquake devastated the Macedonian capital in 1963.<sup>02</sup> Needless to say, Hansen's audacious proposal didn't win and, in the decades following the competition, it fell into minor oblivion, largely left out of architectural and local histories the way unrealised projects often are.<sup>03</sup> Yet Hansen's proposal for hydraulically-powered, rotating telescopic structures that would raise and lower different hexagonal rooms, allowing for "a transformable exhibition space, able to fold completely and then unfold into various combinations" can arguably be said to have revolutionised not only architectural standards of museum architecture but also the very concept of the museum as an institution.<sup>04</sup>

Museums, after all, define the space of our encounter with the past, contributing to the production of what we call history. This is the case even of museums committed to collecting and displaying the most recent contemporary art (they are in the process of constructing tomorrow's history). The resulting exterior forms – the edifices into which the production of this history happens – are most often imposing, immobile, and durable architectonics meant to create the impression of permanence, stability, timelessness, and neutrality so that the museum's collection of cultural patrimony can present itself as if it were 'already' history. Hansen's project was a deliberate counter-proposal to traditional museum forms and the fixity of their claims. In the instability and mutability that the Polish architect made integral to his project, the museum's role as an embodiment of implacable authority comes undone: The institution shows itself to be tentative and in process; and, quietly, but undeniably, it suggests that History (with a capital 'H') too might be just as precarious and subject to change.

The audacity of Hansen's project also lay in yet another conception of the role of the museum that was central to his proposal: He imagined the museum as nothing less than

- 02** In 1964, a decree for a new museum was established by the Town Assembly of the city of Skopje and in 1966 the competition was opened and it is as part of this that Hansen devised his proposal entitled, evocatively, 'Process and Art'. The project by the Polish architecture team of J. Mokrzyński, E. Wierzbicki, and W. Klyzewski won the competition and the museum they designed opened to the public in 1970.
- 03** Recent efforts have attempted to rectify this, notable among them are the Foksal Gallery Foundation's publication of Oscar Hansen's archival materials and documentation of unrealised projects in *Towards Open Form* (Warsaw: Fundacja Galerii Foksal, 2005).
- 04** Hansen in *Towards Open Form*, p. 213.



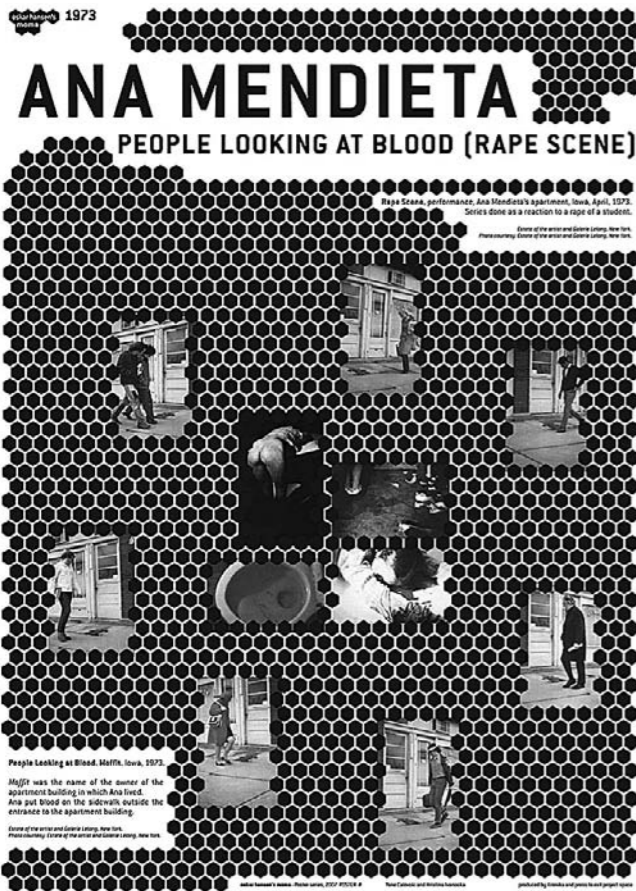
**THE PRAISE OF LAZINESS**  
[...] Laziness is the absence of movement and thought, dumb time - total amnesia. It is also indifference, staring at nothing, non-activity, impotence. It is sheer stupidity, a time of pain, futile concentration. Those virtues of laziness are important factors in art. Knowing about laziness is not enough it must be practiced and perfected. Artists in the West are not lazy and therefore not artists but rather producers of something... Their involvement with matters of no importance, such as production, promotion, gallery system, museum system, competition system (who is first), their preoccupation with objects, all that drives them away from laziness, from art. Just as money is paper, so a gallery is a room. [...]

## MLADEN STILINOVIC

A READING FEATURING THE TEXT IN PRAISE OF LAZINESS



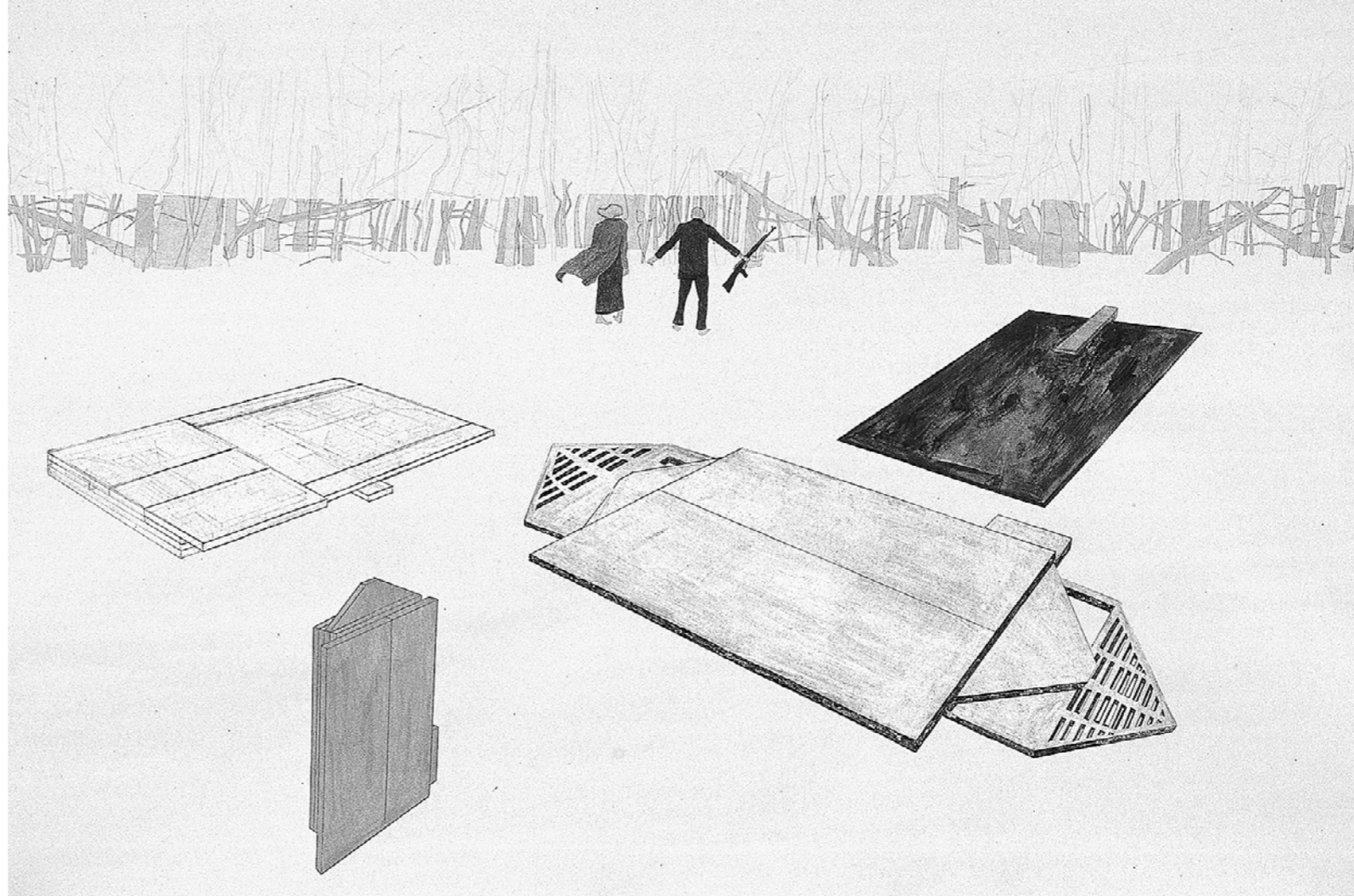
▲ Yane Calovski & Hristina Ivanoska, *Oskar Hansen's MoMA: Mladen Stilinović – A reading featuring the Text in Praise of Laziness, 1998, 2007*, COURTESY OF THE ARTISTS AND ZAK BRANICKA GALLERY



▲ Yane Calovski & Hristina Ivanoska, *Oskar Hansen's MoMA: Ana Mendieta - People looking at Blood (Rape Scene)*, 1973, 2007, COURTESY OF THE ARTISTS AND ZAK BRANICKA GALLERY

an impetus for the art that might eventually be held within it. His modular exhibition spaces, able to move horizontally and vertically, were meant to structurally respond to contemporary art's 'unpredictability'. Thus rather than architecture as the result of purely formal or 'universal' considerations, Hansen's unrealised museum was nothing short of dialectical. 'Beyond the potential...for the exposition itself' the architect thought it could – indeed 'would' – 'provoke new art' and make art and artists active participants in their own framing and contextualisation.<sup>05</sup> One might best understand it as the polemical response to museum design that it was by comparing it with the plans for another art museum conceived (and that one actually built) in the same period: Mies van der Rohe's New National Gallery in Berlin (1962-1968). Van der Rohe's 'temple of light and glass' inaugurated in 1968 and made of a monumental ribbed roof, steel frame, square encasement in glass, grid structural plan, and continuous space is the paradigm of the museum as a commanding and starkly rigid frame for art. Exemplary of the Miesian belief in

<sup>05</sup> Indeed the project expanded on another that Hansen first devised some eight years earlier for the extension of the Zacheta gallery in Warsaw in 1959 (there, exhibition spaces also moved vertically and horizontally, radically shifting one's possible experience of space) but also bears resonances with Hansen's own private residence, with its sliding walls, multi-functional spaces, and infinitely flexible structure. See Oskar Hansen, *Towards Open Form* (Warsaw: Fundacja Galerii Foksal, 2005).



◀ Yane Calovski & Hristina Ivanoska, *Nature and Social Studies - Spiral Trip*, 2000/2003, COURTESY OF THE ARTISTS AND ZAK BRANICKA GALLERY

would have filled or indeed been inspired by it?

In the process, the artists construct fiction. But theirs is deliberately not an elaborate fiction (one could imagine how far they could have gone: fake grainy installation shots of the exhibitions, display maquettes, invitations, catalogues, etc.) because fiction is not actually the point. Instead, they seem to be less interested in the construction of falsehoods (or in the role or power of the poster-as-document in that construction) than in the suggestion of what might have been possible, plausible, and what the artists feel was 'necessary and urgent' for the period. Exhibitions of the work

of *Ana Mendieta* (1973), *Paul Thek* (1974), *Mladen Stilinović* (1998), *Andrzej Szewczyk* (2008), alongside lectures by *Susan Sontag* (1987) and group exhibitions around the theme of 'colour' (1996), for instance, are just some of the responses that the posters offer.

The artist duo acknowledges that there are 'hidden associations' between each exhibition announced on a poster and the year in which the exhibition would have been held. The exhibitions take their dates from a year of the production of certain artworks or a year of greater historical importance for the region – as is the case with the *Painting is White, Sculpture is Black, Architecture is Color* exhibition, 'staged' in 1996, which coincided with the end of the siege

universal architectural forms, the obdurate glass box could not be further from Hansen's example of architecture as a modular and flexible 'open form'. Using Hansen's museum as a starting point, Calovski and Ivanoska pay tribute to his model of utopian modernism, but do so via a project that also necessarily interrogates the premises and functioning of conventional museums as well. To create hypothetical exhibitions specifically for Hansen's museum is to plead for the role that the museum might more actively play in adapting 'itself' to art, rather than merely assuming the role of authority, legitimator, and historian. The question they asked was: Had Hansen's 'foldaway museum' been built, what exhibitions, lectures, and other events

of *Ana Mendieta* (1973), *Paul Thek* (1974), *Mladen Stilinović* (1998), *Andrzej Szewczyk* (2008), alongside lectures by *Susan Sontag* (1987) and group exhibitions around the theme of 'colour' (1996), for instance, are just some of the responses that the posters offer.

of Sarajevo. Urgency can, then, be read in the specificity of their choices, with all their political, social, and cultural dimensions. For instance, imagining an exhibition of Ana Mendieta's *People Looking at Blood (Rape Scene)* for the year 1973 is no innocent choice. The provocative restaging of rape first performed by the artist in her Iowa apartment earlier that year is particularly meaningful in a region that would give birth both to a complex body-art tradition and be plagued by a future of wars and the very real sexual abuses that accompanied them. Very differently, showing Mladen Stilinović's *In Praise of Laziness* (1998) is a very particular and meaningful exhibition choice; shown after the wave of international exhibitions about 'the Balkans', it exposes and makes an artwork of the cliché of laziness attributed to the region.

The poster project thus acknowledges the importance of exhibitions as markers (and makers) of their times. Art critic Thomas McEvilley once described the potential of an exhibition to define "a certain moment, embodying attitudes and, often, changes of attitude that reveal, if only by the anxieties they create, the direction in which culture is moving".<sup>06</sup> Calovski and Ivanoska's project implicitly acknowledges this and attempts to point to some of the directions in which culture might have moved in the region from its Titoist days through its war torn years and their aftermath.

For an earlier project, *Nature and Social Studies: Spiral Trip* (2000/2003), the artists travelled – during a period when the Republic of Macedonia was still engulfed in armed conflict – from the centre of Macedonia to Skopje in a route that followed the shape of Smithson's *Spiral Jetty*. With its explicit element of homage, its references to the construction of (art) historical memory, re-enactment of the past in the present, and transposition of the political and the art historical, their *Spiral Trip* bears telling links with the poster series. Relat-

**ELENA FILIPOVIC** is a curator at WIELS Contemporary Art Centre, Brussels. She was co-curator, with Adam Szymczyk, of the 5th Berlin Biennial, *When things cast no shadow* (2008) and co-edited *The Manifesta Decade: Debates on Contemporary Art Exhibitions and Biennials in Post-Wall Europe* (2006). Recent exhibitions include the first major solo exhibition of Marcel Duchamp's work in Latin America, at the Museu de Arte Moderna in São Paulo and the Fundación Proa in Buenos Aires (2008-2009) and the retrospective *Felix Gonzalez-Torres. Specific Objects without Specific Form* at WIELS; the *Fondation Beyeler*, Basel; and the *Museum für Moderne Kunst*, Frankfurt am Main (2010-2011). She is tutor of theory/exhibition history at De Appel postgraduate curatorial training program and advisor at the Rijksakademie in Amsterdam. She is currently also guest curator of the *Satellite Program* for emerging artists at the *Jeu de Paume*, Paris (2009-2011) and is co-editor of *The Biennial Reader: Anthology on Large-Scale Perennial Exhibitions of Contemporary Art*.

ing the two projects, Cavolski suggests that both attempt "a new discourse on the future, if you will. Art history introduced an anticipated (politically driven) history shaping up in the present. We continuously make connections between points of discontinuity to see how they will all start to play off each other and constitute a new (historical) vertical."<sup>07</sup>

Given the vertiginous continuity of the spiral of Smithson's famous earthwork, it is perhaps not surprising that Cavolski and Ivanoska's *Spiral Trip*, like the poster series, is centred on a convoluted relationship to time. Both are linked to the 1960s era in which each project symbolically traces its 'roots' (Smithson's *Spiral Jetty* was first conceived at the end of the 1960s even if only finally constructed in April 1970 and Hansen's museum proposal dates from 1966). The 1960s was a period of incredible post-war idealism and transformation and, perhaps not unrelatedly, it was also a period when temporality –

the future-looking of both design and space travel – was being intensely practiced and theorised. From the 1961 presidential promise of John F. Kennedy that man would walk on the moon by the end of the decade, with all the temporal implications of sending someone to the unconquered landscape of the future; to George Kubler's *The Shape of Things* (1962) with its theory of time so influential to Robert Smithson and minimalists; to Marshall McLuhan and Quentin Fiore's *The Medium is the Message* (1967) and its reflection on a cybernetic future; to Stanley Kubrick's *2001: A Space Odyssey* (1968): Time was, you could say, in the air.

Like *Spiral Trip*, Cavolski and Ivanoska's *Oskar Hansen's Museum of Modern Art* subtly extends this arch-preoccupation of the period, using it as the starting point for a temporally oscillating project constructed in the present. In the end,

<sup>07</sup> Cavolski in "Imagining the Museum: Sebastian Cichocki talks to Hristina Ivanovska and Yane Cavolski" in Yane Calovski and Hristina Ivanoska, *Oscar Hansen's Museum of Modern Art* (Bytom/Skopje: Kronika/Press to Exit, 2007).

<sup>06</sup> Thomas McEvilley, "The Global Issue", *Artforum*, 28 (1990), p. 20.



Cavolski and Ivanoska's posters chart out a past we could never have taken part in, but they do so without making it a simplistically retrospective or nostalgic endeavour (and the final poster in the series, set already into the future, slyly insists on this). Their conditional perfect 'would have been' is meant to prepare us all the better for what still 'could be', instigating us to question our present's future and the museum and art's role in defining it. ✖

ELENA FILIPOVIC, "THE CONDITIONAL PERFECT MUSEUM," IN YANE CALOVSKI AND HRISTINA IVANOSKA, *OSCAR HANSEN'S MUSEUM OF MODERN ART* (BYTOM/SKOPJE: KRONIKA/PRESS TO EXIT, 2007), 56-60.

▲ EXHIBITION VIEW: Oskar Hansen's *Museum of Modern Art: Interplay*, 2009, PM Galerija, HDLU – Croatian Association of Visual Artists, Zagreb, CURATOR: ANA JANEVSKI, PHOTO: G. VRANIĆ, 2009, COURTESY OF PM GALERIJA, HDLU, ZAGREB



# **the EXHIBition**

art always HAS ITS CONSEQUENCES ★ 08.05-02.06.2010

THE FORMER BUILDING OF THE MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY ART  
AND GALLERY NOVA, ZAGREB ★ REALISED IN COLLABORATION WITH  
SUBVERSIVE FILM FESTIVAL ★ [WWW.SUBVERSIVEFILMFESTIVAL.COM](http://WWW.SUBVERSIVEFILMFESTIVAL.COM)



◀ Bálint Szombathy,  
*Lenin in Budapest*,  
 1972

## WHAT, HOW & FOR WHOM / WHW art always Has its CONSEQUENCES

One of the most famous episodes of guerrilla art protest actions carried out in a museum institution is a series of actions by the group GAAG (Guerrilla Art Action Group) in the period 1969 to 1971, particularly because their protests took place in the Museum of Modern Art in New York, a museum which even today, after its transformation from an elitist temple of aesthetic contemplation into a tourist attraction, maintains its position as the major institution of contemporary global art. Combining street theatre, happenings, political protests and collectivism, the actions of GAAG<sup>01</sup> fit in with other art collectives of the time, especially with the Art Workers Coalition.<sup>02</sup> The actions of GAAG were directed against the war in Vietnam, against the involvement of members of the Museum of Modern Art's management in corporations that profited from the Vietnam War (for example, they demanded the withdrawal of the Rockefeller family's philanthropic involvement from the Museum, as it serves to hide the fact that a great part of their wealth comes from the production and sale of arms), and stood for civil rights, the sexual and racial equality of artists, free museum days in order to bring

<sup>01</sup> GAAG was founded on 15 October 1969 in New York by Jean Toche, Jon Hendricks and Poppy Johnson. Virginia Toche and Joanne Stammera were included in many aspects of GAAG's work. On occasion Toche and Hendricks still continue to work today, but the main period of the group's activities was from 1969 to 1976. The majority of their actions were carried out between 1969 and 1971.

<sup>02</sup> A coalition of artists, writers, critics and museum staff founded in New York in 1969 with the aim of putting pressure on museum institutions to reform themselves towards greater democracy.

art closer to the poor, etc. These actions bear witness to the unselfish belief that artists who care about social matters should join together and act outside the fetishised boundaries of museums and galleries. Photographs of those actions were published in the book *GAAG, the Guerrilla Art Action Group, 1969–1976: A Selection* (PRINTED MATTER, NEW YORK, 1978), which is no longer available, and has yet to find a new publisher within the American museum and gallery culture. The aesthetic of those images is close to documentary and reportage photography, which at that time recorded massive (pop)-cultural events and political protests by young people in America.

The anti-war protests of those years fuelled the political imagination of a generation on both sides of the Iron Curtain, for example in Miklós Erdély's work *The Algebra of Morals – Actions of Solidarity* (1972), which in the repressive atmosphere of Hungary's then official art, protested against the threat of war and called for solidarity "surpassing leaders and those they lead, conflicting countries or groups, guards and guarded – solidarity which, for example, shows that the similarity between prisoner and jailer is greater than that between jailor and jail or between prisoner and imprisonment".

At that time the first signs of the transformation of the political and economic structure of the world that was established after the Second World War were just beginning to emerge. One of the symptoms of that transformation is the recent crash of the financial markets and resulting economic crisis whose direct effects appear to have been softened by unprecedented state interventions, but whose lessons it seems have not been

taken seriously. At that time, the so-called international art scene, which resulted from the broadening of neo-liberal politics after 1989 did not exist, and at that point nothing had especially threatened the dynamics of centre and periphery. Those were the years when the idea of modernist abstraction as the universal language of art entered into crisis, especially in the West, but also in countries behind the Iron Curtain where abstraction as a form that was equated with the idea of artistic freedom and autonomy frequently also bore the stamp of art that resists official ideological instrumentalisation, and which, in the 1950s inspired the international movements that connected the language of modernist abstraction with ideas of universal human emancipation.

This thought was the inspiration for the *Didactic Exhibition on Abstract Art*, taking place from 27 March to 30 April 1957 in the newly-opened City Gallery of Contemporary Art in Zagreb (officially founded in December 1954) by artists and critics who had until recently been gathered around the group EXAT 51 (which had already ceased to exist) and the magazine *Čovjek i Prostor*.<sup>03</sup> The exhibition travelled around the former Yugoslavia<sup>04</sup> until 1962, bringing abstract art closer to the general public. That exhibition, which is now largely forgotten, shows the degree to which abstract art had really ceased to be problematic in the former Yugoslavia as early as the late 1950s, but in the contemporary, so-called transitional, post-socialist period, that fact is interpreted in accordance with a particular ideological vision of Yugoslavia's cultural history. On the one hand it is understood as a cliché about strong domestic social realism and the struggle for modern art against the official party line, which frequently leads to the thesis about modern art being a form of resistance of the remains of the threatened bourgeois society. Its aspiration being to "join

the main current of European culture" to which we have, of course, always belonged. On the other hand, the very breakthrough of abstraction is seen as the extended arm of the all-powerful Party, a Machiavellian manipulation by which the totalitarian system presented itself to the world with an agreeable facade.

Contemporary misunderstandings about modernism and its internationalism are part of the broadly prevailing neo-liberal relationship towards socialism as a failed social experiment that resulted in economic, political and social catastrophe, and which needs to be overcome by 'transition' the cost of which is not to be questioned. In relation to art, the consequence is, among other things, a history of art that oscillates between demonstrating its autochthony and establishing precedence or synchronicity with Western art centres. Examining the dominant art history narratives and relationships towards the socialist inheritance forms the basis of the work of younger artists, such as **David Maljković** who is concerned with the heritage of the group EXAT 51, or **Andreas Fogarasi** whose work *Vasarely Go Home [Announcement]* (2010) interprets the action of neo-avant-garde artist **János Major** at the pompous official opening of a solo exhibition of work by the leading non-figurative artist, **Victor Vasarely**, a Hungarian who lived and worked in France, in Budapest in 1969. The documentary presentation of the *Symposium Wrocław '70*, which holds a mythical place in the establishment of conceptual art in Poland, was also conceived with similar intentions. We are not interested in the *Didactic Exhibition on Abstract Art* as an excellent product of exhibition design, proto-conceptual art work (without original works, i.e., an exhibition of copies, translations and quotations) or a curatorial concept that defines one view of a particular period of art, but rather as a material trace of a society's culture, and its policies in which in one period it was not only realistically possible to create but even to conceive of such a cultural intervention. Thus, the presentation of the symposium in Wrocław also examines the myth, which interprets that event exclusively from the perspective of artistic dissent against official cultural policies, or as a "last gathering of the avant-garde", or as the "first event of conceptual art in Poland".

The exhibition *Art Always Has Its Consequences* considers the 'politics of exhibiting' and, by including historic works and new productions, archive material



▲ EXHIBITION VIEW: Dimitrije Bašičević Mangelos, PHOTO: IVAN KUHARIĆ

and research documentation, reconstructing and reinterpreting paradigmatic artistic and exhibition positions from the 1950s to the present, shows the historical continuity of similar art experiments that question the social role of art. The focus of this interest is what **Peter Watkins** expresses in **Deimantas Narkevičius'** film *The Role of a Lifetime* (2003) – which is an interview with Watkins, a pioneer of so-called 'docudrama', and which presents a kind of manifesto for both artists – when he said: "I don't believe or I'm not interested in the idea of a neutral artist, even if there were such a thing, I don't think it is very interesting, frankly." The exhibition *Art Always Has Its Consequences* extracts the works from the neutrality imposed by the prevailing consensus, which sees the involvement of art in emancipatory social processes as ideological and social ballast.

Although it presents many historical works, the exhibition has no pretensions to be 'museum-like' either on the level of conceptual coherence or by a museum

staging. It is the result of a two-year collaborative project between the organisations **tranzit.hu** (Budapest), **Muzeum Sztuki** (Łódź), **new media center\_kuda.org** (Novi Sad) and **What, How & for Whom/WHW** (Zagreb). Using various formats the project deals with subjects connected with modernist inheritance and joint history, across the recontextualisation of different art practices, of which many are not directed towards the production of art objects and their aesthetic evaluation but the mediation and communication of an artwork with a wider public than regular gallery visitors. The project's research was directed towards a specific historical, economic and political context, and the forming of internationally recognised 'universal' norms, in relation to which the exhibited art practices try to affirm historical continuity and to question their own context. As the result of years of collaborative practice, the exhibition *Art Always Has Its Consequences* is based on the temporary and current constellation of ongoing research, attempting to draw

<sup>03</sup> Ivan Picelj, Radoslav Putar, Tihana Ravelić, Vjenceslav Richter, Neven Šegvić, Vesna Barbić and Edo Kovačević.

<sup>04</sup> The Hall of the Army in Sisak [December 1957], the Museum of Applied Arts in Belgrade [January 1958], the Advisory Body for Education and Culture in Skopje [March 1958], the Youth Tribune in Novi Sad [May 1958], the City Museum in Bečež [June 1958], the City Museum in Karlovac [April 1959], the Art Gallery in Maribor [June 1959], the Museum of Srem in Sremska Mitrovica [February 1960], the Artistic Gallery in Osijek [April 1960], the Youth Club in Zagreb [December 1961], the City Museum in Bjelovar [February/March 1962].

parallels and define points of contact between different but related practices. Despite the accent on art production from Eastern Europe, there is no ambition to offer a homogenising image of 'Eastern European' art from the last few decades, nor to yield to statistics as a policy of presentation. The proposal of the exhibition is not to draw conclusions from the fact that many art positions that would justifiably deserve to be exhibited are missing, nor from the politically incorrect generational, geographical and especially scandalous gender imbalance (two female artists as opposed to eighteen men and eight group projects), but from the interpretation of relationships, which show the way that art has entered into tensions and conflicts with the cultural hegemony of the moment, in its relationship to both the institution of Art and art institutions. The exhibition examines the question of art's autonomy and political involvement outside the simplifying and prevailing understanding in which political involvement negates the autonomy of art, and the art production of Eastern Europe is reduced either to a (delayed) reaction to events in the West or to an instrumentalised ideological construction.

Today, the traditional geopolitical concepts of East and West seem too simplistic to describe the complex movement of capital and its territorial repositioning in the last few decades. But that does not mean that there has been a change in the prevailing thought or rhetoric about the centre, and a periphery that constantly trails after it, through which post-communist countries are defined as cultural spaces in which modernism has been halted for decades, and which it is now necessary to integrate into the global capitalistic system through the process of 'transition'. Nor does it mean that the previous divisions, economic disparities and inequalities have simply vanished. It is a paradoxical fact that in the dominant discourse of art history, Eastern Europe did not exist during the time of the Cold War division into blocs, except as a cliché used for the purpose of ideological instrumentalisation of art's autonomy. In fact it only now exists as a concept in the art world, when the processes of its historicisation and the construction of its narrative have to a certain extent been completed, and what still needs to be done is to deconstruct the hegemonic narrative of the West and point out the ways in which it continues to determine the economic relations of art production. The case of socialist Yugoslavia indicates

those changes effectively, because after 1948, thanks to its independent and later non-aligned politics, Yugoslavia was mainly perceived as not being part of Eastern Europe – to which the Eastern Bloc countries under direct Soviet influence belonged. Only after the fall of the Wall and the break-up of the country at the beginning of the 1990s, did Yugoslavia and the countries that emerged from it become more and more part of that new 'former Eastern Europe'. That does not mean that Yugoslavia was not in many ways 'objectively' part of Eastern Europe, but that the very concept of a 'former' Eastern Europe' is a changeable ideological construct.

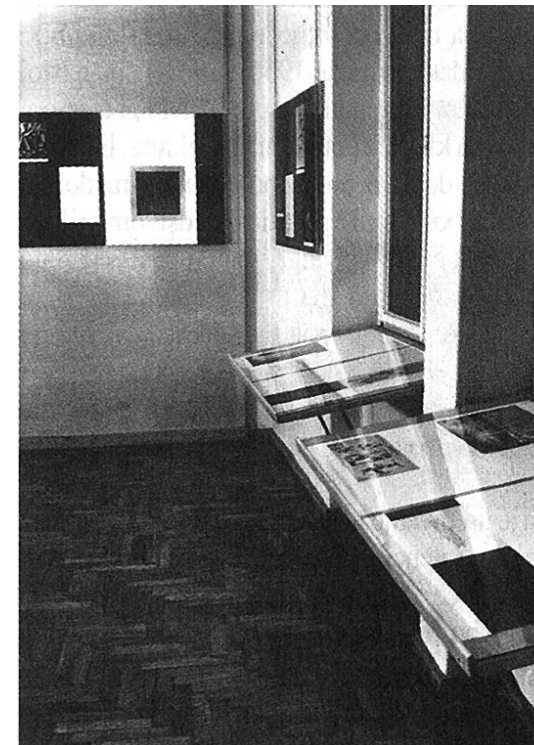
*Art Always Has Its Consequences* starts from the art of the "former" Eastern Europe, bearing in mind the question of Romanian philosopher **Ovidiu Tichindeleanu**: "For what point is there a discussion about East European debates on communism if not to look there for a renewal of the left theoretical tradition?"<sup>05</sup> The exhibition questions the collective amnesia of the progressive achievements of the past. It attempts to offer an aesthetic and political jigsaw, which can help us to reformulate questions relating to the current moment of acute crisis of the political imagination; a consequence of the tectonic shifts after 1989, and also to the place and role of art today – what questions can it ask, what does it fail to address, and how does art deal with its (in)capabilities? What can we learn from the endeavours and art experimentation that characterise art's engagement with the public space? How do gestures of political agitation and protest react to the contracting and closing of public space and the crisis of the concept of the public in different situations, from "real socialism" in Hungary in the 1970s, as in the works of **Tibor Hajas** and **Gyula Pauer**, to neo-liberal Romania after its successful accession to the European Union in the recent work *Auto-da-Fé* by **Ciprian Mureşan**? Can we see **Bálint Szombathy**'s performance *Lenin in Budapest* from 1970, in which the artist wore a poster with a picture of **Vladimir Ilyich Lenin**, as part of the same continuity, or is it more productive to read his relationship to official political propaganda in the light of what later occurred in the context of *Neue Slowenische Kunst*? What connection between political involvement, the international history

<sup>05</sup> Ovidiu Tichindeleanu, "Towards a critical theory of postcommunism? Beyond anticommunism in Romania", *Radical Philosophy*, № 159, 2010.

of the left and art production is made by the activist ambient sound installations of the collective **Ultra-red** founded in the late 1990s in Los Angeles? How should we understand the dynamics of the relationship of subversion and agitation in the controversial poster for the 1987 *Day of Youth* by the Slovenian group **New Collectivism**, in the political illustrations of **Milan Trenc** published in the high-circulation magazine *Start* in the late 1980s, or ten years later in the anti-fascist/feminist intervention of **Sanja Iveković** in the magazine *Arkzin*, which in the second half of the 1990s developed from a fanzine of the anti-war campaign into a low-circulation and unprofitable, but intellectually extremely important critical and theoretical magazine?

The contextualisation of the contradictory processes through which various ideologies and social developments were reflected in the wider context of cultural work, including the fields of design, visual identities, public media and popular education, is addressed by the inclusion of the project *As soon as I open my eyes, I see a film (cinema clubs and the Genre Film Festival/GEFF)*, by curator **Ana Janevski**, which examines the experimental film production of amateur cinema clubs in Zagreb, Belgrade and Split, and their connections with the art events of the 1950s and 1960s. Similarly, the project *The Ideology of Design: Fragments about the History of Yugoslav Design*, the curatorial interpretation of the collective **kuda.org** from Novi Sad, which studies the development and perception of design in relation to art practices and critical discourses.

How does the interweaving of art and social action reflect on polemics about art's 'autonomy', how is a particular practice recognised, legitimised and defended as art, in a given moment? How was autonomy understood by **Dimitrije Bašičević**, a member of **Gorgona**, prominent critic and curator who for decades has created works almost in secrecy under the pseudonym **Mangelos**, and



▲ *Didactic Exhibition: Abstract Art, Zagreb, 1957.*

PHOTO: NENAD GATTIN

whose art only started to enter the public space after **Gorgona**'s retrospective exhibition in 1977? Did the need for autonomy dictate the actions of the enfant terrible of Polish post-avant-garde, artist, poet and musician **Andrzej Partum** who from the 1960s onwards acted outside the existing structures, revealing the absurdities of social and artistic life?

Today, what is the legitimate pedagogical and didactic function of art in relation to those from the historic avant-garde, which for decades propelled art movements such as the Mexican muralists, whose exhibition held in a Ukrainian village in the 1960s is the starting point for the video by **Sean Snyder**? And how and

with what aim was this pedagogical and didactic function used in the films of the **Béla Balázs Stúdió** from the 1970s, or in the contemporary works of **Andreja Kulunčić**? Is there continuity between the relationship towards art institutions and ambitions of withdrawal from the institutions that were the basis of the direct actions of the 1970s, and the art endeavours of today? Should we look for an answer within the wide field of art practice, which since the 1990s has been called institutional critique, or, as in case of Yugoslavia, is the idea that formed the critical relationship towards the system of institutions in the work of many groups and artists of the 1970s, based on a critique of the bureaucratisation and ossification of socialism – as in the work of **Vlado Martek** and **Mladen Stilinović**, members of the **Group of Six Authors** – today inconceivable? Can the institutional and critical interventions of **Tomo Savić-Gecan** be explained exclusively from the perspective of the global art world

that was formed in the 1990s, without looking to the past? How do we understand the fact that **Goran Đorđević's** exhibition *Harbingers of the Apocalypse*, held in 1981 in Gallery SKC in Belgrade, the Gallery of Extended Media in Zagreb and Gallery ŠKUC in Ljubljana, had such an important influence on the Ljubljana scene of the 1980s.

★★★

*Art Always Has Its Consequences* presents works and exhibition projects that encourage the formulation of questions and their different implications, interpreting the works through three distinctive readings: as critique and re-articulation of the political, cultural and art constellations, as direct action or agitation, or as a symptom, which tells us what is possible and acceptable in a given socio-political context. Although the film *Centaur* (Kentaur, 1973–75) by **Tamás St. Auby**, a lucid and sharp criticism of the alienation and degradation of work in a society that appealed to the values of communism, was immediately banned, with the author spending years in exile, the fact is that it was possible to shoot such a film in the 1970s in the oppressive circumstances of Hungary's cultural policies, using the state-financed *Béla Balázs Stúdió*, which enabled the production of avant-garde experimental films.

The title *Art Always Has Its Consequences* is taken from **Mladen Stilinović's** conceptual text *Footwriting*, written in 1984, and refers to research into the relationship between art and reality, but also to the equal importance of intrinsic, internal procedures by which art is repeatedly 'limited' to its own field. Questions about art's responsibility to its own procedures and to the extension of its own boundaries, in connection with the artist's positioning of him/herself, both in the system of art and in the wider socio-political context, have not been resolved by the contemporary transformation of the cultural field into a colony of marketing and profit, nor by the fact that the important function that neo-liberalism has given to contemporary art has stimulated its drowning in the creative industries. Indeed, these questions now seem more important than ever.

The exhibition places historical and contemporary art positions in dialogue and considers the relationship between collective identities and cultural homogenisation, and the role that art institutions have in these processes.



▲▲ EXHIBITION VIEW: Ciprian Mureşan, *Auto-da-Fé*, 2008  
▲ Goran Đorđević, *Harbingers of the Apocalypse*, 1980/81



▲ EXHIBITION VIEW: Vlado Martek, *Beware of the Museum*,  
ALL PHOTOS: IVAN KUHARIĆ

It takes place at the Kulmer Palace on Katarina's Square in Zagreb, where the displayed art works and investigations are juxtaposed with the material and ideological memory of the building itself, which for years served as the main space of the Gallery of Contemporary Art, later renamed the Museum of Contemporary Art. After World War II, the building was nationalised and then denationalised again a few years ago. Its character is inseparable from the institutional context that it had occupied for decades, right up to the relatively recent move to the new building of the Museum of Contemporary Art in New Zagreb. This baroque palace, the former space of the museum, has been left as it was found. In addition to the old exhibition spaces, *Art Always Has Its Consequences* occupies the museum's former offices and depot, previously invisible to visitors.

This choice of location is not an alignment with the current political cultural conjunction, which attempts to acquire cultural capital by criticising the museum as an element of cultural tourism, and of the conjuncture between culture and economy in the city with all the consequential embezzlements and contaminations. Neither does it mean to lean towards the euphoric valorisation of the recently opened Museum of Contemporary Art. This temporary occupation of the museum's former building appeals to the institution's historic memory, its role in the processes of forming and maintaining collective memories and the articulation of collective interests, which are not completely overshadowed by topics imposed by the *realpolitik*, and the mainly electoral rhythm of fictional democracy. The exhibition confronts contemporary approaches with strategies used in the past, inviting a reading of the presented works in relation to the questions of the role and responsibility of public art institutions, the way in which they are positioned towards the economic and ideological circumstances and how they contribute to the forming of cultural influences and hegemonisation of particular norms.

*Art Always Has Its Consequences* opens on 8 May, the Day of the Liberation of Zagreb in 1945. At a time of epoch-making realignment in relation to World War II, and the tendency of equating Nazism and communism under the general term 'totalitarianism', this choice of date is dedicated to the emancipatory sequence of the National Liberation Struggle as the basic point of reference from which we can look into the future. ✘



## CREATIVITY EXERCISES [MIKLÓS ERDÉLY & DÓRA MAURER]

Erdély 1928–86. Lived in Budapest.  
Maurer b. 1937. Lives & works in Budapest.

**Creativity-Visuality** ★ 1987, 25:00

COURTESY OF BÉLA BALÁZS STÚDIÓ / NATIONAL FILM ARCHIVE, BUDAPEST

From 1975–1977, visual artists **Dóra Maurer** and **Miklós Erdély** led what were known as *Creativity Exercises* at the *Ganz Mávag Cultural Centre*, which, instead of the individual, artwork-centred creative process, introduced an alternative educational model that was based on community experiences and the deconstruction of traditional art studies/education. These were later continued under a different name and in a new location, namely as *Fantasy Developing Exercises (FaFej, 1977)*, and *Inter-Disciplinary-Thinking (InDiGo group, 1978–1986)*, finally transforming into the **INDIGO group**, which made appearances at a number of exhibitions at the end of the 1970s. **Dóra Maurer** documented these workshops and in the 1980s she edited the footage into thematic sections at the *Béla Balázs Stúdió* producing a film entitled *Creativity-Visuality*.



▲ Miklós Erdély & Dóra Maurer, *Creativity-Visuality*, 1987,

COURTESY OF BÉLA BALÁZS STÚDIÓ / NATIONAL FILM ARCHIVE, BUDAPEST

“The fact that they (**Miklós Erdély** and **Dóra Maurer**) had known each other for several years, their analytical and conceptual approach to the traditional tools of fine art, their shared interest in photography, film, and the creative process, and their collaborative exhibitions all inspired them to work out a joint plan to reform the programme of the **Visual Artists’ Group** in September 1975 (in the *Ganz Mávag* – the Hungarian State Rail Carriage Factory – Cultural House in Budapest’s 8th district). An initial inspiration for the start of the programme was the creative course held by **Maurizio Kagel**, which they both attended in the spring of 1971, after which they participated in the *Munich Kunstzone*. **Maurer** recalls the event: ‘Here, one of the exercises was about every participant making a particular movement, which was repeated by the next person along, who then added to the movement’. Upon **Maurer’s** suggestion the new course linked planned movement with the ‘traditional artist and model situation’ (**Miklós Erdély**), and drawing was named *Planned Movement and Execution Actions*. The name of the course was changed to *Creativity Exercises* in late February 1976. The new theoretical direction underlying the change is indicated by the fact that on the invitation to the ‘collective activity’ on 11 March, **Erika Landau’s** book *The Psychology of Creativity* is listed as recommended reading. This became the most important reference material for the *Creativity Exercises* led by **Erdély** alone from 16 December 1976...” ✖

FROM: SÁNDOR HORNYIK & ANNAMÁRIA SZÓKE “CREATIVITY EXERCISES, FANTASY DEVELOPING EXERCISES (FAFEJ), AND INTER-DISCIPLINARY-THINKING (INDIGO), MIKLÓS ERDÉLY’S ART PEDAGOGICAL ACTIVITY 1975–86” IN *KREATIVITÁSI GYAKORLATOK, FAFEJ, INDIGO. ERDÉLY MIKLÓS MŰVÉSZETPEDAGÓGIAI TEVÉKENYSÉGE 1975–1986* (CREATIVITY EXERCISES, FAFEJ, INDIGO. ON MIKLÓS ERDÉLY’S ART PEDAGOGICAL ACTIVITY), MTA MKI-GONDOLAT-2B-EMA, 2008, PP. 497–523.

Miklós Erdély & Dóra Maurer,  
*Creativity-Visuality*, 1987,

COURTESY OF BÉLA BALÁZS STÚDIÓ /

NATIONAL FILM ARCHIVE, BUDAPEST



## Miklós Erdély: Creativity and Fantasy Developing Exercises (EXCERPT)

“...In the course of these creative exercises we came to feel that the capability we call creativity is not simply a well-defined faculty, but is perhaps better perceived as a combination of those suppressed abilities that are unable to manifest themselves except at certain times when they somehow manage to seep through. We noted that appreciable manifestations are significantly varied in their nature and that they are not necessarily tied to personalities; at times they surface unexpectedly in completely passive individuals. Accordingly, we are more justified to speak of *creative states* rather than abilities. When we became aware of this we began to seek the conditions that nurture an atmosphere that allows such states to appear with a greater frequency. Here we encountered significant difficulties. In our experience a so-called pleasant atmosphere does not necessarily promote the appearance of the expected phenomena. A generally prevailing pleasant atmosphere is more of a consequence than a cause.

...When we want to characterise the state we call creative, we may compare it to optimism or a sudden onset of hopefulness. However, this hopefulness does not refer to anything specific, just as its negative form anxiety does not have to relate to anything (or as Heidegger has shown, it relates to nothing). At times it may be some trivial, one might even say silly, idea that brings about this condition – or, to put it more precisely, the idea manifests simultaneously with the state. But these seemingly trivial notions still share a quality that is blissful: namely that *they do not arise from any precedents*, nor do they share any qualities with typical problem-solving situations...”

PUBLISHED IN HUNGARIAN IN *TANULMÁNYOK A VIZUÁLIS NEVELÉS KÖRÉBŐL (STUDIES IN VISUAL EDUCATION)*, MTA VISUAL CULTURE RESEARCH GROUP, BUDAPEST, 1978.

RE-PUBLISHED IN ENGLISH: *KREATIVITÁSI GYAKORLATOK, FAFEJ, INDIGO. ERDÉLY MIKLÓS MŰVÉSZETPEDAGÓGIAI TEVÉKENYSÉGE 1975–1986* (CREATIVITY EXERCISES, FAFEJ, INDIGO. ON MIKLÓS ERDÉLY’S ART PEDAGOGICAL ACTIVITY), MTA MKI-GONDOLAT-2B-EMA, 2008, PP. 525–531, PP 529–530.

## Creativity Exercises

led by Miklós Erdély and Dóra Maurer

### Chapter 1

#### Reactions to the video camera

The camera is a weapon; fly from it

The camera makes you immortal

The camera takes stock of the participants: those who are tall grow even taller, small people look smaller

The camera is fixed, it follows a linear path. Only tall people can get in front of the object.

The camera moves in waves, everybody tries to show themselves

The camera swanks randomly: participants react individually

### Chapter 2

#### Movement plan

Complementary movements, touches

One group moves in darkness. At the flashing of a light, everybody stops and tries to memorise her position, then they move again. When the light comes back, the group assumes the position they had when the light flashed.

Participants move in pairs, they make and repeat short, coordinated movements. When there is a change, the partner also has to do it

The same with all the pairs, simultaneously

### Chapter 3

#### Drawing together

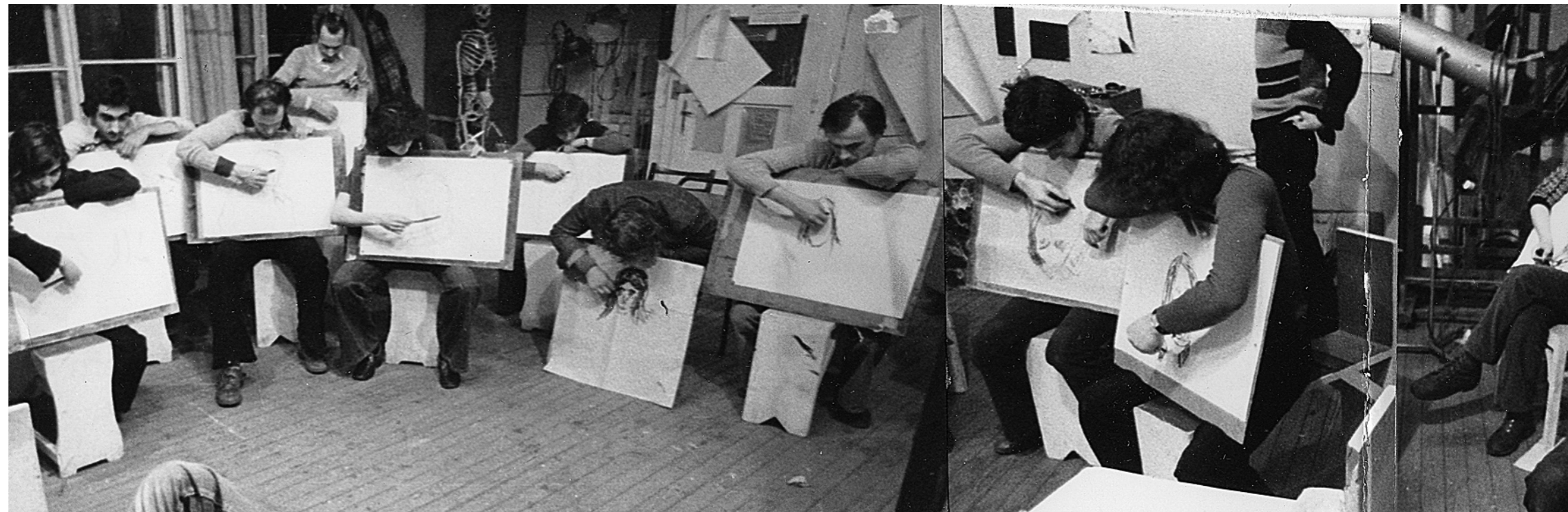
Serial drawing: everybody draws for thirty seconds on a spot, then has to continue her neighbour's drawing

People draw a shared portrait of the workshop coordinator, everybody is allowed to draw for 10 minutes

Everybody draws by taking the right hand of her neighbour with her left hand

Indirect drawing. How passive is the one whose hand is just a tool?

Drawing in pairs: she who has the charcoal tries to draw a circle, but the one who holds the table wants to draw a square



### Chapter 4

#### Obstructed drawing

The portrait being drawn is hidden by a collar around the wrist

Drawing on the other side of the paper

Portrait pairs: the partners are drawing each other's portrait on the back side of each other's paper

Participants do not see the model, only her image on a monitor. The camera is directed either at the model, or at one of the drawings.

### Chapter 5

#### Automatic drawing

Drawing to music

People draw together by moving the charcoal and the table to music

One minute of concentration in darkness, followed by one minute of drawing

One minute paper pieces

▲ Miklós Erdély & Dóra Maurer, *Creativity-Visuality*, 1987, COURTESY OF BÉLA BALÁZS STÚDIÓ / NATIONAL FILM ARCHIVE, BUDAPEST

### Chapter 6

#### Collective pieces

Object animation: objects of matching form are shot one by one by the camera

People make a 10 × 10 cm clay cube, each participant suggests one movement to form it

Let's make one edge of the cube round

Let's turn it by 180 degrees in the bisector plane

Drill a hole perpendicular to the bisector

Make eight little knobs

Put one knob into the hole

Make the whole thing into a sphere

Press it with one single movement

Make a plane on the top

Drill two holes into the biggest surface

Working collectively, action drawing

Rule 1.: spot follows line, followed by clearing the spot

Rule 2.: when two thirds of the paper is covered, the next participant clears one third

glue, gypsum, vacuum cleaner and brush should cross each other's track as many times as possible

### Chapter 7

#### Active-passive exercises

Stand in a circle and do not move. Everybody copies their left neighbour when she accidentally moves

Interaction in small groups. In every group there is a threefold interaction: you have to copy the one on the left. The one on the right follows the follower.

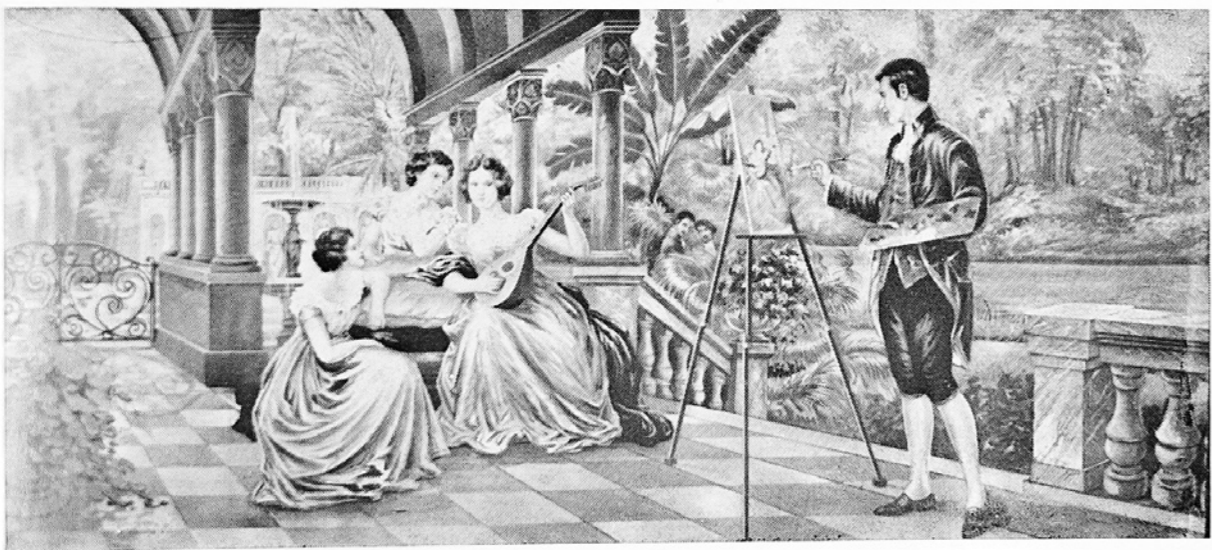
Pairs do very slow movements, reflecting on each other. Either party can initiate, but they have to follow each other's initiatives.

THE VIDEO WAS MADE BY DÓRA MAURER AND IS BASED ON DOCUMENTARY PHOTOGRAPHS OF THE EXERCISES AND A DAMAGED COPY OF THE VIDEOS.

CAMERAMAN: GÁBOR DOBOS, PHOTOGRAPHER: TAMÁS PAPP  
SOURCE: [HTTP://WWW.ARTPOOL.HU/ERDELY/KREATIVITAS/GYAKORLATOK.HTML](http://www.artpool.hu/erdely/kreativitas/gyakorlatok.html)

Umetničko delo, pored ostalog, izražava i neki stav o umetnosti. Radovi prikazani na ovoj izložbi nisu umetnička dela. To su samo stavovi o umetnosti. Bolje rečeno, to su stavovi protiv umetnosti. Mislim da je krajnje vreme da se sa umetnosti jednom odlučno strgne napuderisana maska slobode i humanizma i otkrije njeno pravo lice, lice verne i ponizne sluškinje.

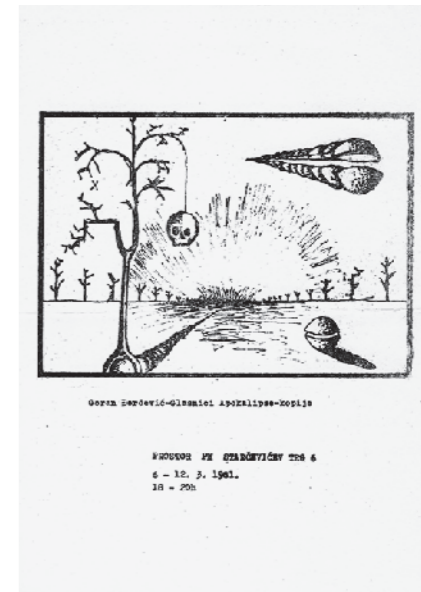
A work of art expresses, among other things, certain attitudes toward art. The works showed at this exhibition are not works of art. They are only attitudes toward art. More precisely, they are attitudes against art. I think it is high time to tear the powdered mask of freedom and humanism off art and reveal its proper face, the face of faithful and humble servant.



◀ Goran Đorđević, *Against Art*, invitation for the exhibition, SKC Gallery, Belgrade, 1980

Mladen Stilinović inspecting *The Harbingers of the Apocalypse* at the exhibition *Art Always Has Its Consequences*, 2010, PHOTO: IVAN KUHARIĆ

“**T**he *Harbingers of Apocalypse*, is a painting I made in my youth. This extremely ugly, distasteful and, above all, dilettantish work, which embarrassed me for many years, represents my first serious attempt at painting. Ten years after its creation I decided to make a number of sketches, which represent, as it were, preliminary preparations for its realisation, probably because I knew that drawings, sketches, and studies preceded many important paintings from art history. I decided to make *The Harbingers of Apocalypse* an important work of art. (...) I began painting copies of *The Harbingers of Apocalypse*, and, at the same time, I went on copying works by modern artists (Mondrian, Malevich, Lichtenstein). It is true that my copies are not the result of an intention to master the art of painting step by step, even though I did, occasionally, try to make a good copy. I think that the very selection of the works to be copied proves the point. (...) For instance, there is hardly any difference between a Mondrian composition and the one I have made. However, the painting done by Mondrian is probably the result of his interest



▲ Goran Đorđević, *Harbingers of the Apocalypse*-copies, cover of the exhibition catalogue, Prostor PM, Zagreb, 1981

## GORAN ĐORĐEVIĆ

b. 1950. Lives & works in New York.

### *Harbingers of the Apocalypse*

★ 1980/81

▶ Mladen Stilinović inspecting *The Harbingers of the Apocalypse* at the exhibition in Prostor PM, Zagreb, 1981



in the relationship between surface and colour, while its copy is the result of my interest in the problem of copying itself. We can conclude that the two paintings, though formally alike, differ completely on a semantic level. But that's not all. While the object of Mondrian's interest can be read from the painting itself, this is not true of its copy. The copy is a painting according to all painterly parameters, but its idea, however, lies outside the painting itself. ... If the original is worthless, does it imply that the same is true of the copy? This example seems to demonstrate that this is not always the case. I think that the copies of *The Harbingers* are more important than the original, although they are hardly different from it.”

GORAN ĐORĐEVIĆ, EXCERPT FROM THE INTERVIEW 'ORIGINAL & COPY', MOMENT, BELGRADE, 1984

## MIKLÓS ERDÉLY

1928–1986. Lived in Budapest.

### **Moral Algebra. Solidarity Action** ★ 1972

Reconstruction by Annamária Szőke, EMF

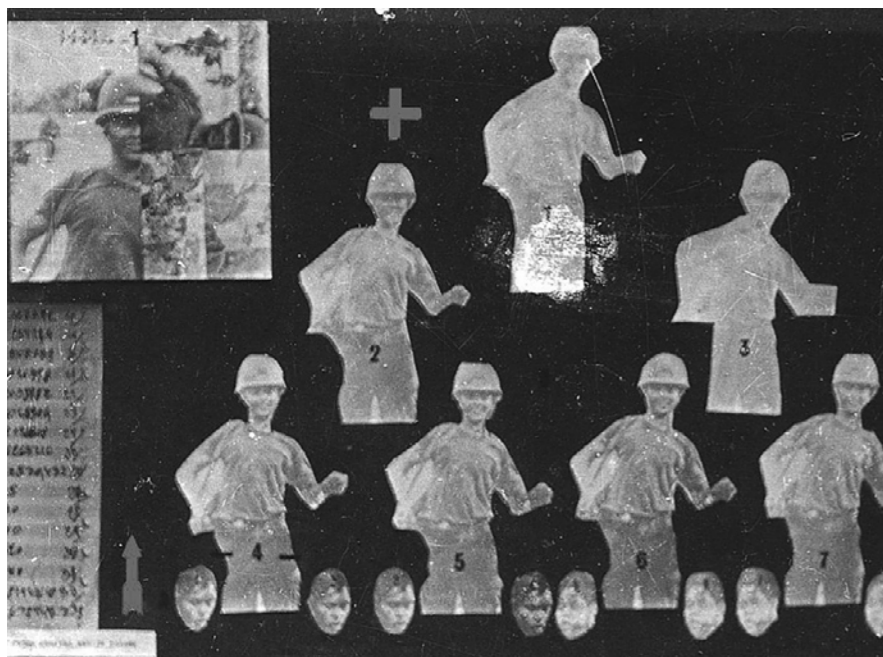
COURTESY OF ERDÉLY MIKLÓS FOUNDATION, BUDAPEST

*Moral Algebra*, a work consisting of five tableaux, was exhibited in 1972 at the **Foksal Gallery** in Warsaw as part of the exhibition **st. jauby – jovanovics – lakner – miklós – pauer – tot**. The present location of the work is unknown. The prints of the tableaux shown in Zagreb are almost identical in size to the originals and were made from the photographic documentation of the exhibition. These can be considered as the physical/material reconstruction of the work supplemented with some prints and copies of preparatory photos, documents pertaining to the work, sketches and other studio materials. Besides Warsaw, the work appeared in a form that is now unknown either in 1973 or

1974 at **CAYC (Center of Art and Communication)** in Buenos Aires. The catalogue of the **Festival Húngaro 74 (Hungarian Festival 74)** contains a sketch of the work and the English translation of the text *Solidarity Action*. The text pertaining to *Moral Algebra* can be considered as a work in its own right.

The central motif of *Moral Algebra*, the photograph of the so-called 'Cambodian head-hunter', stems from a French journal. The photograph was most likely taken in 1970, when, after a coup against King **Norodom Sihanouk** of Cambodia, General **Lon Nol** became president of the newly formed Khmer Republic and fought against the Khmer Rouge, which supported **Sihanouk**. According to **Erdély**, in 1970 he "worked several times in various ways with a horrifying photo of a Cambodian head-hunter". *Moral Algebra* represents an early, and in many respects, exceptional example in post-1945 Hungarian art of a fundamental artistic stance that raises a voice against any kind of action by the prevailing power and its institutions that restricts human liberty and creativity, rejecting inhumanity, murder and all forms of warfare. In his work **Erdély** gives expression to this basic position, which is explicitly indicated by one of the titles, *Solidarity Action*, while the other, *Moral Algebra*, is made up of two apparently mutually-exclusive domains: morality and algebra. How can numerical processes be translated into moral terms and how can the moral dimension be given over to calculations – these are some of the many questions raised by this work. ✘

ANNAMÁRIA SZŐKE



▲ Miklós Erdély, *Moral Algebra. Solidarity Action*, 1972 (2004–2007), detail,

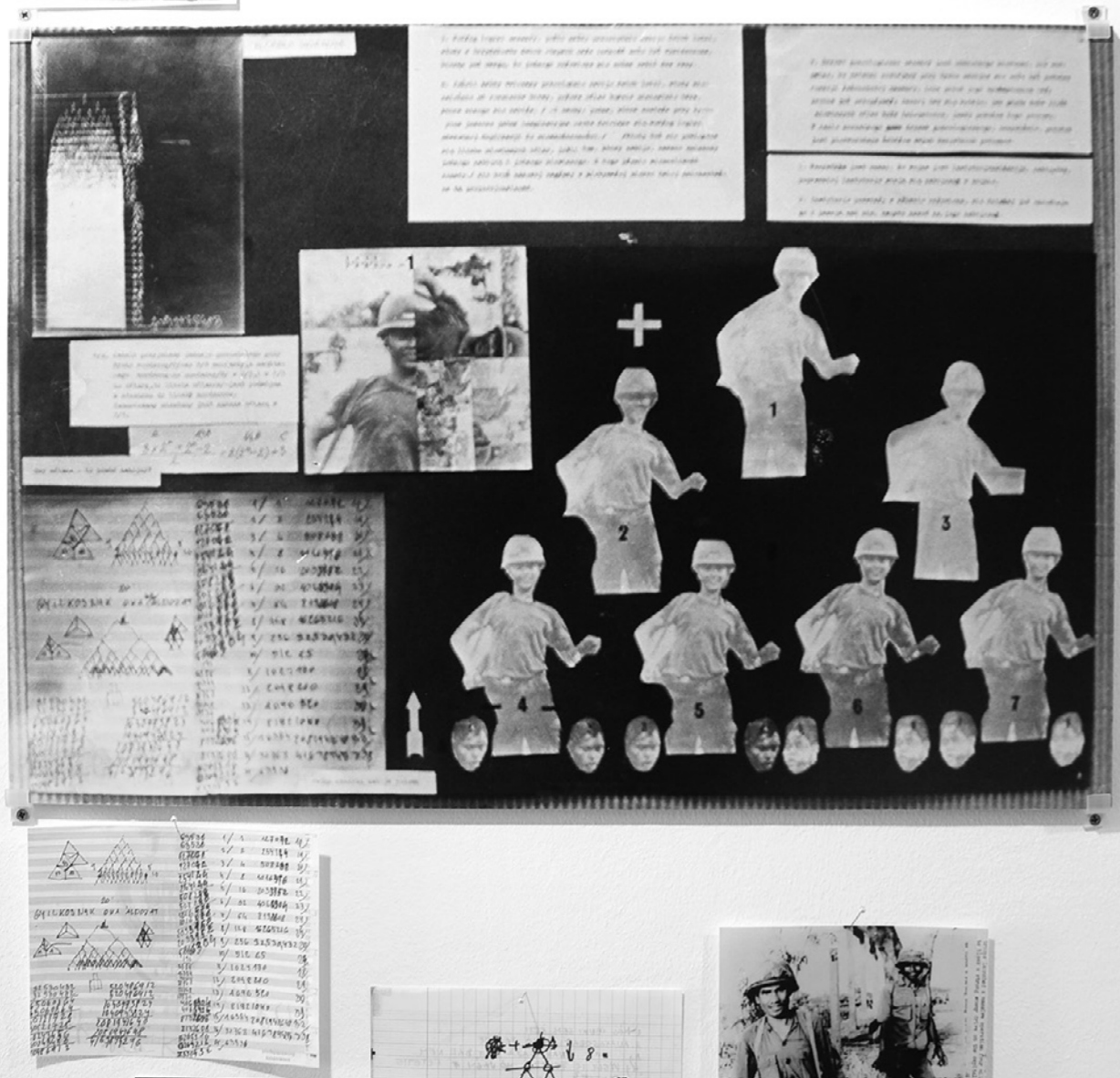
COURTESY OF ERDÉLY MIKLÓS FOUNDATION, BUDAPEST

## Miklós Erdély **Solidarity Action**

(Script of a concept realised as a photomontage and statistical tables), 1972

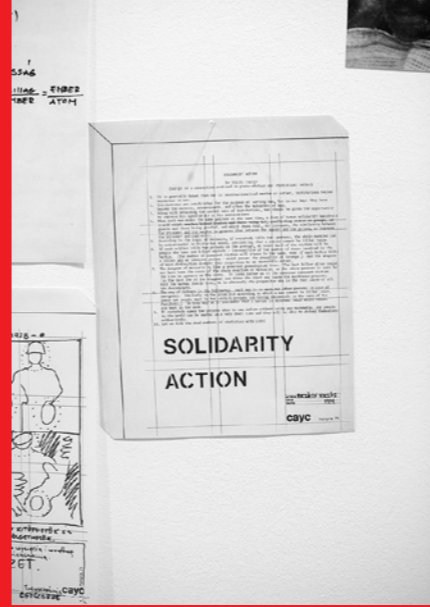
- 1 It is generally known that war is institutionalised murder, or rather, that institutions become murderous in war. person – which proves the absurdity of revenge.) And the weapons of mass destruction distort this proportion to an incredible extent.
- 2 Institutions are established for the purpose of serving people, but in our days they have become the masters, determinants, and often the murderers of people.
- 3 As well as retaining the useful role of institutions, people should be given the opportunity to express their superiority to institutions.
- 4 When each person makes the same gesture at the same time, a form of human solidarity manifests itself, which reaches beyond leaders and the led, conflicting states or groups, or guards and the guarded, a solidarity that shows, for instance, that the similarity between the prisoner and the warder is greater than between the warder and the prison, or between the prisoner and captivity.
- 5 According to the logic of massacre, if everybody kills two people, the whole of humanity can be exterminated in thirty-two moves, considering that a person cannot be killed twice.
- 6 If each soldier kills two people on average, at least half of the victims will be people who have not killed anybody – irrespective of the number of those involved in the battle. (The number of innocent victims will also be the same if each killer always kills a killer and an innocent
- 7 The diagram of massacre is like a reversed genealogical tree. The last killer alive could not have been the cause of the chain reaction of massacre, as the whole process is over by the time he appears on the scene. It looks rather as if the numerous innocent victims (in the last row of the diagram) are those who start and cause the murderous process. This is the reverse of the genealogical tree, where the ancestral progenitor is obviously the cause of all the descendants.
- 8 The way of defence is the following: in an emergency each man is to warn two other people. According to the principle that a man cannot be killed twice, they have to be individually marked (as Göring recommends in the case of pacifists). In this way it is possible to avoid someone being informed twice while others are kept in the dark.
- 9 If everybody marks only two people without using any institutional and communicational means, all the people in the world can be warned in a very short time and they will be able to defend themselves collectively. At a given moment, the siren of solidarity rings around the world.
- 10 Let us fill the dead numbers of statistics with life!

PUBLISHED IN  
HUNGRÍA 74.  
MUESTRA  
PRESENTANDA  
POR EL CENTRO  
DE ARTE Y  
COMUNICACIÓN,  
NOVIEMBRE–  
DICIEMBRE 1974.  
S.P.



**The first tableau**

1. A photo negative reproduction of a hand-drawn diagram demonstrating that if one mankind can be exterminated in thirty-two moves (sic.). The participants in it, seated by small lines from which a cone shape evolves. On the top in the single soldier person alive, while the bottom row is a bunch of bars that completely flow into one, who were killed first and who themselves cover murdered anyone. To the right of a marked 1 to 32, and the number of victims is indicated on the top through row 32. The sum at the bottom, 2,081,947,648, is incorrect, as Erdély—who as we know below this photograph calculated the sum step by step instead of using an easy step 17 the correct sum would be 2,147,483,648. If we accurately add the count-murderers found in each row we get a grand total of 4,294,967,296, which is the population of the earth at the beginning of 1972, when Erdély worked on this case of the earth surpassed four billion around this time.
- 1a. Single typed text.
2. The photo reproduction of a preliminary study written and drawn with a green VIDEOTON Computer Center (sic.). On the piece of paper are seen the repetition of the victims of the massacre and calculations connected with these figures, also grass. The diagrams illustrate the "genealogical tree of massacre," "accompaniment," "the cause of the murderer in the victim", which is a concise summary of it can be read on the seventh point of the text entitled Solidarity Action. In addition, possible geometric formations are seen here, which, like the symmetrical tree-structure of numbers connected to it, can be continued infinitely. See the explanatory content of the schema of the tableaux.
- 2a. Single typed text.
3. The photographic "genealogical tree of massacre" The cut-out figures of the "Cambodian mirror image of the original press photo" are arranged in a triangle and meant that the heads of the "murderers" lower down appear as if held by the sword them. For the time being the function of the originally red \* signs above the bars remains unclear. In the bottom row the heads of the victims murdered by the are lined up in such a way that below the hands of the fourth and fifth soldier up of the heads, while under the sixth and seventh soldiers are the replicas of the soldiering upwards to the left of the soldier-pyramid refers to the fact that the "genealogy" a direction opposite to that of regular genealogical trees.
- 3a. Single typed text.
4. Square-shaped photomontage in which the photo of the "Cambodian head hunter" is simultaneously halved. The geometrization of the logic behind the "genealogy" starting point in the diagram drawn by Erdély with other diagrams on an envelope (preliminary study) (sic.), which he had photographed. It is conceivable a place for this on the tableaux as well. On the envelope, in addition to the sketch: upper left-hand corner of the tableaux, there are two other diagrams which are: quadrangles and triangles that regularly diminish in size and divide. They are exact rhombs. The upper one is a version of the so-called Pythagoras Tree. In this, two appear below the top square and, repeating this to infinity, the squares diminish. The sum of the areas of the diminished squares does not surpass that of the original version of this principle appears next to the genealogical-structure in another in one of his notebooks (sic.). There is also a schematic drawing of the rectangular that appears on the tableaux. We can describe this as the "inwardly twisting" form of the Tree, in which the smaller squares repeat within the larger square, similar to the typical familiar from the golden ratio. On the tableaux this scheme is filled with the head hunter divided into equal halves, then quarters and so forth, clockwise will rise. Through the geometric and mathematical analysis of the spatial form or scheme of massacre Erdély arrived at a visual formulation that was appropriate for the concept of the algebra of murder: the last person to remain alive is equal to all three. This is inscribed on the spiral in the form of an equation, the bold number 1 equals the soldier's head. At the same time the compositional principle of the square—namely the spiral structure, can be brought into connection with the spiral shape—supposition is supported by the fact that the next tableaux presents the cosmic dimension.
- 4a-b. It is presumably an equation connected with these calculations that appears on paper above the preliminary sketch.
5. The fifth and sixth points of the Solidarity Action.
6. The seventh point of the Solidarity Action.
7. The first and second points of the Solidarity Action.



EXHIBITION VIEWS: Miklós Erdély, *Moral Algebra. Solidarity Action*, 1972 (2004–2007), detail,  
PHOTO: IVAN KUHARIC

## ANDREAS FOGARASI

b. 1977. Lives & works in Vienna.

*Vasarely Go Home (Announcement)* ★ 2010

The project examines a double event.

In 1969 **Victor Vasarely**, an internationally renowned artist of Hungarian origin, had a major retrospective exhibition at the *Műcsarnok (Kunsthalle)* in Budapest. At that time, this was his largest exhibition and the first show of abstract art of its size in Hungary. At a time of slow political 'normalisation', cultural politics actively re-established contacts with artists living abroad. While being an 'import' of international art (though no longer progressive), at the same time this was a reclamation of **Vasarely** as Hungarian, so that one can also speak of a cultural 'export'. While Hungarian avant-garde art (comprising abstract art) of that time was at best tolerated, **Vasarely's** exhibition was an immense public event attracting almost 90,000 visitors.

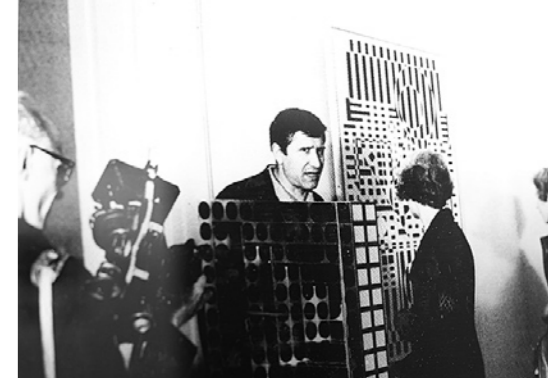
The second event that took place that evening was a one-person protest by artist **János Major**, who had a small sign in his pocket reading *Vasarely Go Home* that he showed only to friends while no one else was watching. ✕

### Vasarely Go Home a documentary film by Andreas Fogarasi about the double event of Victor Vasarely's retrospective at Műcsarnok Budapest



### and János Major's one person protest held at the exhibition opening on Saturday, October 18, 1969 forthcoming

Opening of Victor Vasarely exhibition  
at the City Gallery of Contemporary  
Art, Zagreb, 19.04.1968, COURTESY OF THE  
MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY ART, ZAGREB



▲ EXHIBITION VIEW: Andreas Fogarasi,  
*Vasarely Go Home (Announcement)*, 2010,  
PHOTO: IVAN KUARIĆ

“The process of influence, which is the ‘mission’ of the West is not always successful in its outcome in the East either. When Vasarely’s 1969 retrospective exhibition opened, filling all the rooms of the Budapest Kunsthalle, and ministers and cultural politicians welcomed the pope of nonfigurative art, **János Major**, one of the most talented (and most humble) members of the new avant-garde, appeared with a small ‘pocket-size portable sign’. Whenever he saw an acquaintance in the crowd, he took it out, cast a glance about to be sure the uninitiated were not watching, and held it up: *Vasarely go home!* Could a Western artist understand how little this gesture had to do with envy, aggression or a thirst for professional success, that it was dictated rather by loyalty and self-irony?”

ANDREAS FOGARASI

FROM GÉZA PERNECZKY HOGY VAN AVANTGARDE, HA NINCSEN – VAGY FORDÍTVÁ I-II., 1983, PRIVATE PUBLICATION, KÖLN, (HOW IS [THERE] AN AVANT-GARDE, IF THERE IS NOT – OR VICE-VERSA).

# guerilla art action group

Established 1969 in New York.

GAAG (Guerilla Art Action Group) was formed on 15 October 1969 in New York by Jean Toche, Jon Hendricks and Poppy Johnson. Virginia Toche and Joanne Stamerra were involved in many aspects of GAAG's work. Toche and Hendricks still work together occasionally, but the main period of the group's activity was from 1969 to 1976. Combining street theatre, happenings, political protests and collectivism, the actions of GAAG connect with other art collectives of the time, especially the Art Workers Coalition. ✕



EXHIBITION VIEW:  
Guerilla Art  
Action Group  
(GAAG), actions  
documentation  
from GAAG / The  
Guerilla Art Action  
Group, 1969-1976:  
A Selection,

PHOTOS: IVAN KUHARIĆ

**A CALL FOR THE IMMEDIATE RESIGNATION OF ALL THE ROCKEFELLERS FROM THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART**

There is a group of extremely wealthy people who are using art as a means of self-glorification and as a form of social acceptability. They use art as a disguise, a cover for their brutal involvement in all spheres of the war machine.

These people seek to oppress their guilt with gifts of blood money and donations of works of art to the Museum of Modern Art. We as artists feel that there is no moral justification whatsoever for the Museum of Modern Art to exist at all if it must rely solely on the continued acceptance of dirty money. By accepting soiled donations from these wealthy people, the museum is destroying the integrity of art. These people have been in actual control of the museum's policies since its founding. With this power they have been able to manipulate artists' ideas: sterile art of any form of social protest and indictment of the oppressive forces in society; and therefore render art totally irrelevant to the existing social crisis.

1. According to Ferdinand Lundberg in his book, *The Rich and the Super-Rich*, the Rockefellers own 65% of the Standard Oil Corporations. In 1966, according to Seymour M. Hersh in his book, *Chemical and Biological Warfare*, the Standard Oil Corporation of California—which is a special interest of David Rockefeller (Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Museum of Modern Art)—has one of its plants in United Technology Center (UTC) for the specific purpose of manufacturing napalm.
2. According to Lundberg, the Rockefeller brothers own 20% of the McDonnell Aircraft Corporation (manufacturers of the Phantom and Banshee jet fighters which were used in the Korean War). According to Hersh, the McDonnell Corporation has been deeply involved in chemical and biological warfare research.
3. According to George Thayer in his book, *The War Business*, the Chase Manhattan Bank (of which David Rockefeller is Chairman of the Board)—as well as the McDonnell Aircraft Corporation and North American Airlines (another Rockefeller interest)—are represented on the committee of the Defense Industry Advisory Council (DIAC) which serves as a liaison group between the domestic arms manufacturers and the International Logistics Negotiations (ILN) which reports directly to the International Society Affairs Division in the Pentagon.

Therefore we demand the immediate resignation of all the Rockefellers from the Board of Trustees of the Museum of Modern Art.

New York, November 10, 1969

Supported by:  
The Action Committee for  
Art Workers Coalition

GUERRILLA ART ACTION GROUP  
Sylvianne Jan Hendricks  
Poppy Johnson Joan Teshe

November 18, 1969. Sylvianne, the artist (center) and a member of A.W.C., participated in this action only. The Action Committee of the Art Workers Coalition put their stamp on the manifesto as a way to show their support. GAAG

**COMMUNIQUE**

Sylvianne, Poppy Johnson, Joan Teshe and Jan Hendricks entered the Museum of Modern Art of New York at 2:10 pm Tuesday, November 18, 1969. The women were dressed in street clothes and the men were suits and ties. Concealed inside their garments were two gallons of beef blood distributed in several plastic bags taped on their bodies. The artists casually walked to the center of the lobby, gathered around and suddenly threw to the floor a hundred copies of the demands of the Guerrilla Art Action Group of November 10, 1969.

They immediately started to rip at each other's clothes, yelling and screaming glibberish with an occasional coherent cry of "Nape." At the same time the artists burst the sacks of blood concealed under their clothes, creating explosions of blood from their bodies onto each other and the floor, staining the scattered demands.

A crowd, including three or four guards, gathered in a circle around the actions, watching silently and intently.

After a few minutes, the clothes were mostly ripped and blood was splashed all over the ground.

Still ripping at each other's clothes, the artists slowly sank to the floor. The shouting turned into moaning and groaning as the action changed from outward aggressive hostility into individual anguish. The artists writhed in the pool of blood, slowly pulling at their own clothes, emitting painful moans and the sound of heavy breathing, which slowly diminished to silence.

The artists rose together to their feet, and the crowd spontaneously applauded as if for a theatre piece. The artists paused a second, without looking at anybody, and together walked to the entrance door where they started to put their overcoats on over the bloodstained remnants of their clothes.

At that point a tall well-dressed man came up and in an unemotional way asked: "Is there a spokesman for this group?" Jan Hendricks said: "Do you have a copy of our demands?" The man said: "Yes but I haven't read it yet." The artists continued to put on their clothes, ignoring the man, and left the museum.

NOTE—According to one witness, about two minutes into the performance one of the guards was overheard to say: "I am calling the police!"

—According to another witness, two policemen arrived on the scene after the artists had left.

New York, November 18, 1969

GUERRILLA ART ACTION GROUP

Jan Hendricks

Poppy Johnson

Sylvianne

Joan Teshe



▲ Guerilla Art Action Group/GAAG, November 10/18, 1969: Demands for the resignation of the Rockefellers from the Museum of Modern Art and description of the action: 'blood bath'. Photo: Hui Kwa Kwong. Documentation from GAAG / *The Guerilla Art Action Group, 1969-1976: A Selection*, Printed Matter, New York, 1978





## TIBOR HAJAS

1946–1980. Lived in Budapest.

**Self-Fashion Show** ★ 1976, 14:09

COURTESY OF BÉLA BALÁZS STÚDIÓ /  
NATIONAL FILM ARCHIVE, BUDAPEST

Hajas's short 35 mm film *Öndivatbemutató* (*Self-Fashion Show*), produced at Béla Balázs Stúdió in 1976, suggests documentary methods before questioning them. On a busy square, passers-by are stopped and asked to look into the camera for one minute in a pose of their own choosing, to present themselves as 'models of their own fate'. The vulnerability and malleability of those approached becomes apparent and is highlighted by a soundtrack, which was added later. Images and sound form a montage: the 'protagonists' appear as a "collection of beetles, an anthropological manual" (Hajas) and are instructed by three speakers in how best to present themselves. ✖

FROM DÓRA HEGYI, "ART AND THE AMNESIAC SOCIETY: THE NEO-AVANT-GARDE REVISITED", IN *KONTAKT. THE ART COLLECTION OF ERSTE GROUP. CATALOGUE, MUMOK, VIENNA, 2006.*



▲ Tibor Hajas, *Self-Fashion Show*, 1976, film still, COURTESY OF BÉLA BALÁZS STÚDIÓ AND NATIONAL FILM ARCHIVE, BUDAPEST

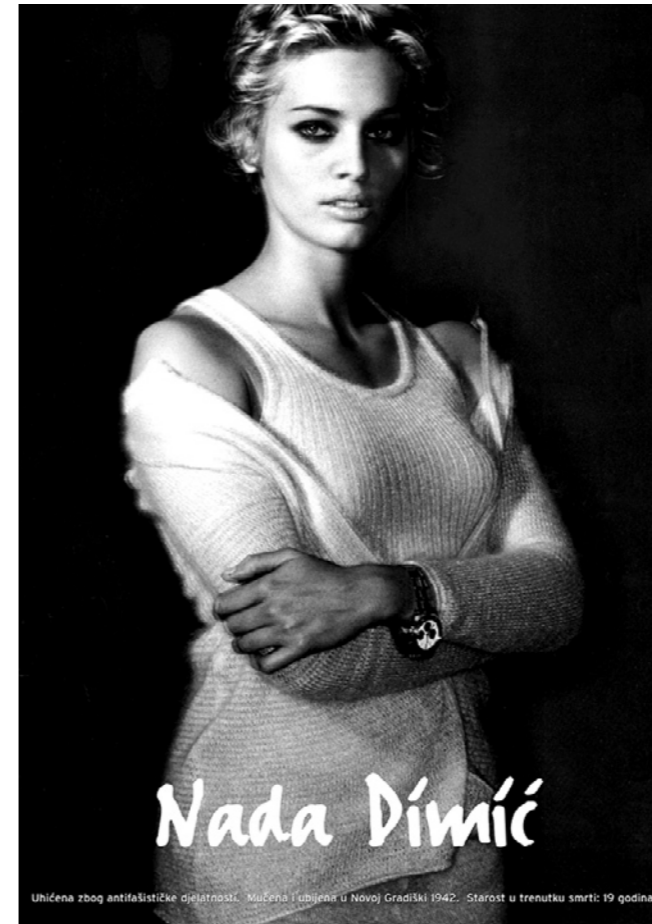
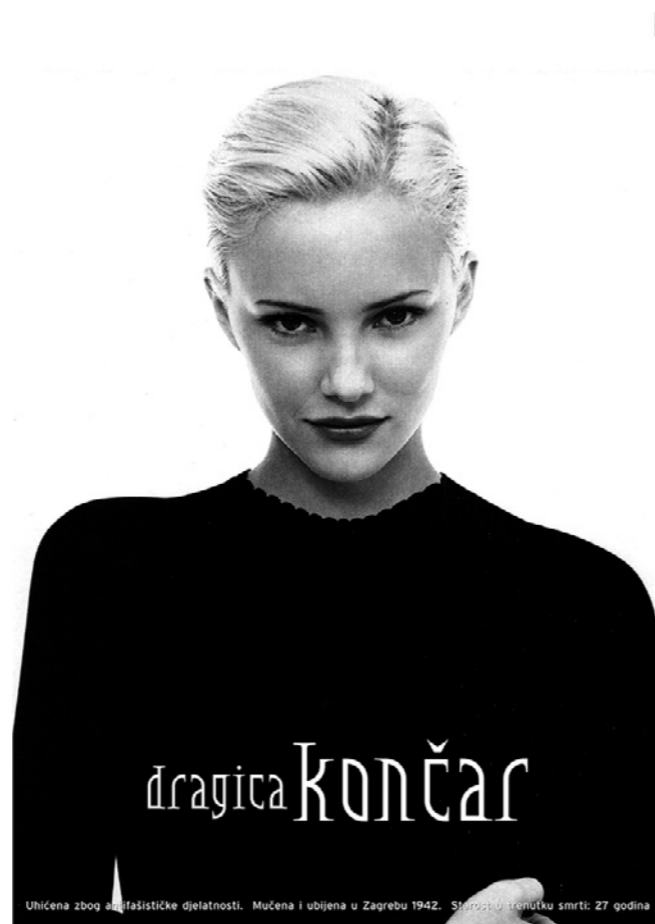
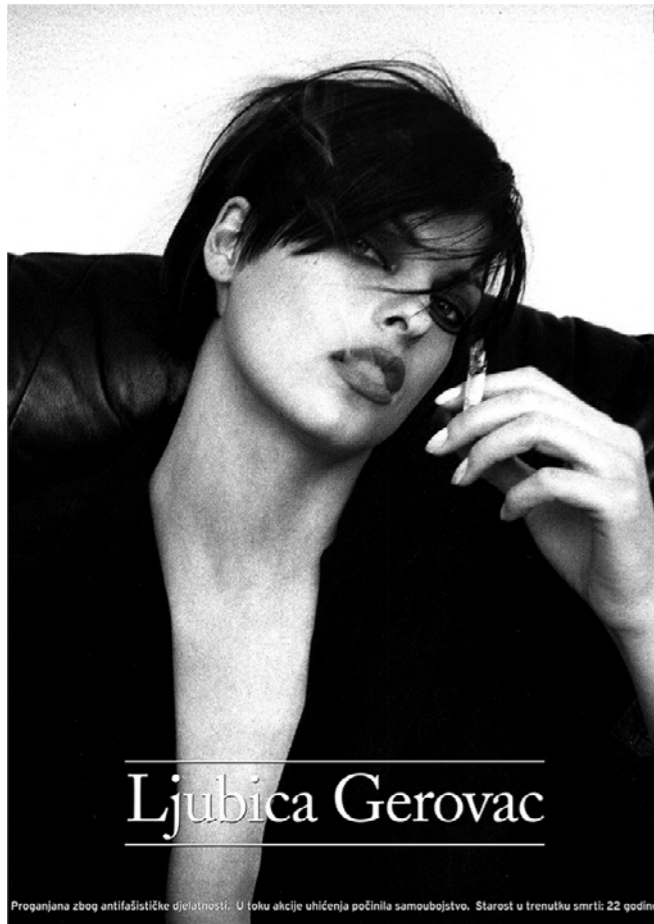
## SELF-FASHION SHOW

FILM SCRIPT

Now step forward.  
You can come closer.  
Stop. Now is alright.  
Look in my direction.  
Act as if you do not know how many are in front of you.  
Look a bit higher up.  
Make a half turn to the left.  
Try to find the position that suits you the most.  
Think that you are looking into a mirror.  
Correct your look.  
Decide who you would like to please.  
Try to make a nice impression.  
Be charming.  
Be a pleasure to the eyes.  
Smile.  
Add a hint of challenge to your smile.  
Be irresistible.  
Be memorable.  
Imagine you are beautiful.  
Imagine you are rich.  
Imagine you are healthy.  
Make some typical gesture.  
Say something characteristic.  
Make an event out of your appearance.  
Represent a lifestyle.  
... an age group.  
... a town.  
... an era.  
... a fate.  
... a personality.  
Realise the image you have of yourself.  
Become our pleasure.  
  
No good!  
You are not able to perform to those instructions which you have been given for your benefit.  
That is the way you would like to see yourself in the cinema?  
You are not enough of a character.  
You are not unique and not typical.  
You are not a meaningful enough sight.  
Not exciting enough.  
Thus we are obliged to take this unworthy picture of you.  
You are a natural born target.

Be aware of being watched but do not be disturbed by it.  
We ourselves are not disturbed by your presence.  
You are in control of the image that is being made of you.  
There are no hidden obstacles.  
You are taken neither by the situation, nor by the emotions.  
You are not forced to say anything that you would feel sorry for later on.  
We will not falsify your sentences.  
We will not put your gestures into a new context.  
We do not want others to draw any conclusions about your life, according to our taste.  
We are not investigating you or directing your thoughts to meet our areas of interest.  
You do not need to make us believe anything.  
You do not need to be ready for any task that we have prepared for you.  
You do not need to follow alien patterns.  
You are free.  
Free to do whatever you want.  
If you break the rules, there will not be any consequences.  
If you do not, you will not have any special advantage.  
There are no rules here.  
We do not want to find out the truth about you.  
We do not check your story.  
We do not expose you.  
We do not interfere.  
You are interesting to us as a phenomenon.  
You are the model of your own fate.  
You are an offer and a counter-offer at the same time.  
You are a star.  
We are making a star-picture of you.  
We will not tell you how to be properly represented by the picture.  
We will not tell you where to put your hands and feet.  
You are more experienced than we are.  
Because you know that everybody is using you as a model.  
People try to be similar to you.  
You are a genuine experience.  
The city is wearing your image.  
Thank you for being at our disposal.  
Thank you for the chance of being at your disposal.

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▲ **LJUBICA GEROVAC**  
 Charged with anti-fascist activities  
 While being captured she committed suicide  
 Age at the time of death: 22

▲ **DRAGICA KONČAR**  
 Charged with anti-fascist activities  
 Tortured and executed in Zagreb in 1942  
 Age at the time of execution: 27

▲ **NADA DIMIĆ**  
 Charged with anti-fascist activities  
 Tortured and executed in Nova Gradiška in 1942  
 Age at the time of execution: 19

▲ **SISTERS BAKOVIĆ**  
 Charged with anti-fascist activities  
 Tortured and executed in Zagreb in 1942  
 Age at the time of execution: 21 and 24

## Sanja IVEKOVIĆ

b. 1949. Lives & works in Zagreb.

Gen XX ★ 1997-2001

Since the early 1970s, **Sanja Iveković** has been interested in the political content of privacy from the perspective of feminist critique. Whether she is engaged in performances, videos, installations, actions in public spaces, media or activist projects, the artist transposes a wide range of personal themes into the public or media space, emphasising their political potential and

social impact. Her works explore the intersections of crisis points in regimes of representation, and the ideological positions from which they stem. *Gen XX* is a work initially published in 1998 in the Croatian magazines *Arkzin*, *Kruh i ruže* and *Zaposlena*, all of them originating from the independent, alternative scene that set out to critique nationalist politics and culture

in the 1990s. The work consists of textual interventions on advertising photos featuring famous fashion models. An image that is recognised as an advertisement by the average media consumer is supplemented by a text that introduces the model with the name of a national heroine from the anti-fascist struggle of World War II, along with her age at the time of her death. ✖

## andreja kulunčić

b. 1968. Lives & works in Zagreb.

**NAMA: 1908 Employees, 15 Department stores**

★ 2000

PHOTO: Mare Milin

STYLING: Robert Sever

MAKEUP: Saša Joković

DESIGN: Rutta

DOCUMENTATION: Ivo Martinović & Mare Milin

EMPLOYEES OF NAMA DEPARTMENT STORE:

Branka Stanić

Biserka Kanenarić

Barbara Kovačević



▲▲  
EXHIBITION VIEW:  
Andreja Kulunčić,  
NAMA: 1908 Employees,  
15 Department stores,  
2000, PHOTO: IVAN KUHARIĆ

◀ Andreja  
Kulunčić, NAMA:  
1908 Employees,  
15 Department  
stores, 2000,  
detail



Andreja Kulunčić realised the city-lights project **NAMA: 1908 employees, 15 department stores** as part of the exhibition *What, how & for whom, on the occasion of the 152nd anniversary of the Communist Manifesto* curated by WHW (Croatian Association of Artists, Zagreb, 2000). The project was installed at various city-lights locations in the city centre before and after the exhibition. *NAMA (Peoples Magazine)* was once an established chain of department stores that for decades tried to satisfy the shopping appetites of socialist workers, and whose glorious story ended in bankruptcy in the late 1990s. By the beginning of the twenty-first century, these store locations, which

were condemned to insolvency by the country's economic development, had been in the same paradoxical situation for several years: they practically ceased all activity, but were kept open by the employees who still occupy them. Based on the resources, values and locations of the advertisements, a public debate was initiated concerning the economic transition of Croatia. The project works as an appeal to solidarity, which was put at risk by the market economy and a process of transition in which the state lost its status as the political-administrative representative of solidarity based on work, and a new civil-social form of power based on private property was established. ✘

## DAVID MALJKOVIĆ

b. 1973. Lives & works in Zagreb.

*Images With Their Own Shadows* ★ 2010

David Maljković's works confront us with forgotten or 'invisible' heritage, or heritage that is not perceived as valuable in the present moment. The series of collages evokes works by the Croatian painter and architect **Vjenceslav Richter** (born 1917, died 2002) who was also a member of **EXAT 51**, a group of artists active in Zagreb from 1950 to 1956. The group proposed to abolish the borders between high and applied art, emphasising the collective and experimental aspects of artistic practice.

In *Images With Their Own Shadows*, Maljković uses fragments of the list of exhibits from a 1970 monograph on Richter's work written by art historian **Vera Horvat Pintarić**. Whereas previous collages used motifs from Yugoslav modernism, in this series Maljković is deliberately using signifiers devoid of any visual reference in order to thematise the lack of an optimistic and progressive political and artistic project at the present time.

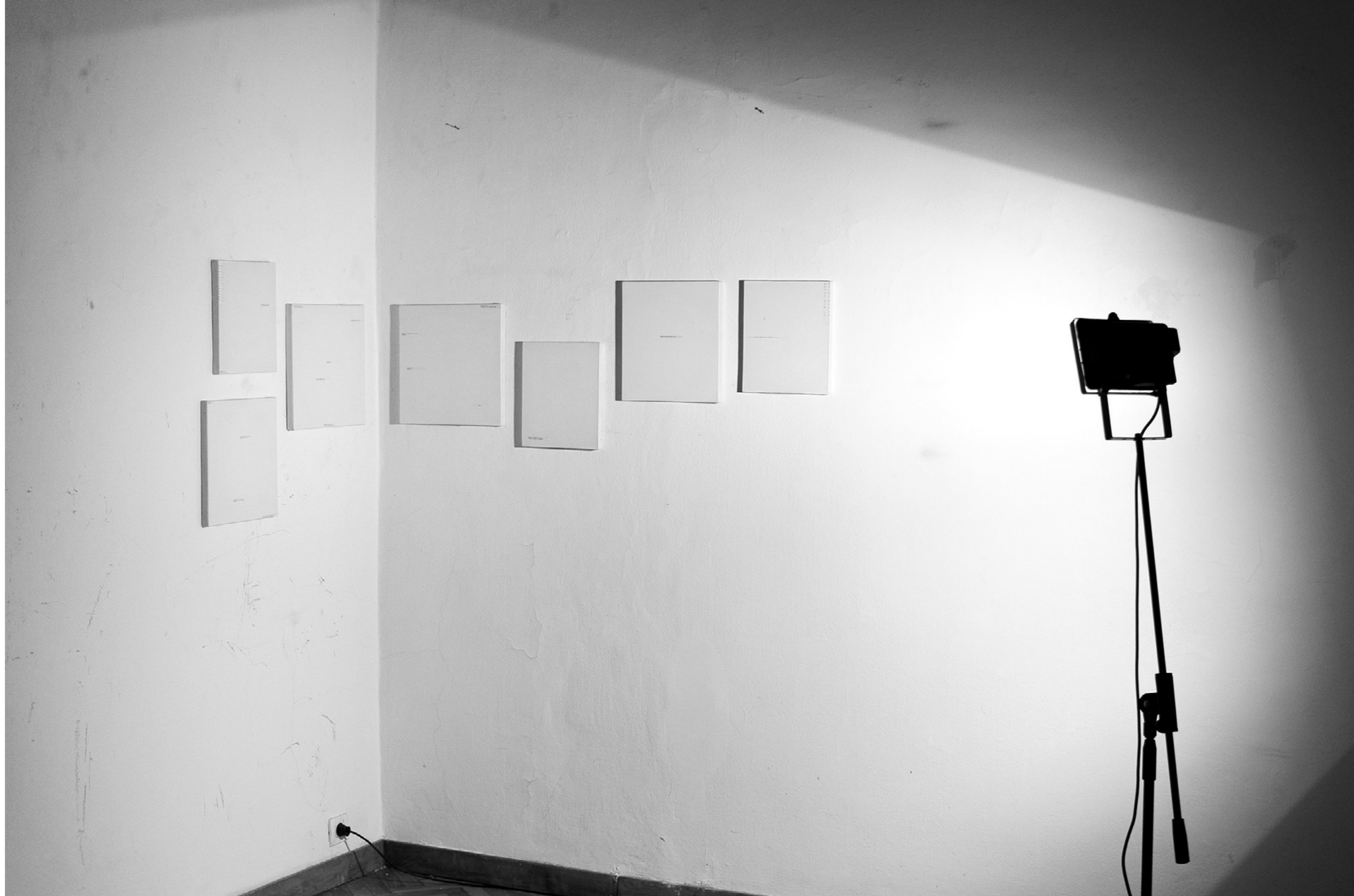
Although they refer to the past, Maljković's works are not concerned with nostalgia, but the possibility of looking at the past with sober eyes, to reassess its potential for the present. ✘

EXHIBITION VIEW:

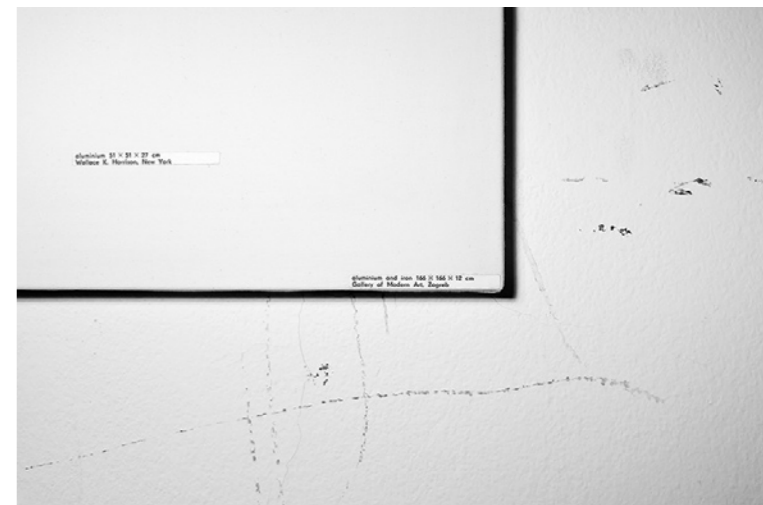
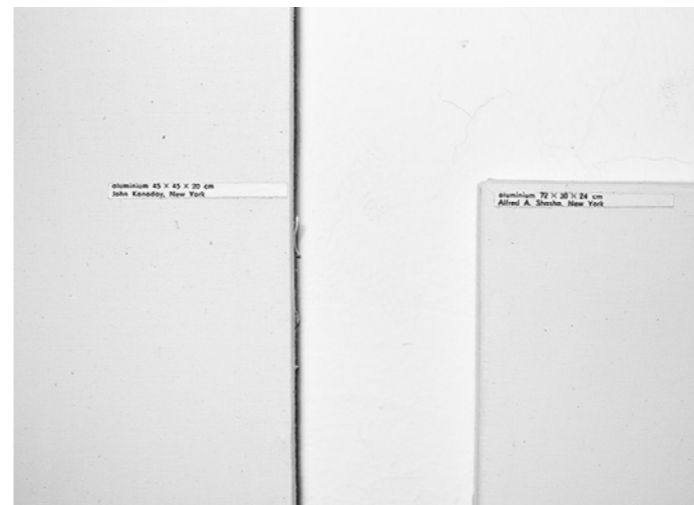
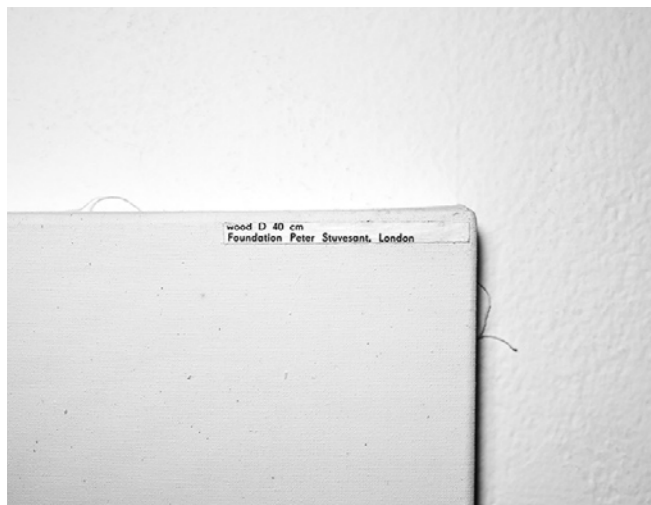
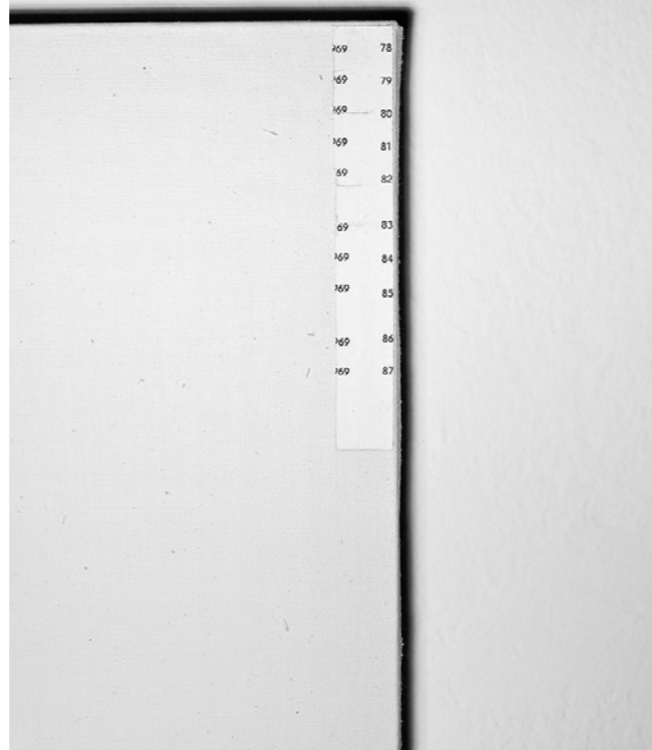
David Maljković,

*Images With Their Own Shadows*, 2010,

PHOTO: IVAN KUHARIĆ



DETAILS: David Maljković, *Images With Their Own Shadows*, 2010, PHOTO: IVAN KUHARIĆ



## DIMITRIJE BAŠIČEVIĆ MANGELOS

1921-1987. Lived in Zagreb.

**American poet Gertrude Stein often used to remind Picasso** ★ c. 1967-1972

**Awaiting resurrection of the dead** ★ 1964

**Energy, memory, la dilemma** ★ 1977-1978

**Jahrensbuch** ★ 1970 ab.

**La paysages des graphicons** ★ 1956

**Manifesto on thinking N° 1** ★ c. 1977-1978

**Manifesto on photography N° 4** ★ c. 1977-1978

**Negacion de la peinture** ★ m. 5 (1951-1956)

**Negacion de la peinture** ★ m. 5 (1951-1956)

**Negacion de la peinture** ★ m. 5 (1951-1956)

**Non stories-2** ★ 1964

**No stories 3** ★ 1964

**Recently...** ★ c. 1967-1972

**Shid-theory (no art)** ★ 1978

ALL COURTESY OF ZDENKA BAŠIČEVIĆ

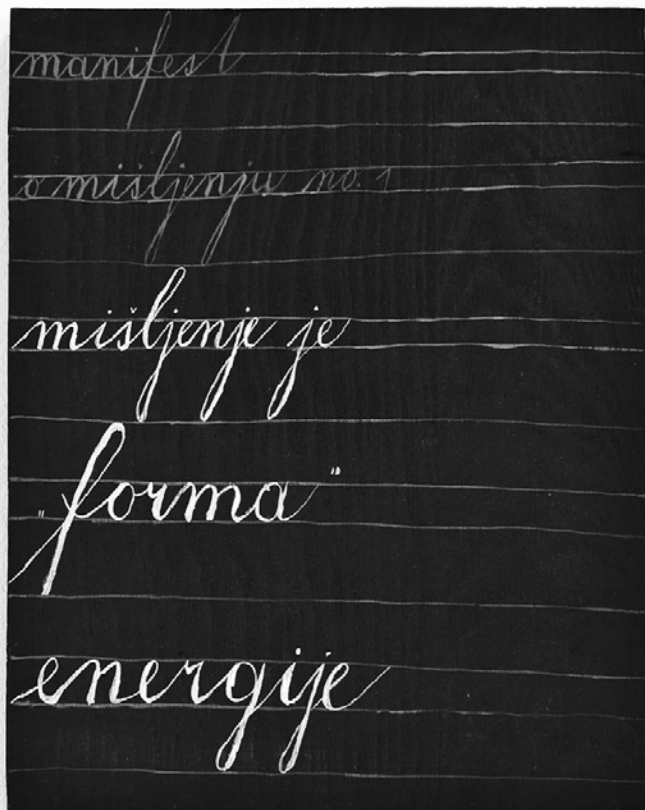


**Dimitrije Bašičević Mangelos** was an artist, art historian, critic and curator at the Zagreb City Gallery of Contemporary Art (now the Museum of Contemporary Art, Zagreb). He was a member of the **Gorgona** group (active in Zagreb from 1959 to 1966). **Mangelos'** oeuvre, according to later analysis, starts in the post-war period with the groups of works: *Paysages de la mort*, *Paysages de la guerre*, *Paysages*, *Tabula Rasa* (black and white monochrome surfaces with text written underneath), which he used to express a state of oblivion and the setting for a new beginning. Using **Gorgona's** anti-art position, in the series *Pythagoras*, *Anti-peinture*, and *Abecede*, **Mangelos** denied painting, instead accentuating art's rational aspects. He later wrote ideas, poetry (*No-stories*) and manifestos in a palette of black, red and white, using calligraphy between drawn lines, and a hybrid form of writing and painting in notebooks, on wooden boards and globes. Texts were a specific form for expressing highly subjective arguments dominated by the theory of the 'machine civilisation' and 'functional thought' with which he affirmed his theories about the development of society and the non-development of art, i.e., about the crisis and death of art, explaining this with the rift between two civilisations: the 'handmade' and the 'machine', the former being based on the 'old, naïve and metaphoric' and the latter on 'functional thought'. ✖

BRANKA STIPANČIĆ

◀ EXHIBITION VIEW: Dimitrije Bašičević Mangelos, *American poet Gertrude Stein often used to remind Picasso*, c. 1967-1972, PHOTO: IVAN KUHARIĆ

Dimitrije Bašičević Mangelos  
**Manifestos, 1978**



▲ Mangelos, *Manifesto on thinking* №1, c. 1977-78

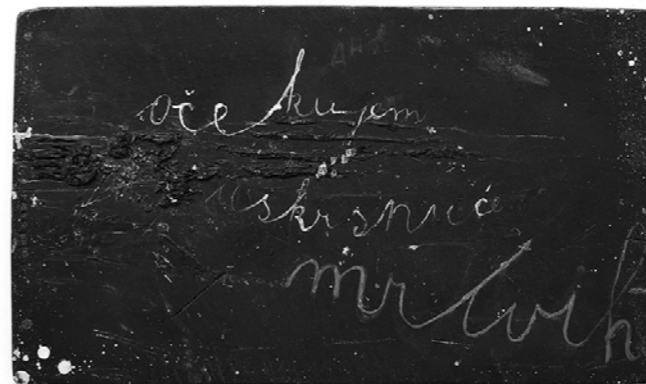
**manifesto of manifesto**

dear friends  
 dear fiends  
 this is not a manifest claim that the experiments carried out over the years were entirely successful because they were not but that another route has been discovered instead of following the line of meaning the thinking process proceeds along the line of function corresponding to other processes of life. this is the framework for my manifestos.

the world is not only changing it has changed. we are in the second century of the second civilization. the machine age. the social use of the machine has put an end to the civilization of manual work and to all the social phenomena rooted in manual work.

by changing the character of work the world changes its way of thinking. the revolution of thinking has the character of a long-term evolution. In the course of this process the previous artistic or naïve thought has integrated itself into the process of application with another one based on the principles of mechanical work.

civilization is practically evolving into a cultural organization of the interplanetary kind with uniform mechanical production. and consequently with uniform types of social superstructure based on the principle of social functionality. Instead of emotionally structured units a type of social unit it formed, which thinks functionally.



**manifesto on genius**

there is no such thing as genius what in naïve thinking is called genius is just a worker who invested tens of thousands of hours more in his specialized work than a routine worker at the same task.

**manifesto on aesthetic**

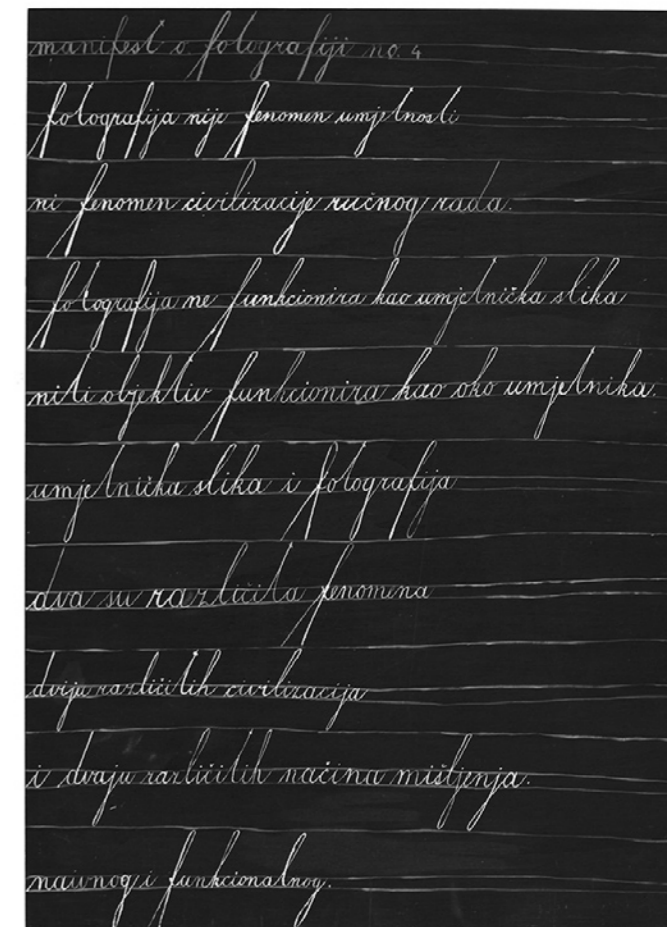
aesthetic feelings were never relevant, let alone decisive, in the production of art. primary feelings were relevant. an aesthetic approach to a work of art is therefore only one of many possible wrong approaches.

FROM DIMITRIJE BAŠIČEVIĆ MANGELOS, *MANIFESTOS*, 1978, OFFSET ON PAPER, 26 SHEETS PUBLISHED ON THE OCCASION OF THE EXHIBITION AT &TD, ZAGREB ARTIST'S EDITION, TWO COPIES, ONE WITH THE COVER PAINTED, PLUS INVITATION CARD

TRANSLATED FROM THE CROATIAN BY MAJA ŠOLJAN. ENGLISH TRANSLATION ORIGINALLY PUBLISHED IN MANGELOS NOS. 1 TO 9 ½, EDITED BY BRANKA STIPANČIĆ (PORTO: FUNDAÇÃO DE SERRALVES, 2003) ON THE OCCASION OF THE EXHIBITION MANGELOS Nº 1 TO 9 ½, ORGANISED BY THE MUSEU DE ARTE CONTEMPORÂNEA DE SERRALVES, PORTO AND CO-PRODUCED BY NEU GALERIE AM LANDESMUSEUM JOANNEUM, GRAZ; FUNDACIÓ ANTONI TÀPIES, BARCELONA; AND KUNSTHALLE FRIDERICIANUM, KASSEL IN 2003-2004.

◀ Mangelos, *Awaiting Resurrection of the Dead*, 1964

▼ Mangelos, *Manifesto on Photography* №4, c. 1977-78

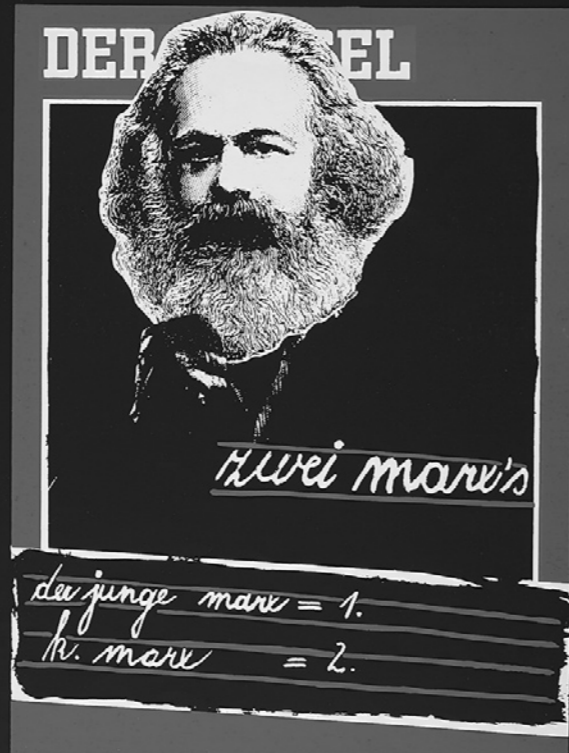




mangelos no. 9

no art

shid-theory



~~marx  
van gogh  
krleza  
mao  
rimbaud  
stalin  
mangelos~~

=

*two marxes  
four van goggs  
two krlezas  
two maos  
two rimbouds  
two stalins  
nine mangelos's*

manifest  
šidexi

često se citiraju "dva"marxa"tri"vaogoga  
"više"picassa itd.  
time se ukazuje na znatne razlike  
između ranih i kasnih faza autora.  
stavovi ranih prema kasnim fazaama  
mnogo se razlikuju, do suprotnosti.  
kao da potiču od različitih jedinki.

objašnjenje te pojave je jednostavno.  
radi se o sama različitim subjektima  
u istoj pravnoj osobi.  
materijalna pretpostavka diferenciranja  
je totalna promjena ćelija u organizmu.  
ćelije se izmjenjuju svakih sedam godina.

ukoliko su informacije o fiziologiji ~~poznate~~  
koje sam pokupio u šidexoj školi - pouzdane  
bilo bi devetipol mangelosa.

mangelos no.1 ... 1921 & 1928  
mangelos no.2 ... 1928 - 1935  
mangelos no.3 ... 1935 - 1942  
mangelos no.4 ... 1942 - 1949  
mangelos no.5 ... 1949 - 1956  
mangelos no.6 ... 1956 - 1963  
mangelos no.7 ... 1963 - 1970  
mangelos no.8 ... 1970 - 1977  
mangelos no.9 ... 1977 - 1984 (ukoliko su toč-  
mangelos no.9 1/2 .1984 - 1987 na izračunavan-  
nja)  
1933-šid - 1987, les champs du dernier goulag

▲ Mangelos, *Shid-theory (no art)*, 1978



## VLADO MARTEK

b. 1951. Lives & works in Zagreb.

**Beware of artist** ★ (1978)/2007

**Beware of the Museum of Contemporary Art** ★ 2005

**Beware of the metaphoric** ★ 2008

**Beware of museum** ★ 2005

**Beware of stars** ★ 2005

**Can you look sparrows in the eyes, I wonder at the doorstep of the Museum of Contemporary Art** ★ 2009

**Either the museum or the stars** ★ 2005

**I want to be responsible to the Museum of Contemporary Art** ★ 2000

**Museums are sad** ★ 2008

**Star Family** ★ 2010

**Untitled** ★ 2010

◀ Vlado Martek, *Beware of the MSU (Museum of Contemporary Art)*, 2005

PAZI  
IMPLICITNO  
DJELO

▲ *Beware of the implicit (art)work*, 2005

PAZI  
OŠTAR  
MUZEJ

▲ *Beware of the museum*, 2005

PAZI  
METAFORIČNO

▲ *Beware of the metaphoric*, 2008

HOĆU  
BITI  
ODGOVORAN  
PREMA  
MUZEJU SUVREMENE  
UMJETNOSTI  
U ZAGREBU

▲ *I want to be responsible to the Museum of Contemporary Art*, 2000

Vlado Martek zastupa ideju da je svijeta umjetnosti - svijet razmjene. Takvo nešto ubacuje dilemu ili dvije: kako se pripremiti odnosno, kako percipirati svoju ulogu, svoju umjetnost, djelo i djelovanje, te kako kritiku, ironiju uskladiti sa samokritikom, samoironijom. Što radi dijete konceptualizma? Kroz šarene forme daje naslutiti stalni impuls utopije. On ne može zaustaviti umjetnost u svome idealizmu. Praksa je poigravanja sa granicama umjetnosti i života. Simptomi. Vidi se govor, retorika imperetiva jednog idealista: Čitaj ... Paži... Jedi...., Izaberi ... Politički i društveni simboli u službi stava: NEĆU

Umjetnost kao zamišljeni i izborni teritorij slobode. Autor je nestalan jer se podvrgava alkemijskoj mijeni. Umjetnost je inscenirani rastanak o nje. Umjetnost sama sebi svjedok.

Definitivno bolje (ne više) znaju od eksperata. Pa ako su još skloni romantici, susižu svoje želje i shvaćaju dualnu potku svijeta sve se sklapa prividno netrag u početnu točku. (Po Eliotu: mari i ne mari) Jadno je svako inzistiranje na sredstvima. Sve su stvari i pojave više ozbiljne nego ih se drži takvima, ali su i nestalnije nego li ih se tretira. Umjetnost je sasvim blizu metafizike, no dobro - vlada šarenilo a la "funny and short". Martek, svaštar u umjetnosti (pjesme, pred-pjesme, slike, skulpture, ambijenti, grafiti, akcije, ertanje, tekstovi) otkriva individualnost kao ideju umjetnosti, sa svim reperkusijama toga stava i pozicije. Djeca konceptualizma u pustinji autoreferencijalnog. Svaki umjetnik je predek ideala. Mnogo motiva, mnogo ideograma - par ideja, ključnih: slobode, individualnog, zajedništva (nekadašnje: bratstvo) uklijevanje dolaska u svijet umjetnosti (predpoezija ...) donosi disperzno, raznovrsno djelo i raznovrsnu komunikaciju/razmjenu. Gdje je publici zadnja stanica? Sigurno ne umjetnost koju konzumira, možda je ona - bezgraničnost (kako za dobro tako i za loše.).

Martek

Vlado Martek stands for the idea that the art world is a world of exchange. Such an attitude introduces one or two dilemmas: how to prepare or how to perceive one's own role, one's own art, work and activity, and how to align criticism and irony with self-criticism and self-irony. What does a child of conceptualism do? Through colourful forms he gives promise to the constant utopian impulse. He cannot halt the art and its idealism. The practice is in playing with the boundaries between art and life. Symptoms. There is speech, the rhetoric of imperatives of an idealist: *Read... Be alert... Eat..., Choose...* Political and social symbols in the service of the attitude: *I WILL NOT*

Art as an imagined and secured territory of freedom. The author is ephemeral as he subjects himself to alchemical change. Art is a staged parting from art. Art as its own witness.

They definitely know better (not more) than the experts. And if they are still inclined to romanticism, they draw close to their desires and understand the dual fabric of the world; everything apparently folds up to the starting point. (According to Eliot: care and do not care). Every insistence on the means is pitiful. All things and phenomena are more serious than they are considered to be, but are also more ephemeral than they are treated. Art is very close to metaphysics - well, what prevails is hodgepodge à la "funny and short". Martek, an art generalist (poems, pre-poems, paintings, sculptures, ambients, graffiti, actions, drawings, texts) reveals individuality as the idea of art, with all the repercussions suggested by such an attitude and position. Children of conceptualism in the desert of the self-referential. Every artist is an 'ancestor' of ideals. Many motifs, many ideograms - a few ideas, the crucial ones: freedom, individuality, community (formerly: brotherhood). Hesitation in entering the world of art (pre-poetry...) brings dispersal, heterogeneous work and a heterogeneous communication/exchange. Where is the last station for the audience? Surely not the art it consumes; maybe it is without boundaries (both for the good and the bad).

MARTEK, 2010



## PIET MONDRIAN

1912–1944.

*Composition in red, blue and yellow* ★ 1983

We were informed that there was an original Mondrian in Belgrade, at the People's Museum, and we managed to verify that information through some people we knew. And indeed, the painting was in a cellar depot. When the Dutch royal family visited the Karageorgevich in 1932, knowing that Prince Paul was a renowned art collector, they brought him as a present a Mondrian and a drawing by Van Gogh. The Van Gogh was exhibited, but the Mondrian was stored away. With Božo Beck's help, the City Gallery of Contemporary Art decided to borrow the Mondrian and make a serigraph. The painting arrived in a box, packed in plain brown paper, by regular mail. By mail! We were totally shocked. We immediately

started negotiating as to who would take it back, someone who wouldn't fall asleep! It was hanging here in my apartment, on this wall, for two months. Then we printed a serigraph and translated Sandberg's text that had been published in Paris, at Denise René's gallery, with her approval. Vera Horvat Pintarić wrote another text and that is how we created the portfolio. That painting by Mondrian and the misunderstandings around it motivated us to prepare the didactic exhibition on abstract art.

FROM WHW'S INTERVIEW WITH IVAN PICELJ IN *POLITICAL PRACTICES OF (POST-YUGOSLAV) ART, EXHIBITION CATALOGUE, BELGRADE, 2010.*

▲ Goran Đorđević,  
*How to Copy Mondrian*, public demonstration, Narodni muzej, Belgrade, 1983

# WALTER BENJAMIN MONDRIAN 1963-1996

Ladies and gentlemen, friends and colleagues, The title of my lecture tonight concerns works by Piet Mondrian, which originate from 1963 to 1996, at least as far as we can ascertain on the basis of the dating of the pictures themselves. As you can see, these works are exhibited here behind me. What we have are seven paintings characteristic of one of the most important artists of this century, an artist whose very name, rightly or wrongly, has become synonymous with abstract art. However, before we go on to an analysis of these pictures, I think it would be useful to remind ourselves of what Mondrian himself had to say about his works:

"Among various possible directions," says Mondrian, "there are only two basic directions possible: horizontal and vertical. Among various possible light values, there are only three basic colours possible: white, grey and black". Explaining how he arrived at these pictures, he says:

"In the first pictures the space was the background. I began by marking out the forms in detail: verticals and horizontals became rectangles. They still appeared as forms separated from the background, and the colour was still unclear. Feeling a lack of unity, I brought the rectangles closer; the space became white, black or grey; the form became red, blue or yellow. Linking up the rectangles corresponded to the expansion of the verticals and horizontals on the whole composition. It was clear that the rectangles, like all individual forms, stood out, and that therefore they had to be neutralised in respect to the composition. However, the rectangles are never an end in themselves but the logical consequence of lines continued into the space that determines them; they arise spontaneously from the intersection of vertical and horizontal lines. Otherwise the rectangles, if they are applied on their own, without adding some other form, do not appear as individual forms, because their contrast with the other forms does in fact cause a difference. Later, with the aim of cancelling the accentuation of the designs and rectangles, I abolished

colour and emphasised the border lines, intersecting them one over the other. Not only were the designs obliterated and cancelled, their relationship became more active. The result is an increase in expressive dynamism. Even in this case too, I experienced how important it is to remove individual forms, which is the first preparation for universal construction. By continuing the process of abstraction, in which the large square predominates, two processes, which will completely mature, can be perceived: the first is the harmonious division of the surface, which is arrived at by reducing the whole surface to two succinct images (squares, horizontal and verticals rectangles), which arise from extending the peripheral lines; the other is the ever-increasing importance of lines as the main factor in the picture. Thus the main and structural role of the line is emphasized, its function is no longer to border a geometrical image, which is no longer closed but appears in the form of open spacious parts. And although it is negative, the background once again gains importance, it will almost always be uniformly white or grey as a chromatic definition of the space."

Well, that's what Mondrian says about his own pictures. At first glance, it looks as though it wouldn't be possible to add anything to this explanation. But is this in fact the case?

The first thing that could appear extremely unusual to us is the very presence of these paintings. You might well be asking: how come we have Mondrian's works here in this lecture hall? How is it possible to have so many Mondrian paintings in one place in this city? I'm sure that it seems almost unbelievable to the majority of you. If we even believed for a moment that by some miracle it was possible to obtain original works by Mondrian for this occasion, we would soon be puzzled by the data we find on the pictures themselves. If you take a careful look at them, you can see that they really do carry Mondrian's signature, but that the dating seems a lit-

tle strange to say the least. Namely, these pictures are dated with the numbers 63, 79, 83, 86, 92, 96. This means that the oldest picture was done in 1963! So what now? Because we know that **Mondrian** lived from 1872 to 1944, we can simply conclude that what we have in front of us are not original pictures. Even if we assume that for some reasons unknown to us, **Mondrian** himself dated or post-dated his pictures in this way, it would be possible to confirm by scientific analysis that these paintings originate after **Mondrian's** death. And that means we could conclude that what we have in front of us cannot be pictures painted by **Piet Mondrian**. A new question therefore arises: who is the real author of these pictures? We could, for example, assume that these are originals made in the style of **Mondrian**, by some contemporary painter who is unknown to us. But if one takes a look at the literature, and you can take my word for this, one can establish that each of these pictures represents a more or less faithful copy of a **Mondrian** original. Thus these two, for example, are copies of a **Mondrian** in the National Museum in Belgrade. And so, we can now assert with certainty that in front of us are copies of **Mondrian** paintings done by some unknown author. But we must also not lose sight of the possibility that these copies could have been made by several authors. In view of the fact that the pictures are signed only with **Mondrian's** initials and that there is no other data on them that could point to their real author, we can conclude that the answer to the question who is the author of these copies, remains unknown. If we can't determine who has done them, isn't it at least possible to answer the question: when did these pictures originate?

We have seen that the signature on these pictures does not necessarily point to the real author and therefore this might be the reason why the dates, that is, the years on them do not necessarily indicate the actual date of origin. If the years 1963 or 1979 might still seem possible as dates of origin, what can we say about these two pictures which are dated 1992 and 1996? I don't know if it makes sense to say that this picture originated in 1996, or perhaps it would be more correct to say that it will originate in 1996. It's already evident that the dating used on these pictures can't be taken as reliable data on the time of their origin. Thus we are left without an answer to the question: when did these pictures originate?

If we don't know who did these pictures and when, would it then be possible to find a satisfactory answer at least to the question of why they have been made. Yes, why did these pictures originate? We have already established, very cred-

ibly, that **Mondrian** himself did not do these paintings. On the other hand, we know that they correspond to pictures that **Mondrian** did paint during his lifetime. This means that the pictures in front of us are some kind of copy. But, why should someone copy **Mondrian**? We know that copying is not unknown in artistic tradition. Copying the great masters from the history of art was frequently a practical way for many artists and students of painting to acquire the skills of the craft. Thus for example, in the last century, copying was part of the syllabus at the Academie des Beaux Arts in Paris. Students regularly went to the Louvre where they gained the skill of painting by copying masterpieces. I'm sure that some of you even today have had the chance of seeing artists in some museum standing in front of a masterpiece, canvas on easel and palette in hand, trying to at least get close to its unreachable example. One can still somehow understand copying great masters of painting, but however could it occur to anyone that by copying these **Mondrian** compositions they would acquire artistic skills? I'd hardly believe it was possible. Apart from this, if we look carefully at these copies we will see that they don't radiate artistic perfection. Of course, this still doesn't mean that some less skilful painter, not to say dilettante, might not have tried to practice painting technique by copying **Mondrian**, but I assume that one would at least see some progress in the pictures. In this way, either the author of these pictures is completely untalented, or the reasons for the existence of the works must be looked for elsewhere. Although the first possibility should not be entirely excluded, we will assume at least for now that the acquisition of painterly perfection was not the reason for making these pictures. Secondly, I think that we can all understand that a reason for copying **Mondrian** pictures would be forgery. It's clear why. **Mondrian's** paintings have acquired such value today, that it might not be a bad idea to flog someone a copy instead of an original. However, as it is well known that copies made for the purpose of forgery can only be detected with difficulty through superficial analysis, it is clear why, on the basis of the dates of these pictures alone, we can freely dismiss this possibility. In addition, we have already ascertained that these aren't really such perfect copies as could serve as forgeries even without incorrect dating. So, if these pictures did not originate for the purpose of acquiring artistic skills, and were not made for the purpose of forgery, what then is the real reason for their creation? Copying pictures such as **Mondrian's**, in a way that clearly shows that they are copies, seems completely senseless. Especially

because we know that in modern art copying has not up to now been thought of as a particular virtue. Modern art does in fact insist on originality, authenticity, creativity...

Being a modern artist means being new, unrepeatable, different from the rest. And copying means working directly contrary to this. To say of some artist today that he reminds us just a little of some other author is equal to insulting him, let alone if it involves a question of direct copying. And that's completely understandable. Because copying really does represent an extremely uninventive procedure. First, there exists a painting which is chosen as the model. Then, within the limits of the possibility of the person who is copying, the formal characteristics of the model are repeated. In this way, we get a picture, which will be called a copy, while the model on which it was made is called an original. For pictures such as **Mondrian's** this isn't such a big problem. But why then were these pictures created? Isn't it in fact extremely illogical to make copies of such simple paintings and such a well-known artist as **Mondrian**? If I had to answer this question, my answer would be in the affirmative. Yes, it's illogical even to think of copying **Mondrian**. So what now?

It looks as though we've reached the end. The end of reason or the end of understanding. Because I don't know how it would be possible to talk sensibly about the results of such a senseless procedure... Or perhaps it is possible. Could we, for example, suppose that this very senselessness, this nonsense, is the sense of the creation of these pictures. However, I ask myself whether that solves anything. And is it then possible to say anything else about these pictures? Let's assume for a moment, as an exercise, that senselessness is indeed the cause of their creation. Let us just think what could then be the possible consequences. Take for example this picture. It's a copy of the **Mondrian** picture in the National Museum here in Belgrade. We can see it every day when the museum is open. I'm sure that many of you who've had the chance to see it will have noticed it differs quite a lot from the other works exhibited in the same room. Let us now suppose that this copy is exhibited in the same museum, but in a room that corresponds to the period when these pictures appeared

in public for the first time, because we have seen that we cannot rely on the dating of these pictures. This means that this picture would be displayed together with works from the 1980s.

And so, one nice, sunny day, we set out for the National museum. If by any chance the day isn't a Monday and we arrive at a time when the museum is open, then it's quite certain that we'll have a chance to look at its rich collection from prehistory to the present day. Among other things we can see some of the great names of modern art: **Monet**, **Gauguin**, **Renoir**, **Matisse**, **Picasso**, and of course we'll notice our **Mondrian**. And now, carried away by curiosity, we continue to follow (through a non-existent exhibition, at least as far as this museum is concerned), the dramatic developments and exciting changes in modern art in the last decades, and we fail to recognise, in the enthusiasm of our exploration, that we've suddenly arrived in a room in which are exhibited works of masters of the 1980s. And suddenly it seems to us that we've seen something familiar.

Believing that there's been some mistake, at first glance we reject the very thought that we have already seen the picture we are looking at.

We will think that the picture only seems familiar to us. In a state of doubt we go up to the picture, and there's the **Mondrian**! We rub our eyes in disbelief and take another look. It really is the work by **Mondrian**. And it's the very same one we saw several rooms ago, that is, several decades earlier. Still puzzled and still not believing our eyes we run back to check, and no matter how much we doubted our senses, we will see that the real **Mondrian** is nicely hanging in the room to which it belongs, firmly tied to its own epoch. Still puzzled, but now with a chill in our hearts, already not feeling quite as happy as we were before, we return with somewhat slower steps, forward through time, and with resignation, accept the fact that the second **Mondrian** is still there. And suddenly we feel the earth beginning to shake under our feet. We look quickly at the wall... and we see that it's shaking too. The thought flashes through our heads: an earthquake! We immediately realise how our beautiful edifice of history, change, progress, is being shaken from its foundations and is

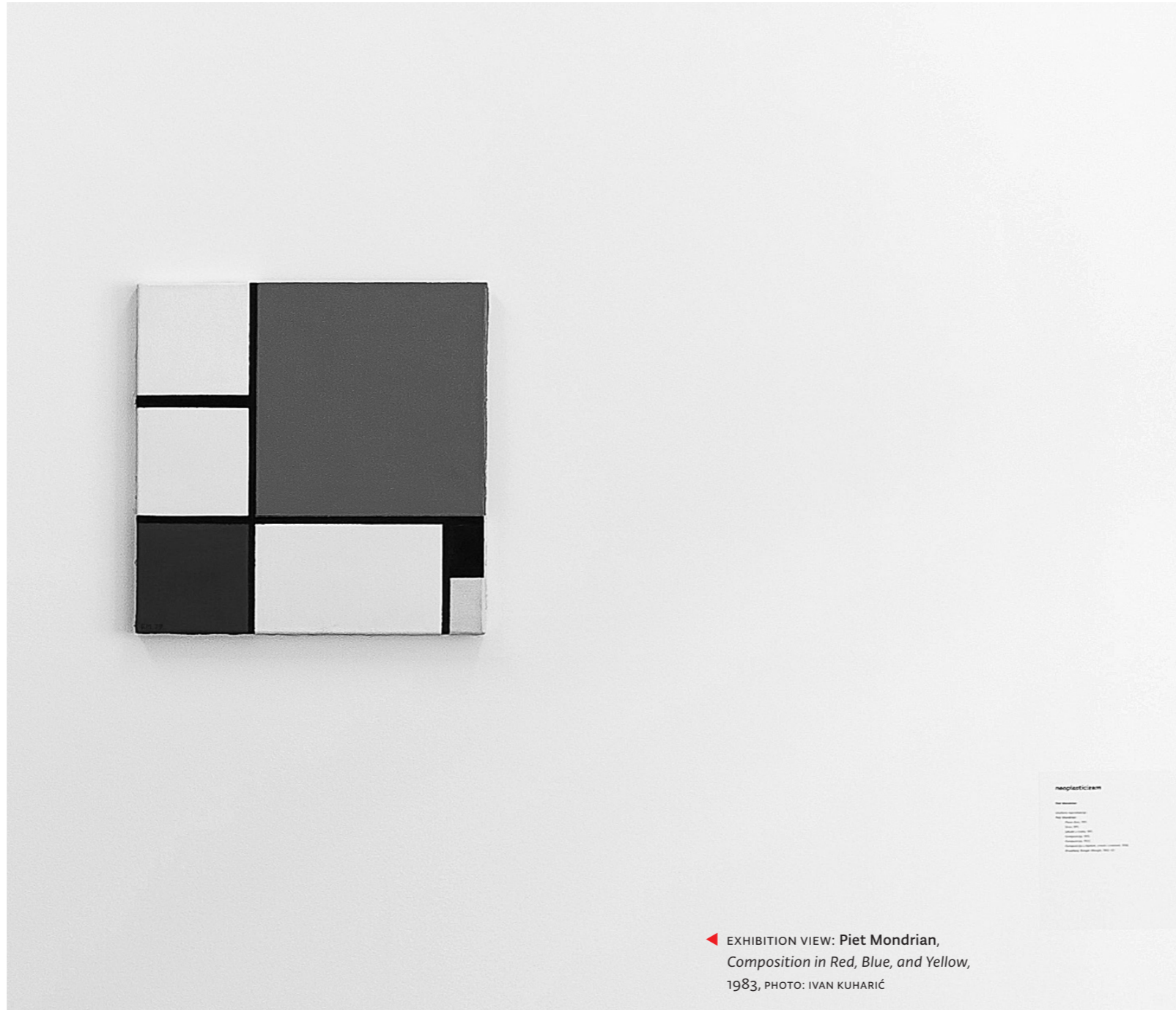


▲ Walter Benjamin: *Mondrian '63-'96*, lecture, TV Gallery, Belgrade, 1987

slowly but surely collapsing. With horror we watch paintings, sculptures, all those masterpieces of our civilisation crashing down together with the edifice. But what is happening with our picture? The second Mondrian picture? It is completely still, it practically hovers in its non-existent place as if it isn't touched by anything going on around it.

Well, that could be the consequence of such a senseless deed as copying Mondrian. However, we'll soon see that this isn't the only one. But let's continue our story. Let us assume that by chance we have survived this catastrophic earthquake and that also, by mere chance, we have saved the very two pictures that are of interest to us here. I'm sure you can guess which pictures these are! Of course, the real, original Mondrian and its now already legendary copy. We lift the original out of the ruins, shake off the plaster and the dust, then we take the copy, which we will not have to clean, for understandable reasons, and then we take them home and hang them up in our modest little room, one next the other. Still shaken by the previous dramatic events, we make a coffee, sit down on the floor, light a cigarette, and thus, thinking over everything that's happened, by some chance, almost absent-mindedly, our glance wanders to the wall where we've hung the pictures. And there, in an almost empty and half-dark room, on a wall which was once white, hang two Mondrians: an original and a copy. We'll not be at all surprised by their similarity. Formally, they are in fact the same picture. But we know that only one is an original. The other is of course a copy. The original is the painting that was done by Mondrian. It was created as a result of his interest in the problems of space, design, verticals, horizontals, primary colours, grey, black... yellow... red... And all this can be seen in the picture. Now we look at the copy, and everything found in it is the same as in the original. The same colours, the same structure...

But, we can assert with certainty that the unknown author of the copy was not concerned with horizontals, verticals, colours, background, when he made his picture. He was simply making a copy for reasons unknown to us. We have assumed that the only sensible reason for the creation of this picture is the senselessness of doing something like copying Mondrian. The object of his interest was only the copy and its relationship with the original. This means that in front of us we have two identical pictures, but behind them stand two completely different ideas. While in the original painting we can see what the idea behind it is, this can't be said of its copy, because on the copy we still only see Mondrian!



◀ EXHIBITION VIEW: Piet Mondrian,  
*Composition in Red, Blue, and Yellow*,  
1983, PHOTO: IVAN KUHARIĆ

This means that the copy contains both the idea of its model and its own idea, the idea of being a copy. Paradoxically, but it seems true, this results in the copy being multi-layered and more complex with regard to its meanings in relation to the original! And imagine, it almost doesn't differ from the original at all.

Perplexed by all these considerations, you don't even notice how much time has passed, the cigarette burnt out long ago, and your coffee's already got cold and you haven't even tried it. Really, it is simply unbelievable how two identical pictures can in fact be different. But that's not all. Let's come back to this lecture room and look at these two pictures. One is a copy of the Mondrian in the National Museum, which we've been talking about up to now. And this other one? You'll say that this is also a copy of the Mondrian in the National Museum. Perhaps it is, perhaps it isn't. Firstly, we don't know whether the same author did both copies. Perhaps these are two copies by two different authors. If this were so, what mutual relationship would exist between these two pictures? And what relation would they have towards the original? And what if the truth is quite different? If, let us say, the second author made a copy of the work by the first author. A copy of the copy. What is the relationship between these two pictures then? And what is the relationship of this second copy with the original? To be honest, I'm rather perplexed by all these questions. Even the so-called answers, which we've arrived at in this lecture, are only conditional answers, because they are based on assumptions and not on facts. The only true facts are these paintings, which stand in front of us. Such simple pictures and such complicated questions. We still don't know who the author of these pictures is, when they originated and what their meaning is. They rely neither on co-ordinates of time, nor on co-ordinates of identity, nor of meaning. They simply hover, and the only comprehensible sense of their existence which we can accept with certainty are these questions themselves.

Can we now imagine what good old Mondrian would have said about all of this?

Instead of "problematic understanding of art as a reflection of the uncertainty of the human soul", Mondrian has this to say about the new plastic art:

"It is characterised by a certainty which does not pose questions but offers answers. Man's consciousness clearly rejects the unconscious and expresses itself in art in a way which creates an equilibrium and thus precludes all questions." ✖

# FRANZ KAFKA: THE PAINTER

One December day in 1929, the Kollector decided he wanted to meet a painter called **Mondrian**. He drove to the address where the artist lived, in a New York suburb at the opposite end of town from the offices of the new Museum. This was a poor neighborhood. The houses were dark, the streets filled with sludge oozing about slowly on top of the melting snow. At the tenement where the painter lived, one half of its great double door stood open. Beneath the other half, in the masonry near the ground, was a gaping hole. Just as the Kollector approached, it issued a disgusting, steaming hot, red, yellow and blue fluid from which some rats fled to the nearby canal. The Kollector cast only a fleeting glance at all this. He wanted to finish here as quickly as possible. He would merely ask the painter a few searching questions and return at once to the bank. His work today would benefit should he have any luck at all on this visit. When he reached the third floor he had to slow down. He was quite out of breath, for each storey was disproportionately high. The painter was said to live quite close to the top, in the attic. The air was stifling; there was no well to these narrow stairs enclosed by blank walls. At rare intervals a very high window could be seen. Just as the Kollector paused to take a breath several young girls rushed out of a flat to laughingly race past him up the stairs. The Kollector slowly followed, catching up with one who had fallen behind. As they ascended together he asked her, "Does a painter called **Mondrian** live here?" The girl, who was slightly hunchbacked, seemed scarcely thirteen years old. She nudged him with her elbow and peered at him knowingly. Neither her youth nor her deformity had saved her from being prematurely debauched. She did not smile but stared unblinkingly at the Kollector with shrewd, bold eyes. The Kollector pretended not to have noticed.

"Do you know the painter **Mondrian**?"

She nodded. "What do you want him for?"

The Kollector thought he had a good chance to discover more about **Mondrian** while there was still time. "I want him to paint my portrait," he said.

"To paint your portrait?" she repeated, letting her jaw drop.

She then gave the Kollector a little slap, as if he had said something extraordinarily unexpected or stupid, and lifted her short skirt with both hands to race as fast as she could after the other girls whose shrieks were dying away in the distance. At the very next turn of the stairs the Kollector ran into all of them, waiting for him. Lining either side of the stairway they were squeezed against the walls, to leave room for the Kollector to pass, smoothing their skirts with their hands. All of their faces betrayed the same mixture of childishness and depravity, which had prompted them to force him to run the gauntlet between them. At the head of this line of girls, now enclosing the Kollector with shrieks of laughter stood the hunchback, ready to show him the way. Thanks to her, he made straight for the correct door. He had intended to mount the main stairs, but the girl had indicated a side stair branching off to **Mondrian's** dwelling. This stairway was extremely narrow, very long and straight. It could be easily surveyed, and stopped abruptly at **Mondrian's** door. In contrast to the stairway his door was brightly lit by a small fanlight angled away from it, and was unpainted. On it was scrawled the name '**Mondrian**' in red, yellow and blue sweeping brush-strokes. The Kollector and his escort were hardly more than halfway up the stairs when someone above, obviously disturbed by the clatter of so many feet, wedged open the door.

A man, wearing nothing but a nightshirt, appeared at the opening. "Oh!" he cried, when he saw the approaching mob, and promptly vanished. The hunchback clapped her hands with joy, the other girls crowding around the Kollector from behind to urge him on. They were

still gathering when the painter flung the door open and bowing deeply invited the Kollector to enter. Not one of the girls was allowed in, although they implored him, trying to enter by force when not given permission. The hunchback alone managed to slip under his outstretched arm, but he seized her by the skirt, whirling her once round in the air to set her down before the door among the other girls who were standing still although he was no longer guarding the threshold. The Kollector did not know what to make of all this. They seemed to all be on the friendliest terms. The girls outside of the door, craning their necks, shouted jocular remarks at the painter, which the Kollector did not understand. The painter was also laughing as he practically hurled the hunchback through the air. He then shut the door, bowed once more to the Kollector, extended his hand and said, "I'm the painter **Mondrian**." The Kollector pointed to the door shielding the whispering girls. "You seem to be a great favorite here," he said. "Oh, those brats!" responded the painter, trying unsuccessfully to button his nightshirt at the neck. He was barefooted and besides the nightshirt wore only a pair of wide legged red, yellow and blue linen trousers fastened by a belt. "Those brats are a real nuisance," he went on, as he stopped fiddling with his nightshirt – only because the top button had just fallen off. **Mondrian** fetched a chair and urged the Kollector to sit down. "Unlock this door," said the Kollector, tugging at the handle. He could tell by the resistance that the girls were hanging on the door handle from the outside. "Don't be bothered by the girls," said the painter, "You should



◀ NEP, *Kontakt & Mondrian, Art Always Has Its Consequences*, former building of the Museum of Contemporary Art, Zagreb, 2010

take this way out". He indicated the door behind the bed. The Kollector was perfectly willing.

He rushed towards the bed. But instead of opening the bedside door, the painter crawled under it to say from beneath the bed, "Wait just a minute. Wouldn't you like to see a picture or two? Perhaps

you might care to buy them?" **Mondrian** dragged a pile of unframed canvases from under the bed; they were so thickly covered with dust that when he blew some of it off the Kollector was almost blinded. He choked on the cloud that flew up. "Composition in red, blue and yellow," said the painter, handing the picture to the Kollector. A large red square was in the upper right corner, a small blue square was in the lower left corner, and a very small yellow rectangle was in the lower right corner, all surrounded by a white field. The fields were all edged by vertical and horizontal black lines. The large red square was surrounded by only two lines and thus had a tendency to expand rhythmically beyond the edge of the canvas. Particularly noteworthy was the signature: "P.M. '63," in the lower left corner. "Fine," said the Kollector, "I'll buy it." The Kollector's curtness was unthinking, so he was glad when the painter, instead of being offended, lifted another canvas from the floor. "Here's the companion picture," he said. It might have been intended as a companion picture, but there was not even the slightest difference between it and the other.

There were red and blue squares, black lines and white fields. Only the signature in the lower-left corner was different: "P.M. '79". But the Kollector did not bother

about that yet. “They’re fine compositions,” he said. “I’ll buy both of them and hang them in my office.”

“You seem to like the subject,” said the painter, extracting a third canvas. “By luck I have another study here.”

It was not merely a similar study; it was simply the same composition again. This time the signature was: “P. M. ‘93.”

The painter was apparently fully exploiting this opportunity to sell his old pictures. “I’ll take this one as well,” said the Collector. “How much for the three pictures?”

“We’ll settle that next time,” said the painter. “You’re in a hurry today. We can keep in touch with each other anyway. I may say that I’m very glad that you like these pictures. I’ll throw in all of the others that are under the bed as well. They’re all compositions. I’ve painted every one of them dozens of times. Some people won’t have anything to do with these subjects because they’re abstract, but there are always those like yourself who prefer abstract pictures.”

The Collector finally decided to ask the painter about the signatures. “What is the meaning of this?” he said, pointing at the lower-left corner of one of the paintings.

“Oh! Those are just my initials. P. M. stands for Piet Mondrian,” said the painter proudly. The Collector was not yet satisfied. He already expected such a response to the letters, but the numbers were what bothered him. “I understand that, but what about the numbers,” he asked nervously.

“What numbers? Of course, the numbers!” said the painter with understanding. “These are simply the years when the paintings were made.”

The Collector was confused again. “What do you mean? Are you trying to tell me that this painting was made in 1896? And this one in 1879, and this one even in 1863?”

“Of course not,” said Mondrian. “These numbers stand for 1963, 1979 and 1996. You see, I’m a futurist. These

paintings belong to Abstract Futurism. It is a movement which...”

The Collector was now absolutely confused but he had no mind to listen to the professional pronouncements of the struggling painter. “Wrap the pictures up,” he cried, interrupting Mondrian’s garrulity, “My assistant will call tomorrow to fetch them.”

“That isn’t necessary,” said the painter. “I think I can find someone to take them with you now.” He reached over the bed to unlock the door. “Don’t be afraid to step on the bed,” he said. “Everybody who comes here does.”

The Collector stepped over the bed, the painter following him with the pictures. They soon found a Curator, and the painter issued instructions for him to accompany the Collector to carry the pictures. The Collector tottered more than walked, keeping his handkerchief pressed to his mouth. They had almost reached the exit when the girls rushed to meet them, not sparing the Collector another encounter. The girls had obviously seen the second studio door opening and had made a detour at full speed. “I can’t escort you any further,” cried the painter laughingly, as the girls surrounded him. “Till our next meeting. Don’t take too long to think it over!”

The Collector did not look back. When he reached the street he hailed the first cab. He must get rid of the Curator, whose gold buttons offended his eyes, even though they seemed to escape everyone else’s attention. The Curator, zealously dutiful, sat beside the coachman in his box, but the Collector bade him to dismount. Midday was long past when the Collector reached the bank. He would have left the pictures in the cab but was afraid that someday he might be required to explain to the painter where they were. So he carried them to his office and locked them in the bottom drawer of his desk to protect them from the eyes of the Art Historian, for the next few decades at least. ✖

DECEMBER 1909, NEW YORK

## CIPRIAN MUREȘAN

b. 1977. Lives & works in Cluj.

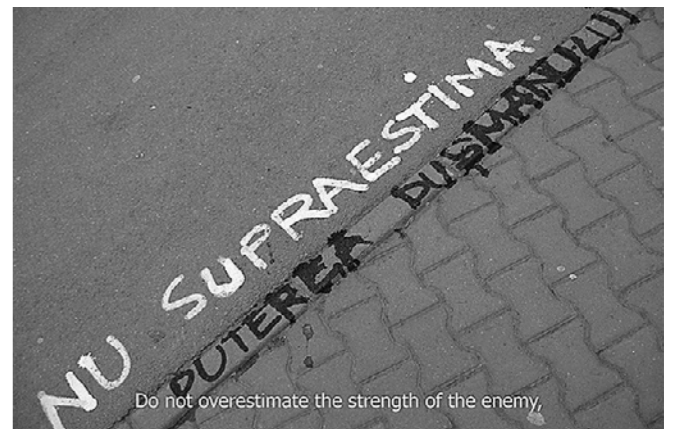
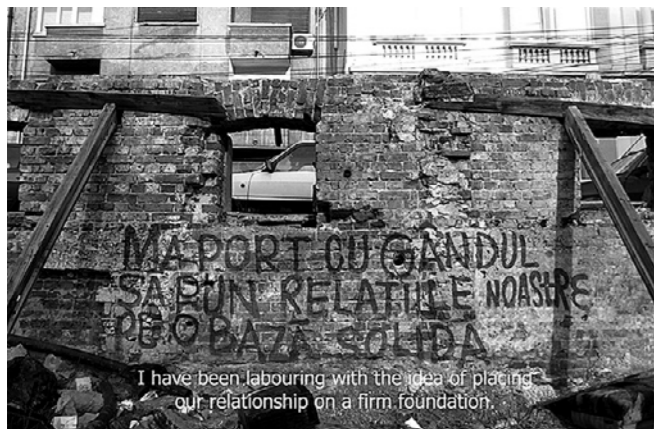
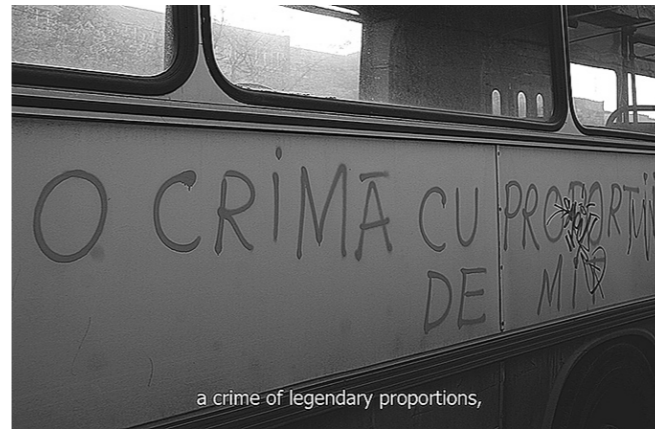
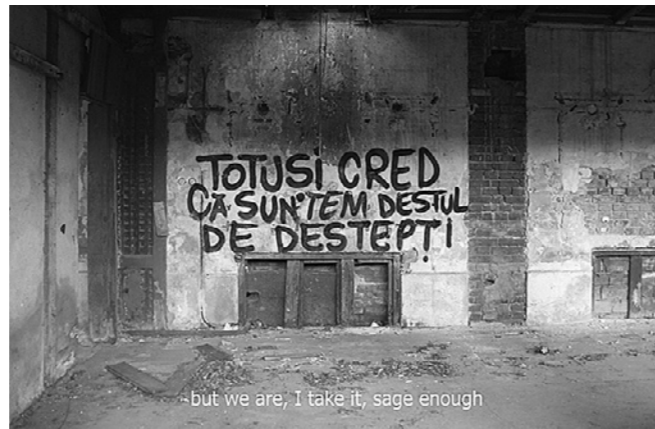
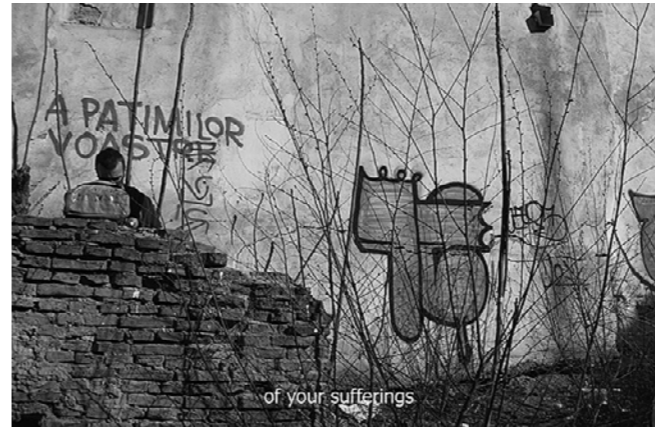
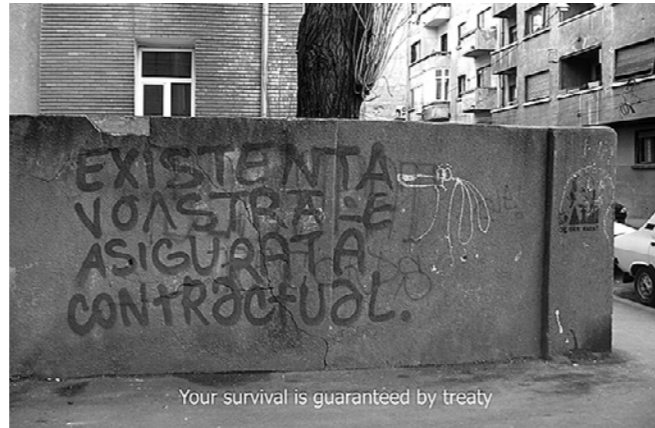
**Auto-da-Fé** ★ 2008

A few pages from **Elias Canetti**’s novel *Die Blendung/Auto-da-Fé* (1932) are graffitied onto walls throughout the cities of Romania. The text acquires a monumental quality, while the processes of subjective dissolution it describes are embedded into the monumental. The resonance of each sentence, its persistent attempts to locate and rearrange the flotsam of a disintegrating subjectivity, are set against the immobility of walls and enclosures. The rambling monologue that **Canetti**’s protagonist addresses to his library has been interpreted by literary critics as a significant document of the ‘end of modernism’, shattered utopias and fragmented beliefs. To an extent, the artist’s strategy of dispersing the text replicates the destructive acceleration written by **Canetti** into modern urban space. But by painstakingly recomposing the text from its scattered bits, **Ciprian Mureșan** also engages the transition between modernism and its post-modernities as a historical point where the monumental needs to be re-evaluated. Between the detritus of modernism and post-modern equivocation, **Mureșan**’s ambivalent monument to **Canetti**, to alienating spaces and to the capacity of speech for defining and holding together a subjectivity, embodies the experience of those evacuated, dispossessed of their right to the city and pushed to the very margins of social life. ✖

MIHNEA MIRCAN



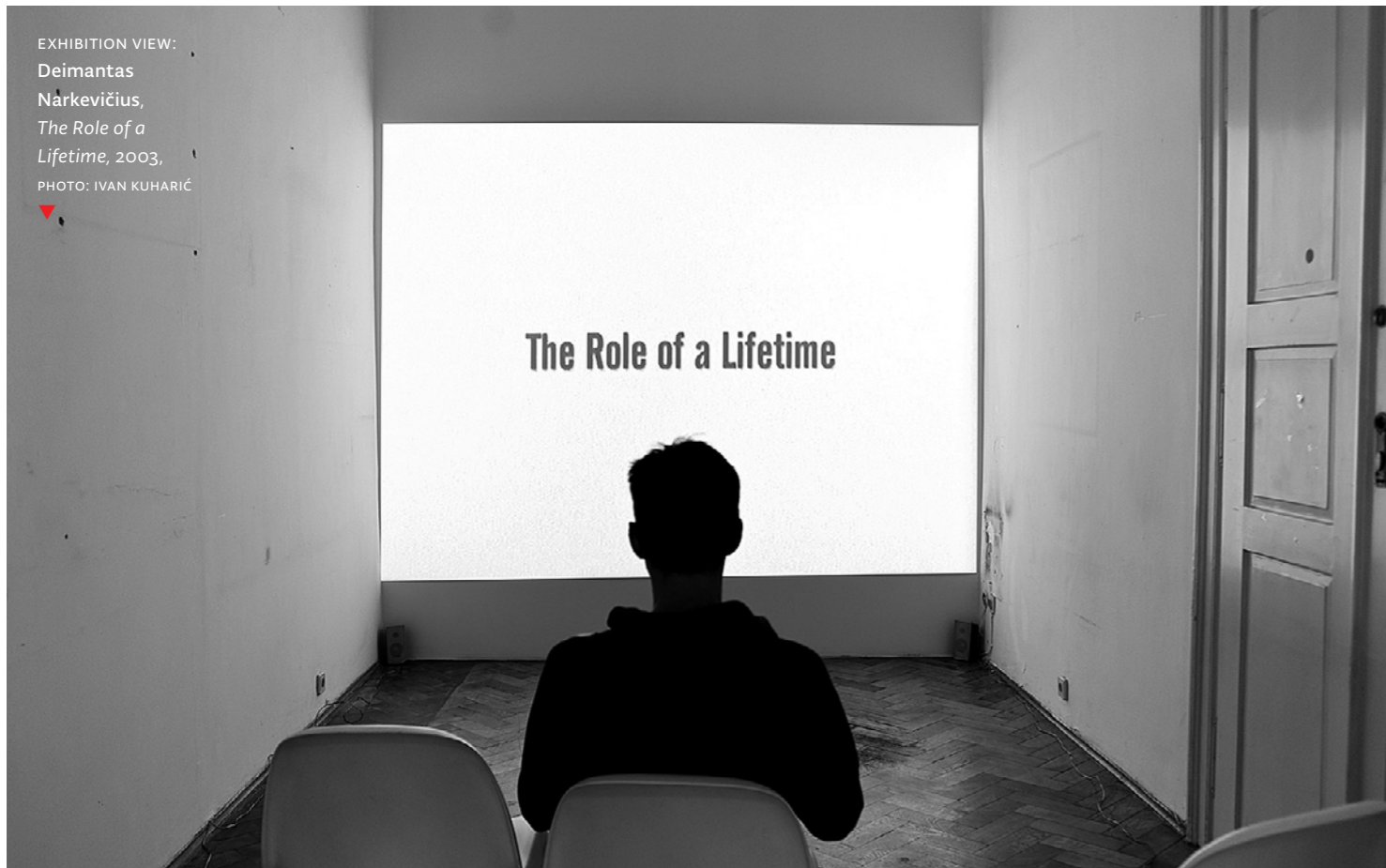
▲ EXHIBITION VIEW: Ciprian Mureșan, *Auto-da-Fé*, 2008



▲ Ciprian Mureșan, Auto-da-Fé, 2008



EXHIBITION VIEW:  
Deimantas  
Narkevičius,  
*The Role of a  
Lifetime*, 2003,  
PHOTO: IVAN KUHARIĆ



## DEIMANTAS NARKEVIČIUS

b. 1964. Lives & works in Vilnius.

***The Role of a Lifetime*** ★ 2003, 17:00

The films and video works of **Deimantas Narkevičius** often mismatch constituent narrative elements, questioning the process of filmmaking. *The Role of a Lifetime* (2003) has several overlapping spatiotemporal layers: the main narrative thread is an interview with film director **Peter Watkins**, one of the pioneers of docudrama, whose politically engaged films set out to change the understanding of the documentary genre. The audio recording of the interview is

juxtaposed with drawings by Lithuanian artist **Mindaugas Lukošaitis** and amateur Super-8 film clips of people enjoying Brighton, taken from **British film archives**. The questions in the interview are not heard, and **Watkins'** gently flowing monologue touches upon questions of realism and fiction, of the construction and recreation of reality, the question of objective form, and his interest in filmmaking not only for creative, but for political and social reasons, which resulted in his work becoming increasingly marginalised. Through a subtle montage of moments in which statements by **Watkins** converge and diverge with its pictorial elements, the film works as a powerful declaration of belief in the necessity of critical and self-critical thinking in art, and is almost a manifesto for both artists. ✖



▲ Deimantas Narkevičius, *The role of a Lifetime*, 2003, video stills

We put images and sounds together, but we never discussed with the audience, with the people, what it means to do this? What effect is this having on society, what is this having on history, what is this having on our personal feelings, what effect is this having on the way we speak to each other, what effect is it having on the way we think about time, space, structure and process? Constantly it's working in a very manipulative, authoritarian, fixed, regulated, programmatic, hierarchical way with all those things. And we, as human beings, we try not to do that and we are trying being complicated in our memories, our feelings, but not the pictures and sounds we see.

★★★

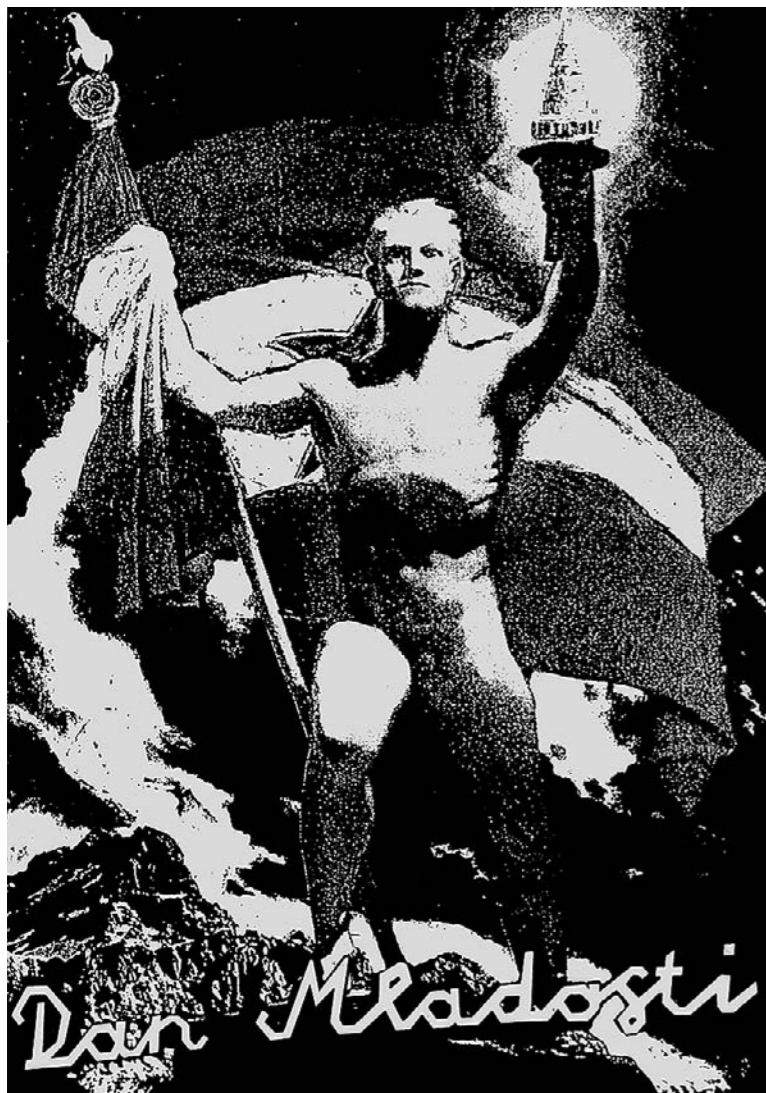
I don't believe or I'm not interested in the idea of a neutral artist, even if there were such a thing, I don't think it interesting very much, frankly.

PETER WATKINS IN THE ROLE OF  
A LIFETIME (2003) BY DEIMANTAS  
NARKEVIČIUS

## NOVI KOLEKTIVIZAM

Established in 1983 in Medvode.

Youth Day Poster ★ 1987



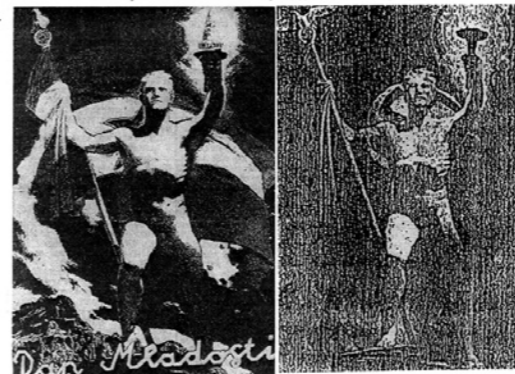
▲ New Collectivism, Youth Day Poster, 1987

In Yugoslavia in 1987, the ritual of **Tito's** relay race was revered. The political youth organisation named the Association of Socialist Youth of Yugoslavia organised an annual relay race which passed through all the major Yugoslav towns with the participation of children ('Pioneers') and young adults carrying a baton bearing messages from the young people of Yugoslavia to **Tito**. On 25 May, President **Tito's** birthday, the baton with its messages was solemnly presented to **Tito** at a mass celebration in a large sports stadium in Belgrade. **Tito's** relay race continued even after his death. Every year, one of the Yugoslav republics was responsible for the preparation of the celebration's concept and for the design of the relay baton and poster. In 1987 it was Slovenia's turn. The committee for the preparation of the celebration issued a public competition for the design of the poster and the relay baton; responses to this competition included one from the **New Collectivism** group. Their poster was based on a painting by a German artist of the Third Reich, **Richard Klein**. In the proposal, the Nazi flag from **Klein's** painting was replaced with the Yugoslav flag, and the German eagle with a white dove of peace. From several proposals, this one was selected by a jury comprised of art experts and politicians. However, problems developed when a print of the proposed poster was published in the Belgrade daily newspaper *Politika*. The published proposal was seen by **Nikola Grujić**, a mechanical engineer, who was reminded of a piece of Nazi artwork he had seen in a book entitled *From Sarajevo to Potsdam*. He alerted the Yugoslav media and overnight the so-called *Poster Scandal* erupted. The police filed charges against the **New Collectivism** studio with the public prosecutor's office. The members of the jury who had selected the work were interrogated. Some of them claimed to have selected the proposal because it appealed to them and that they had not been informed that it was in fact a redesigned Nazi poster. Because of the lack of evidence to confirm the suspicion that the poster was a product of anti-state propaganda, no trial ever took place. After a year, the Slovene public prosecutor's office issued a public statement that the **New Collectivism** studio had adopted a legitimate retrogardist artistic method, which allowed for different interpretations. ✖

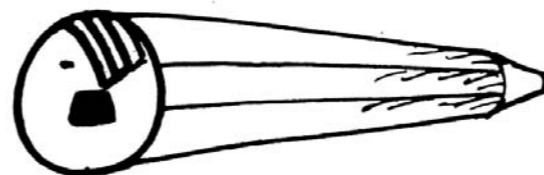
NEW COLLECTIVISM

## Подвала на плакату

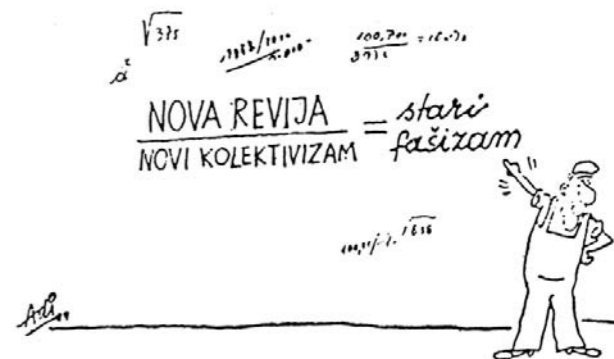
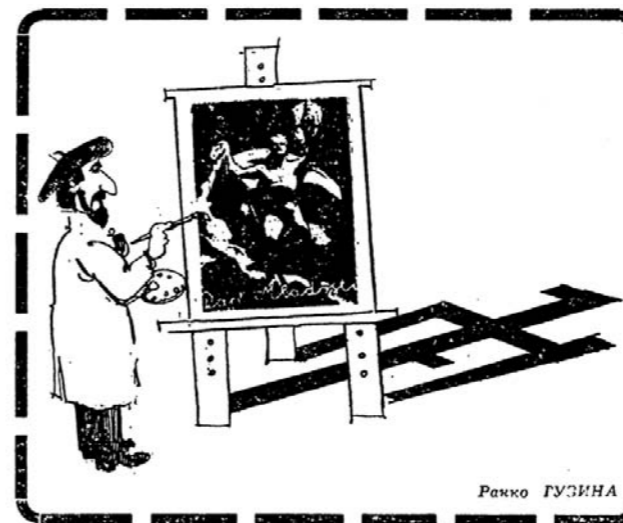
СЕННА НАД СИМБОЛОМ ПРОСЛАВЕ ДАНА МЛАДОСТИ  
Љубљански дизајнери копирани нацистично дело „Трећи рајх“ аутора Рихарда Клајна. — Сличност потпуна, да би била случајна



NOVI KOLEKTIVIZEM



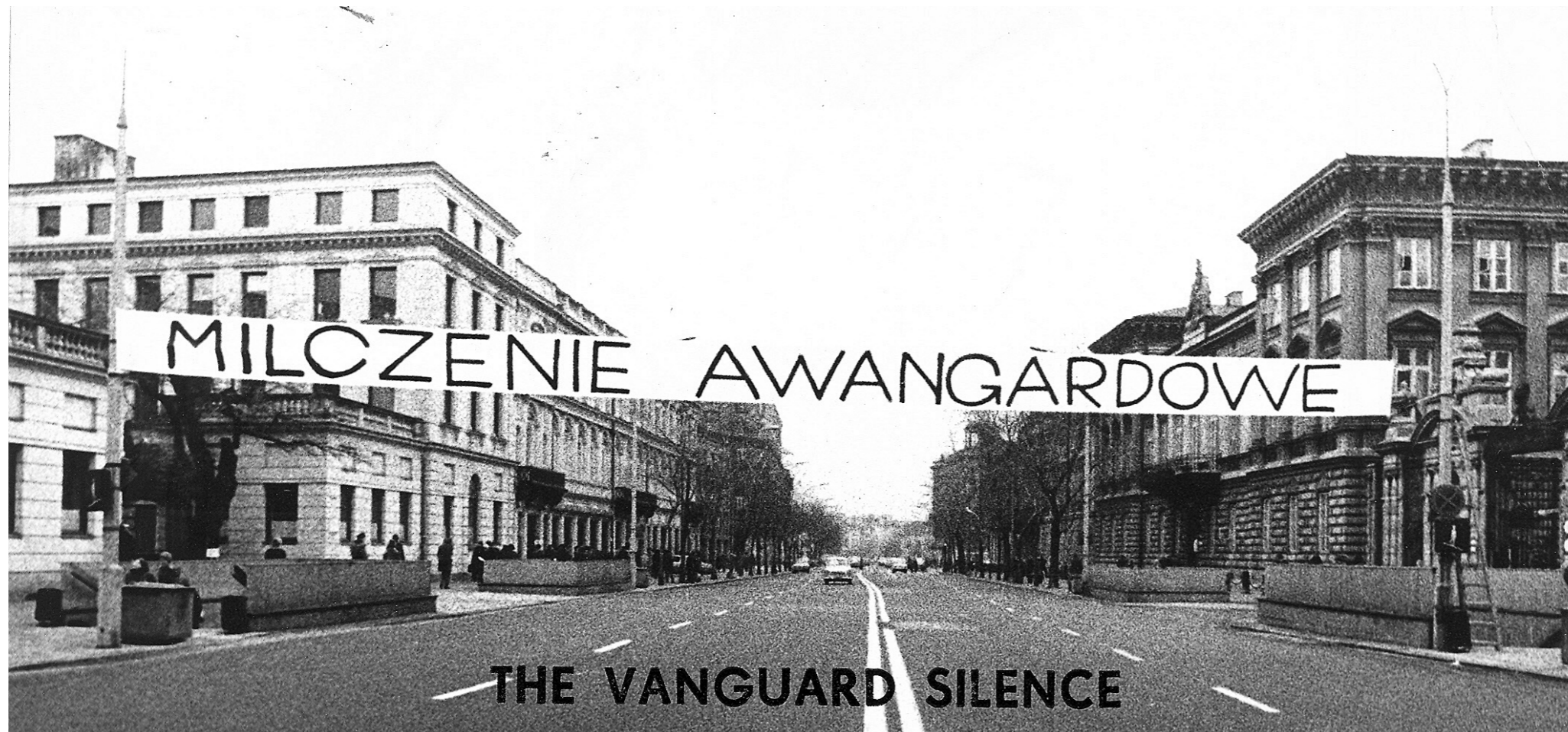
STARA KONSTRUKCIJA



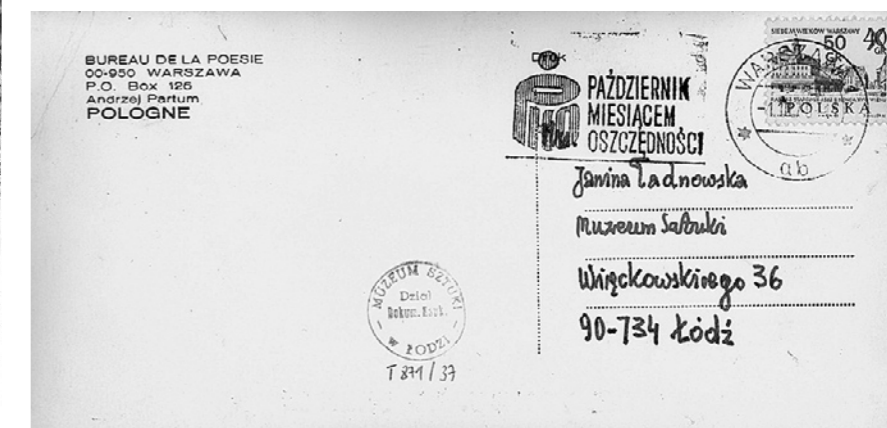
ODGONETNUTA FORMULA (Adi Mulabegović, »Oslobođenje«)

▲ Reactions in the media:  
*Politika*, 26 February, 1987  
*Pavliha*, 11. March, 1987  
*Večernje novosti*, 1 March, 1987

*Borba*, 7 March, 1987  
*Oslobođenje*, 3 March, 1987



Andrzej Partum,  
*The Vanguard Silence*,  
1974, postcard sent by  
Bureau de la Poesie,  
Warsaw, from the  
archive of Muzeum  
Sztuki, COURTESY OF  
WANDA LACRAMPE



## ANDRZEJ PARTUM

1938–2002. Lived in Warsaw and Copenhagen.

- Animal Manifesto* ★ 1980
- Manifesto of Insolent Art* ★ 1977
- Oxide of Resources* ★ c. 1970
- The Vanguard Silence* ★ 1974
- Visual poetry work for Bureau de la Poesie - Warsaw* ★ c. 1971

Artist, performer, poet, composer, filmmaker and author of manifestos, as well as critical and theoretical texts about contemporary art. His practice could be broadly described as a collection of artistic gestures, actions involving words, texts and interactions. Already in the 1960s and 1970s Partum came to be considered as an artistic legend, by demonstrating his dissent from both the official artistic life supported by political circles, and the sphere

of avant-garde artists. In his actions, ranging from walks to recitations and happenings, he officially mocked the absurdity of the administration of socialist reality. In 1971 Partum established the **Bureau of Poetry** in Warsaw (operating until 1985) and was among the first artists in Poland to finance his own prints and booklets.

*The Vanguard Silence*, a performance held in Warsaw in 1974, is among the best-recognised activities of **Andrzej Partum**, a hugely prolific artist whose

output explored the field between poetry and visual arts. Throughout the 1960s and 1970s Partum became known as one of the most flamboyant figures of the local art scene, levelling his critique at the established art circuit as well as the avant-garde movement. Often bordering on the absurd, his practice highlighted the role of subjective experience and mocked, as well as tested, the limits of language as a vehicle, charging the artist with the task of constantly discrediting

accepted routines and clichés. Now known mostly from photographs, the *The Vanguard Silence* banner strung across Krakowskie Przedmieście street, between the campus of Warsaw University and the Academy of Fine Arts for slightly more than an hour on an April day 1974, was Partum's contribution to the *Living Gallery*, a film by the video artist **Józef Robakowski**. The latter was meant to be part of the *Polish Film Chronicle*, a short newsreel screened before the main

film in cinemas. In Partum's episode the ambient soundtrack of the street was edited out. Three years later, in an eponymous manifesto distributed in Polish, German and English in 1978, the artist further developed the theme announcing in a characteristically vague statement *The Vanguard Silence* is a call for overpowering "harangues of those who wish to manipulate art from a comfortable armchair". ✖

KRZYSZTOF KOŚCIUCZUK



## GYULA PAUER

b. 1941. Lives & works in Budapest

**Protest-Sign Forest** ★ 1978



▲ Gyula Pauer, *Protest-Sign Forest*, 1978

ANNAMÁRIA SZŐKE

Gyula Pauer began his career in the 1960s as a sculptor, arriving at the anti-sculpture of his 'pseudo-art' in 1970. *Protest-Sign Forest*, an intervention in public space, was conceptualised as a street protest transferred to a natural setting. The legibility of the 'slogans' on the signs was determined by the passing of time and the angle of the sun's rays. The protest signs formed a plastically and topographically structured order. The work was created at the Artists' Colony of Nagyatád in the summer of 1978, taking several months to complete, it stood covering an area of about 400 m<sup>2</sup> for a single day, after which it was demolished by the authorities. Only photographs made by Pauer before he fled the site preserve the overall image of the work, which no one was able to walk across and take in as the artist himself had imagined.

After working in various styles of modern sculpture Pauer finally arrived at the anti-sculpture of *pseudo art* in 1970. From here on 'appearance' became his most important theme, both with respect to art and philosophy. In the 1970s he elaborated on the question of 'it's as if', in work of a conceptual nature, approaching the visual question of appearance primarily from a notional point of view. *Protest-Sign Forest* stemmed from this notional-art-poetic incentive and was a monumental summary of his thoughts concerning artistic means of expression, the creative process, the effect of works, and the nature and function of art and sculpture. The social and communal function of sculpture expresses itself in the mise-en-scène of the work, which Pauer conceptualised as a vision-like image, a street protest contextualised in a natural setting. The texts, among which the term 'pathos formula' figured, were also to function as pictures. The visitor, walking among the signs, was to take in the formal and notional meaning, the significance, as well as the impulse of the letters, syllables, words and sentences through the complex experience of combining the visual and written elements of the texts with the sensations of his/her own movements and gestures. All the while he/she was to become part of this pictorial and textual composition – in other words a 'protester' bearing these signs, which concealed or exposed certain things when singled out by the individual's attention. ✘



## tamás st.auby

b. 1944. Lives & works in Budapest.

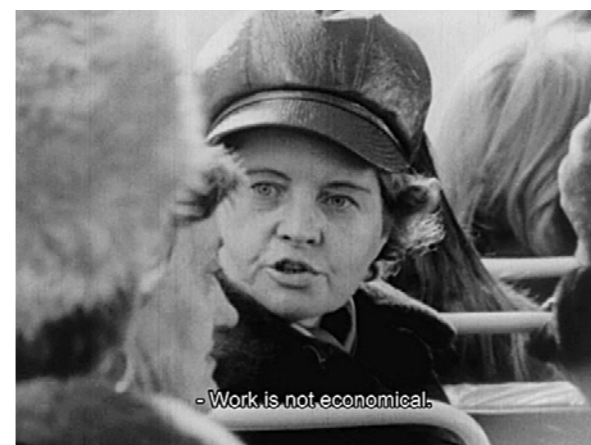
**Centaur** ★ 1973–75, 39:22

DIGITAL RESTORATION: Hungarian Film Laboratory, Ltd., ACAX, Budapest, tranzit.hu, Budapest  
COURTESY OF BÉLA BALÁZS STÚDIÓ

Tamás St.Auby, also known as Tamás Szentjőby, Tamas Stjőby, Tamas Stauby, Tamas St. Aubsky, Emmy Grant, Emily Grant, Tamas Staub, Tamas Taub and Kurt Schwitters, is a key figure of the Hungarian post-avant-garde. St.Auby began his anti-art and poetry experimentations in the 1960s. He spent most of his exiled years in Geneva, where in 1981 he broke ties with the commercial gallery system and proclaimed the *Geneva Strike* 'against alienation through working' in the field of art.

His 16 mm black and white film, *Centaur* (1973–75), questions the politics and value of work. Produced by the state-funded Balázs Béla Filmstúdió that enabled the production of experimental film, it was immediately banned by the censorship committee. While experimenting with the relationship and discrepancies between sound and image, the film presents a lucid and bitter criticism of social alienation, class relationships and the degradation of labour in a society that has declared adherence to communist values. Documentary sequences shot in various public spaces (a sewing factory, bus, industrial hall, office, café, field, dormitory, waiting room) feature everyday people (workers, housewives, farmers, coalmen, and their superiors) as the main protagonists.

The documentary footage is combined with a soundtrack comprised of a series of poetic and estranged fragmentary dialogues that appear to be taking place between the protagonists. In what circumstances can radical thought change social conditions? An examination of the possibilities for revolutionising social institutions and collective consciousness is left unresolved, tinted with an overall pessimistic undertone of flagrant exploitation. ✘



## Centaur

Balázs Béla Filmstúdió, 1973–1975

WRITTEN AND DIRECTED BY Tamás Szentjőby

CAMERA: János Gulyás

EDITOR: Éva "Etikus" Vörös

EXCERPT FROM THE FILMSCRIPT

**Peasant women hoeing in a field**

PEASANT WOMAN

— Whatever requires money is war!

PEASANT WOMAN

— I'm a peasant, but I'm no idiot. If war is for money then what are you hoeing for?!

PEASANT WOMAN

— Only idiots hoe for money! This is money that I'm hoeing. Because nature is money's raw material, so we are hoeing money. For free.

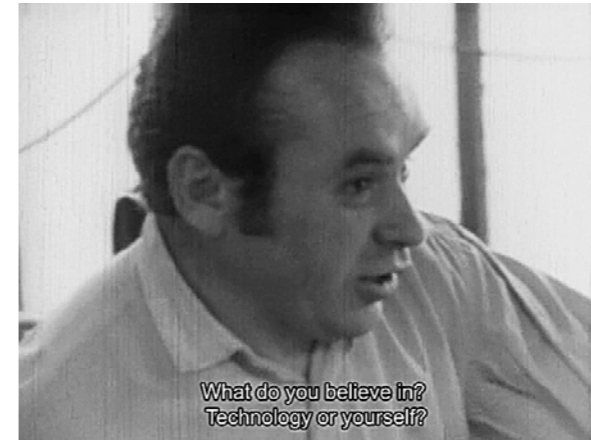
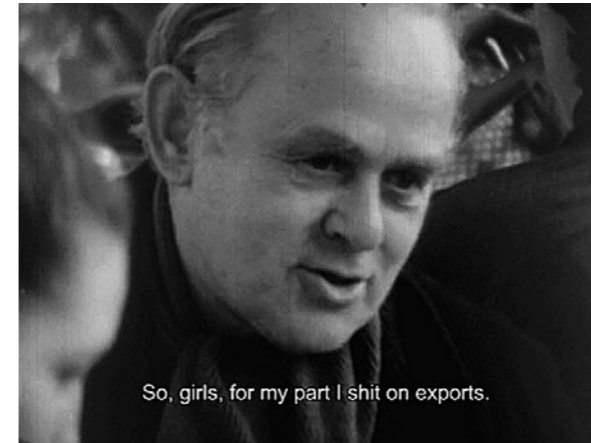
PEASANT WOMAN

— That's because you were taken in by the merchants! Thinking that's the only way to stay alive! They've formed us in their own image! We've dug up all their shitty products, and our heads are spinning in delirium about finally getting our share of life's true values and glory!

(laughter)

They really laid it out for us – what has value and what doesn't. What's right and what's wrong! What's worthy of praise and what's dangerous! What we can say and what's worth saying! What's the standard and where's the limit! What we need and what we don't! Basically they tell us what exists and what doesn't! Though it's obvious that one person's interests are not the same as anyone else's, and certainly not the same as the interests of those who praise us, making us think we are people! Meanwhile he's preaching in the market square hoping to escape the apathy of the open society!

(laughter)



**FIKA (excerpt from an interview with Tamás St. Auby, manuscript, 2006)**

“...The centaur is half animal, half human. Sound films are like the centaur: image and sound. In this case, the image is the visible, material realm, what is given, the world in which we live, what exists, the status quo, that which has been formed – the horse body of the centaur, the audible sound, the evaluation, the plan, the thing that will be, the bodiless, the invisible, the spiritual world, the moving beyond, mutation, transcendence, the other world, the mind, the will, the future, that which is coming into being – the human part of the centaur, in parallel. We see fifteen sequential images, sites/locations/scenes: panoramic shots of a ploughed field, a factory, café, workers’ hostel, office, railway station waiting room, etc., with occasional frames showing two or three people in conversation in the given setting. During the shooting I asked them to talk to each other, about anything. Their voices were not recorded, only the movement of their mouths. I wrote a dialogue which was dubbed over the recorded material. It is obvious to viewers that the conversational exchanges do not correspond to what can be seen. For example, the ‘displaced’ things that the female workers say – about empty shoeboxes, whipped cream, their living and working conditions – they would probably never say to each other. The film juxtaposes – or to be more exact, superimposes – a realistic and utopian dimension. Thus, this is not a horizontal space/time montage, but a vertical sphere-of-existence. A mutation montage. As with the centaur, where the past is inferior, the waist of the centaur is the present and the future becoming is superior.”

So, girls, for my part I shit on exports.

What do you believe in?  
Technology or yourself?

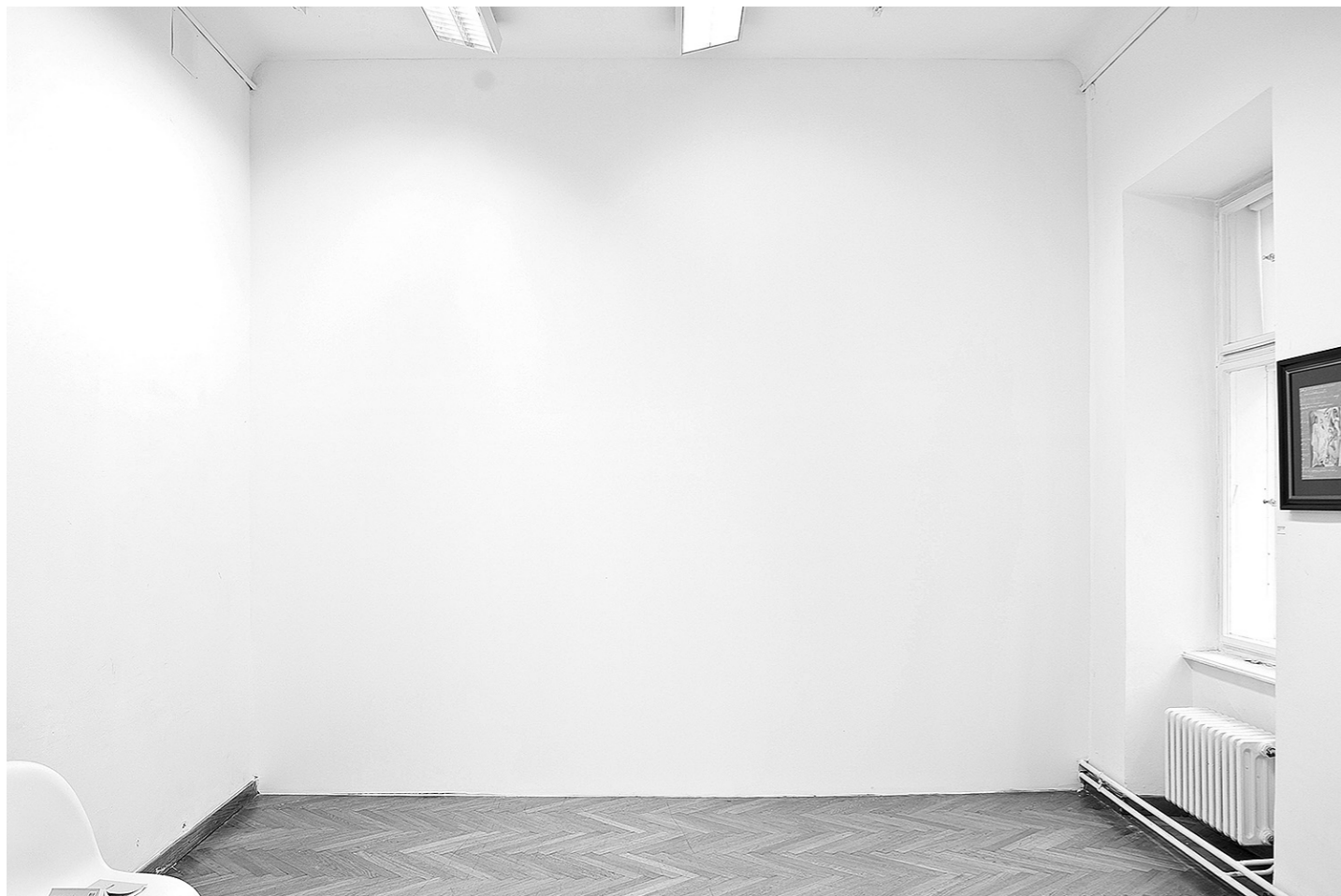
No Grass Grows Here is out!

My road's end - alas! - I cannot see.

## tomo savić-gecan

b. 1967. Lives & works in Amsterdam.

**Untitled** ★ 2010



**Tomo Savić-Gecan** is an artist who exhibits 'nothing'. Conceived as *tabulae rasae*, his projects function as empty sites filled with various charges, concealed tensions and references. Dematerialisation, absence and emptiness are the consequences of his specific treatment of the gallery space. Overall, the artist's works can be seen as an ongoing tactical positioning vis-à-vis and within the white cube space, the 'archetypal space of modern art'. *Untitled 2010* referred directly to the work that the artist realised in the space of the **Museum of Contemporary Art** for the exhibition *Here, Tomorrow* (04/10–03/11/2002) when one of the **Museum's** rooms was walled in by a glass surface. ✖

**Tomo Savić-Gecan**  
*Bez naslova / Untitled*  
2010



## SEAN SNYDER

b. 1972. Lives & works in Kiev & Tokyo.

**Exhibition** ★ 2008, 06:59



◀ Sean Snyder,  
*Exhibition*, 2008,  
video still

*Exhibition* (2008) is a video about art and the discourse and rituals it generates, as well as the work involved in the production of exhibitions. *Exhibition* reflects the social dimension of art and the failure of educational projects based on assumptions that the aesthetic experience is universal. The video uses the Soviet documentary film *Noble Impulses of Soul* (1965) by **Israel Goldstein** as its subject. In typical 1960s Soviet style, the pedagogical tone of the film's narrative praises the efforts of a provincial museum in the village of Parkhomivka in the Eastern Ukraine, revolving around an exhibition of contemporary Mexican art being presented at the museum accompanied by an art history lecture at a village farm. The reprocessed video restructures the primary components, eliminates the voice of the narrator, and reorders the chronology of the film to break the continuous realistic world of the documentary. ✖

SEAN SNYDER

## MLADEN STILINOVIĆ

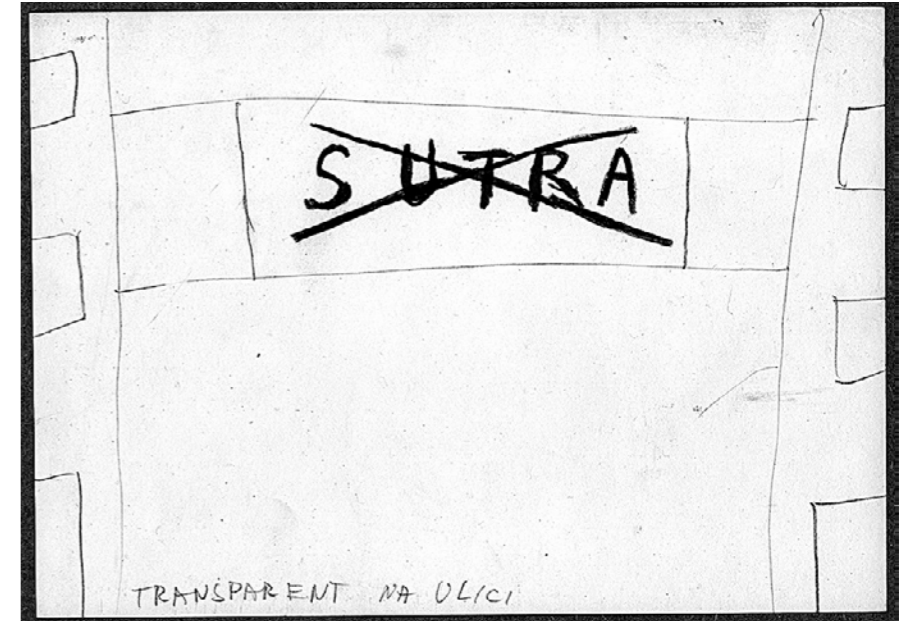
b 1947. Lives & works in Zagreb.

**Insulting the Anarchy** ★ 1980-2010

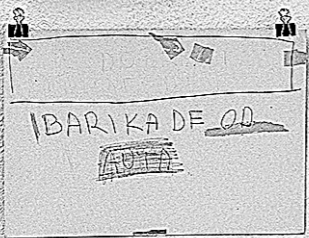
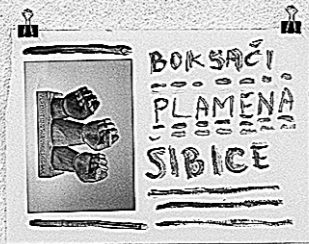
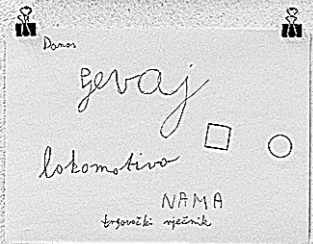
Since the mid-1970s, **Mladen Stilinović** has developed artistic strategies using 'poor' materials. His works are simple in their execution and engage such subjects as pain, poverty, death, power and the language of repression as ongoing and mutually connected conditions. Usually the title is inscribed into the work itself, such as in the work *Tomorrow* (1975) consisting of a banner with the text 'Tomorrow', which he then crossed out. "This linguistic work, which referred to the often-used syntagm of the socialist community: 'now is not the time' to solve these and these problems, has the urge to be shown in a new, social, political and linguistic context."<sup>01</sup>

By using clumsy, uneven handwriting and cheap, readily available or organic materials, such as food, which he often places in dialogue with the space and context of the exhibition, the artist underlines the fragility and the vulnerability of existence. This is evident in the brutal fragmentation of words, signs and objects, as well as in the obsessive repetition and confusing juxtapositions. ✖

01 Branka Stipančić, *On Unknown Works*, WHW, Zagreb/AGM, Zagreb/ARL, Dubrovnik, 2006, p. 9.



▲ Mladen Stilinović, *Tomorrow*, 1975 (2006)



EXHIBITION VIEW:  
Parlour leftists  
linoleum, 2006

Today sing  
locomotive  
NAMA trading  
dictionary, 2007

Boxers, fire,  
matches, 2006

Good and useful  
ideas, barricades  
made of cars, 2006

EXHIBITION VIEW:  
Dead bureaucracy  
says to dead  
bureaucracy  
you are dead  
bureaucracy, 1980

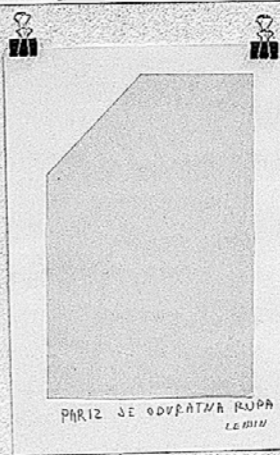
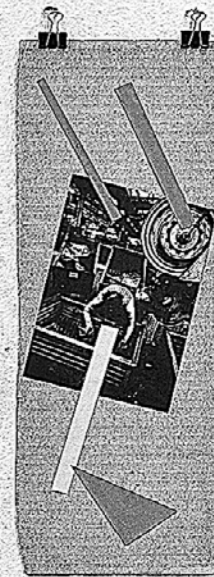
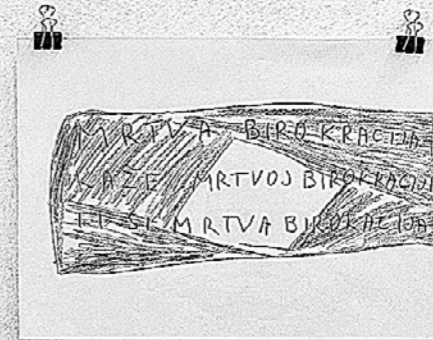
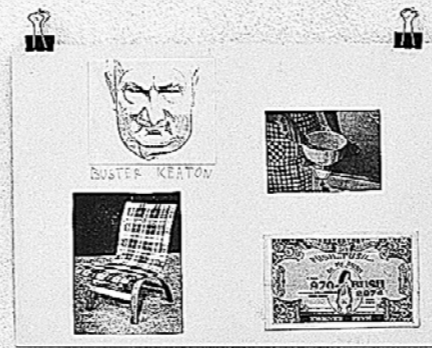
Action sale, workers'  
rights, 2006

Insulting Anarchy,  
how much  
longer, 2007

Paris is a disgusting  
hole, Lenin, 2007

English language on  
sale, urgent, 2006

PHOTOS: IVAN KUHARIĆ



## Bálint SZOMBATHY

b. 1950. Lives & works in Budapest.

*Lenin in Budapest (Budapest, 1972)* ★ 1972



Szombathy's early performance *Lenin in Budapest* is an anonymous photo-performance. In the countries of real socialism, posters with portraits of **Vladimir Ilyich Lenin**, leader of the 1917 Soviet Bolshevik revolution, were fetish-images or symbols of the revolutionary attitude that used to be displayed at Party congresses, state-organised rallies and parades together with pictures of local Party officials and the classic figures of Marxism, **Marx** and **Engels**... Szombathy carried either a poster with **Lenin's** portrait around Budapest as an advertising poster or one containing slogans of protest. Thus, the portrait of **Lenin** was deprived of its fetish function. The image of the leader was placed within the mundane trivia of life in real socialism. The symbol of the Revolution outside the field of Party control meant defiance to the bureaucratic system, as it seemed to reflect the impact of the New Left from the West or looked like a Luddism-inspired dodge. ✖

FROM: MIŠKO ŠUVAKOVIĆ, BALINT SZOMBATHY: *LENIN IN BUDAPEST*,  
[HTTP://WWW.AGORA8.ORG/ARTIST/BALINT\\_SZOMBATHY\\_1.HTML](http://www.agora8.org/artist/balint_szombathy_1.html)



▲ Bálint Szombathy, *Lenin in Budapest*, 1972

## milan trenc

b. 1962. Lives & works in Zagreb.

**Illustrations in Start magazine** ★ 1985-1990

Milan Trenc publishes illustrations, comics, and picture books, and works as a screenwriter and director of animated films. He started publishing his comics in the early 1980s, initially in the youth press, and then in weekly magazines. From 1985 to 1991 he was chief illustrator of *Start* magazine, holding this position until the last issue of the magazine. From 1991 to 2003 he was working in New York, publishing comics in *Heavy Metal Magazine*, and his illustrations can be found in *The New York Times*, *Time*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *New Yorker*, *Fortune Magazine*, *Washington Post*, *Business Week*, and other major American press. ✖



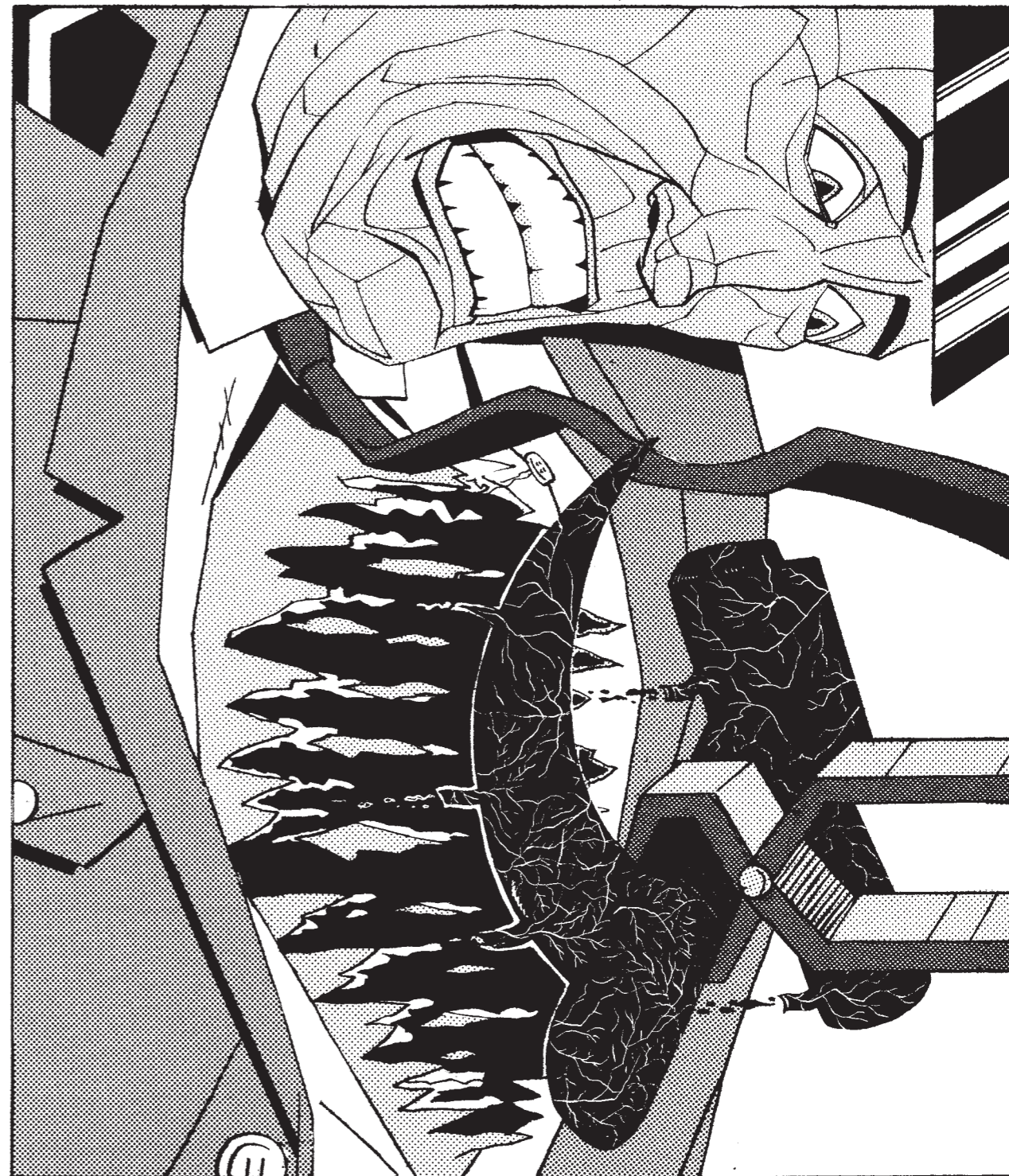
*"Instead of illustrating texts, I illustrated the problems the texts were talking about. Sometimes the illustration had a completely opposite opinion to what the text was saying. Since it was the time of the relaxation of political discipline, the duty censors looked round in panic. In the Start magazine we had a lot of freedom, but also a great deal of responsibility, precisely because the illustrations were handed in at the last moment, and the texts were provocative and political. Since I did not have to hand in sketches, making an illustration that was publishable was exclusively a matter of my own judgement."* ✖

**DARKO GLAVAN, MILAN TRENC, RETROSPECTIVE 1980-2005, COMICS, ILLUSTRATION, FILM, EXHIBITION CATALOGUE, GALERIJA KLOVIČEVI DVORI, ZAGREB, 2005**

▲ EXHIBITION VIEW: Milan Trenc, *Illustrations in Start magazine, 1985-90*, PHOTO: IVAN KUHARIĆ

◀ *All nationalists united against Tito's legacy, Start magazine, 1990*

Milan Trenc, *Army and KPJ (Yugoslav Communist Party), 1989* ▶



## Ultra-red

Established in 1994.

**Blok 70: 你听到什么? | Šta ste čuli? | Was haben Sie gehört? ★ 2004/2010**

**Protocols for In Front, Within, and Beyond ★ 2010**

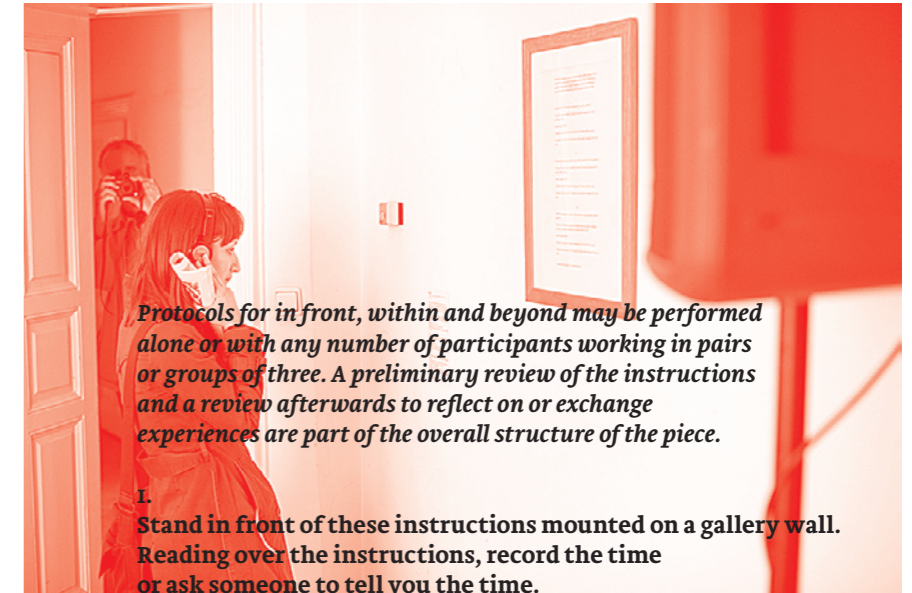
Founded in 1994 by two AIDS activists in Los Angeles, the sound art collective currently has nine members based in North America and Europe. Conducting investigations where sound is both the site and the means of enquiry, the collective develops projects in relation to social movements wherein **Ultra-red's** members have worked as organisers, activists and militant researchers. Drawing on the traditions of *musique concrète*, conceptual art, popular education, and militant enquiry, **Ultra-red** approach composition using field recordings to produce sound objects for collective listening and analysis. In numerous performances and workshops presented across North America and Europe, **Ultra-red** emphasise the organisation of listening through the use of conceptually-derived performance protocols. Their investigations have resulted in audio recordings, art exhibitions, events, or sound walks. ✖

EXHIBITION VIEW: Ultra-red, *Protocols for In Front, Within, and Beyond*, 2009, Higher Institute for Fine Arts, Ghent, PHOTO: JENS MAIER-ROTHE ▶



EXHIBITION VIEW:  
Ultra-red, *Protocols for In Front, Within, and Beyond*, 2010 ▶

EXHIBITION VIEW:  
Ultra-red, *Blok 70: 你听到什么? | Šta ste čuli? | Was haben Sie gehört?*, 2004/2010, PHOTO: IVAN KUHARIĆ ▶▶



*Protocols for in front, within and beyond may be performed alone or with any number of participants working in pairs or groups of three. A preliminary review of the instructions and a review afterwards to reflect on or exchange experiences are part of the overall structure of the piece.*

I.  
Stand in front of these instructions mounted on a gallery wall. Reading over the instructions, record the time or ask someone to tell you the time.

Remain silent for a period of time.

Record the time or ask someone to tell you the time.

Record what you heard, or you and a partner share with each other what you heard.

II.  
Move within the room to a position in front of the gallery windows. Looking out of the window, record the time or ask someone to tell you the time.

Remain silent for a period of time.

Record the time or ask someone to tell you the time. Record what you heard, or you and a partner share with each other what you heard.

III.  
Move beyond the building into one of the spaces visible from the gallery windows.

Facing either towards the windows or with your back to the building, record the time or ask someone to tell you the time.

Remain silent for a period of time.

Record the time or ask someone to tell you the time. Record what you heard, or you and a partner share with each other what you heard.

Repeat protocols for the longest possible time.

# Ultra-red BORDERING ON THE FUTURE art, activism & analysis

When the invitation came in 2001 for the then Los Angeles-based sound art collective Ultra-red to present a series of electroacoustic performances in Europe, the four members confronted a dilemma of translation. For much of the group's history, a practice in listening and composition had occurred within very specific contexts related to the social movements that defined their own political commitments. What would it mean to tour? The question possessed a particular irony in light of two contradictory observations. On the one hand, it was clear that Ultra-red's standing 'as artists' would be shaped by the group's capacity to circulate in an international artistic milieu. On the other hand, whether our political work existed in the context of AIDS activism, housing justice, or education, our constituents lived with the every day exigencies of migration struggles. At the same time, the four members of Ultra-red – Elizabeth Blaney, Pablo Garcia, Dont Rhine, and Leonardo Vilchis – all had some relation to migration either immediately as the holder of a Green Card or by way of friends and loved ones. But most importantly, the status of migrant proved the primary obstacle for constituents from communities that we organised to participate in a tour as members of Ultra-red.

This understanding led the group to a very basic critical relationship to our own status as cosmopolitan sound artists whereby specific forms of labour provide access to mobility and circulation (and vice versa). As the four members of the group reflected further on the contradiction between the value of cultural work and the ways that border regimes structure our personal and political relationships, the terms of that contradiction came to determine the content and form of the performance work, *Trabajo y Días*.<sup>01</sup> Inherent in the work itself was the question: How does one listen, even/especially listen politically, when the conditions of listening are framed by the voices one leaves behind?

The decision to organise performances in Europe through reflections on the struggles of migration would quickly become the context for a series of encounters that have continued up to the present day. Assembling an account of these encounters and reflecting on their implications for a theory and practice of organising provides the impetus for this text. If, as Paulo Freire once said near the end of his life, "The future does not make us. We make ourselves in the struggle to make it";<sup>02</sup> then the same could be said when we commit ourselves to analysing our relation to migration. This essay is a reflection on listening for the future.

As a consequence of assuming the identity of migrant activists and artists, Ultra-red came into contact with similar political activists and social movements during our travels in

<sup>01</sup> "Work and days" is translated from Hesiod's classical meditations on the concept of justice within the pastoral, the musique concrète compositions of Ultra-red's *Trabajo y Días* featured sound sources from specific sites of migrant organising in Los Angeles. A primary sound source was the rehearsals of the band Los Jornaleros del Norte, a group of musicians whose experiences as migrant workers and organisers provided the content of their rancho songs. Ultra-red presented *Trabajo y Días* at Sonar Festival (Barcelona, Spain, June 2001), Museo Serralves (Porto, Portugal, June 2001), ICA London (November 2001), and the Futuresonic Festival (Manchester, England, November 2001), as well as at the San Francisco Electronic Music Festival (May 2001), the Progressive Los Angeles Network Conference (October 2001), and a final performance in collaboration with Los Jornaleros del Norte as part of the 8th Los Angeles Freewaves Festival at Self-Help Graphics in East Los Angeles (November 2002). Compositions from *Trabajo y Días* were released on the album *Ultra-red Play Los Jornaleros del Norte* (Public Record, 2004). This and all Public Record releases are available for free download at [www.publicrec.org](http://www.publicrec.org).

<sup>02</sup> Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of Indignation*, Boulder, CO: Paradigm Publishers, 2004, p. 34.

Europe. We increasingly met those who identified the policing of and resistance to regimes of migration control as their primary analysis. Ultra-red considered migration, not in relationship to the politics of border regimes, but to the quotidian struggles of labour, housing, healthcare and education.<sup>03</sup>

Meeting with activists in Frankfurt for the first time, we placed a microphone on the table. One at a time, the thirteen activists repeated the question, "What are the basic rights of all Frankfurt residents?" and then recorded a response. As we explained it to the people in the room, our plan was to take the final recording back with us to Los Angeles. Digitising the recorded voices into the computer, we would format the files and then proceed to run them through a number of digital sound patches. At the time of the actual recording, none of us in Ultra-red had a sense of how the final composition would sound, or what responses the completed piece would provoke from the listeners to come. The site of that final meeting between listener and sound was to be the radio. Flipping through channels, the listener would come upon a two-minute *musique concrète* composition by Ultra-red. A different mini-composition would air on Hessischer Rundfunk, hr2, each day for seven days.<sup>04</sup>

Days after our initial meeting with the activists in Frankfurt, the microphone was turned around. The members of Ultra-red became the subject asked to speak at the request of Kanak Attak members Ellen Bareis and Manuela Bojadžijev.<sup>05</sup> The request did not come without complications. The ques-

<sup>03</sup> The two Ultra-red records released by the Frankfurt-based record label Mille Plateaux seemed quite unrelated to each other and unrelated to the performances of *Trabajo y Días*. As a collective comprised of activists from different social movements, some members of Ultra-red assume a position of solidarity to a given political struggle (HIV/AIDS activism, for example), while at least one member of the group experiences those politics in a sustained and deeply personal way. The two records alluded to are Ultra-red, *Second Nature: An Electroacoustic Pastoral* (Frankfurt, DE, Mille Plateaux, 1999) and *Structural Adjustments*, Mille Plateaux, Frankfurt, DE, 2000.

<sup>04</sup> The hr2 broadcasts coincided with the sound art exhibition *Frequencies [Hz]*, mounted at Frankfurt's Schirn Kunsthalle from 9 February to 28 April 2002. Portions of the radio project would eventually appear on the Ultra-red album, *Ultra-red Play Kanak Attak*, Public Record, 2005.

<sup>05</sup> The resulting interview would be published by Ellen Bareis and Manuela Bojadžijev, "We Come From Your Future", *Fantômas 1*, Summer 2002, pp. 61–64.

tions endeavoured to make sense of the four Ultra-red members as individuals invested in the struggles of migration. The four of us had announced ourselves as Los Angeles-based organisers in diverse struggles. We no more came from the same political movements as shared a common intellectual framework. Of course, these divergences did not prevent us from speaking in the first person plural – even when the plural became a passageway to personal experience.

"One issue central to our work," said Ultra-red's Leonardo Vilchis, "is the translation of ideas, cultural understandings, experiences, terms, discourses etc. In the United States the expression *el pueblo* does not exist in English. The obvious translation would be 'the people'. But even in the most progressive context this term tends to have very bourgeois liberal connotations. In the context that I come from, *el pueblo* refers to a self-conscious community of people who see themselves in a struggle to change the structural conditions and/or to create a new system *donde todos caben*, where everybody is welcome."

Attempting to parse the distinctions concealed within Ultra-red's collective identity, Bareis and Bojadžijev pressed on with their questions: "We in Kanak Attak are very curious about how, on a local level, you contend with this relationship between the community to whom you are accountable and your status as an artist. Naming yourself an artist carries with it very specific political implications that, we suspect, has an impact on that relationship. Speaking both of that community you have left behind in Los Angeles and as artists performing in Europe, have you reconsidered your relationship to migrant labour in a global market? If so, does that reconsideration have implications for different forms and articulations of migration (not to mention different settings of racism)? Can you elaborate on this?"

The sounds of the outside Frankfurt traffic announced their ephemeral dramas. Staring at the microphone, Vilchis added: "I think that a good example is our conversations with you, exchanging experiences on our local struggles and reflecting on their global implications. When I come back to Los Angeles I have lots of ideas, questions, reflections, that I need to test in my local situation. I hope that the same happens to you. At the same time our local struggles sometimes are disconnected from a global analysis or understanding of their relationship to the global context. Thus, Porto Alegre, Munich, Genoa, those events in the struggles against capitalism outside the borders of North America, remind us that there is still a lot of work to do."



▲ EXHIBITION VIEW: Ultra-red, *Protocols for In Front, Within, and Beyond*, 2010, PHOTO: IVAN KUHARIĆ

“And your impressions from your travels to Europe?” Our interlocutors asked in the final minutes of our time together. “How do you assess the political situation as either different or comparable to your own?”

“We come from your future.”

Once uttered, the phrase “we come from your future” haunted us. The encounter with *Kanak Attak* deeply affected *Ultra-red*’s relationship both to our electroacoustic practice and to the very terms by which we organised our politics. In the former, hearing about the traditions of militant enquiry, so central to the work of *Kanak Attak* and the history of migrant struggles in Europe, would begin a process of conceptualising *Ultra-red*’s own use of sound increasingly along the lines of *Militant Sound Investigation*. In the realm of organising, *Ultra-red* would begin the work of translating an analysis of the autonomy of migration, crucial for *Kanak Attak*, into the various contexts of autonomous community development and HIV/AIDS politics.

Returning to Europe in the years to come, *Ultra-red* would be surprised to hear the extent to which that initial encounter had a similar (while not analogous) effect on our European comrades. At the centre of that effect was the uncanny declaration, “We come from your future”. Like an acousmatic echo, it sounded in the ear, guiding us towards a horizon that could not be mapped in advance. “We come from your future” served as a device alternatively functioning as declaration and as means of producing an analysis – an analysis to come. Ar-

iving at each destination, we uttered the phrase, insistent on its precision and refusing our mastery over it. We also refused to identify as the ‘we’. The phrase exceeded that banal cliché, “We are the ones we’ve been waiting for”. This latter statement offers no analysis but only the narcissism of an imaginary politics. “‘We’ come from ‘your’ future” raises the problematic of not only the first person plural but, as well, the second person: the other, ambiguously singular or plural.

“We come from your future” crosses borders for the purpose of staging new encounters. It becomes a gift to be passed along, an invitation for the other who might, in this place, at this time, be the first person plural on the way to becoming the second person in the future. For us, this moment of becoming in the future marked a specific time and a specific place where the device determined a change in direction and a change in tempo. A change in tempo can only be detected through careful, even analytical, listening – an act of slow time itself.

In that moment, a cut will have occurred in our ethnographic drama. We will not be the ‘we’ reviewing a record of the past. We will have found a recording from our future.

The cut in our narrative underscored the precaution against naturalising temporal distance between the scene of recording and the scene of listening to the record. This naturalisation informs nearly every ethnographic foray into the realm of the primitive, the ancient and the pre-modern – the sphere from whose distant future the researcher arrives.

Naturally enough, in the ethnographic narrative, the other exists in a state immersed in the past. The researcher, in contrast, possesses the benefit of historical hindsight. Having observed this land out of time with a keen eye, the researcher eventually returns to the future. In the solitary space and time of the future, the researcher picks through the remains of the encounter when he or she shared time with the other. The principles of participant-observer require nothing more. Experiencing the cut like a festering wound, the researcher produces his or her analysis from within the affective space of melancholia: a lament for a shared time with those left behind. When the researcher does extend the analysis to the affective, it typically serves the call for intervention – the urgent need to preserve the purity of the scene of the other. *We must do something!* With each passing minute spent on reading the notes and examining the photographs, the time of the other takes one more fateful step towards an annihilating future. The analysis, when finally published and distributed for readers in the cosmopolitan centres of Europe, serves as a polemic for conservation. The polemic has no time for an analysis of how the past comes to be produced in relation to the future.

Imperial time, imperial melancholia, and imperial analysis: “We come from your future” accrues its problematic. For *Ultra-red*, the problematic followed us, particularly as the ‘us’ would, by 2002, include *Manuela Bojadžijev* as a permanent member of the collective.

Listening to the struggles of migration through their social use becomes its own methodology. Call that methodology *Militant Sound Investigation*, popular education, or by any other term. The analysis ensues from listening to the desires expressed by those in struggle as well as listening to the kind of world that those in struggle are attempting to create in conversation with those voices left behind. Perhaps we begin to perceive a gap between the analysis of the activist and what we hear. We begin again.

Rather than participating in the struggles of migrants, we participate in the struggles of migration – a process that has no predetermination but transforms its determinations through a chain of reactions. Having said that, we need to be clear: this is not a process without participants. Like listening to public space through its social use, one cannot hear the struggles of migration without migrants. It is the struggle of migration as a structure of resistance that gives priority to social change. It is not a question of transforming what we have. Something new comes from the perspective of those people who are building it. The shifter that is ‘you’ becomes our future, or rather: Through each encounter and the organisation of its effects, our future takes shape. Towards an analysis of that future and its terms, the international sound art collective *Ultra-red* has composed this reflection of encounters. ✖

# AS SOON AS I OPEN MY EYES, I SEE A FILM [CINEMA CLUBS & THE GEFF]

Marina Abramović ★ Gorgona ★ Tomislav Gotovac ★ Zlatko Hajdler ★ Dušan Makavejev ★ Ivan Martinac ★ Dalibor Martinis ★ Mihovil Pansini ★ Živojin Pavlović ★ Vladimir Petek ★ Vojislav Rakonjac ★ Milan Samec ★ Mladen Stiljinović ★ Sava Trifković ★ Ante Verzotti

EXHIBITION CURATED BY Ana Janevski (Museum of Modern Art, Warsaw)

The starting point for the Zagreb presentation was the research and exhibition *As soon as I open my eyes, I see a film – Experiments in Yugoslav art in the 60s and 70s*, which was held at the Museum of Modern Art in Warsaw in April 2008. The beginning of the research consisted of analysing the activities of amateur cinema clubs, especially in Zagreb, Belgrade and Split, and the connection and mutual permeation between experiments in so-called amateur cinematic art, the art of the 1950s and 1960s, as well as the anticipation and the birth of a new artistic production in the cultural space of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

One of the goals of the exhibition was to mark and represent the artists, who negated existing art trends and introduced critical and new-media approaches to dominant artistic production, expressing a critical view and using ironic and subversive strategies seldom used before then in the field of visual and film art. We were also discussing authors who, during the 1960s, reached and explored an almost nihilistic atmosphere of anti-art: **Gorgona's** setting up of the anti-group and the publishing of the anti-magazine, the anti-painting of **Julije Knifer**, the non-art of **Dimitrije Bašičević Mangelos**, and the production of 'anti-films'<sup>01</sup> in the cinema clubs that finally resulted in the emergence of the so-called *New Art Practice*, which from the 1970s onwards developed especially in the student centres in the former Yugoslavia.

It is truly interesting to examine this special kind of cultural institution while searching for alternative means of production, presentation and distribution of art and film work.

<sup>01</sup> "Anti can be understood according to the dominant disposition of the group as a negation of official art tendencies, but also as an awareness that their artwork is barely acceptable or is (?) unacceptable as art. Likewise, anti can be seen in the context of gorgonic emphasis on the ideas of anti-art and anti-painting, as well as their affinity with the literature of the absurd, anti-drama and anti-film." Branka Stipančić, *Josip Vaništa, The Time of Gorgona and Post-Gorgona*, Zagreb: Kratis, 2007.



▲ GEFF 69 Bulletin №2, Zagreb 1970, design: Mihajlo Arsovski

In line with the official system of socialist self-management of that time, self-organisation was also present in the field of culture. Even more so, the cinema clubs were part of the socialist project to bring technical culture and achievements closer to all citizens, not only professionals, so the formation of amateur societies was systematically encouraged (amateur film, amateur photography, visual amateur groups and 'colonies', etc). Although they were under central 'political' control and were hierarchically organised, they were mostly left to their own devices as peripheral 'amateur reserves'. The chance to pursue film was primarily taken up by young people, mostly students and film buffs, in this way creating an important platform for experimenting and reassessing the conventional language of film that was dominant in Yugoslav cinematography.

In 1962 and 1963, as part of the **Cinema Club Zagreb**, a group of film amateurs came up with the term *anti-film*. Cinema club members **Mihovil Pansini** and **Tomislav Kobija** instigated lively discussions on the concept of *anti-film*, and these conversations were spontaneously named *Anti-film and us*. It was concluded that *anti-film* was not a film of conveyance, expression or communication between the artist and the viewer, but an act of disclosure, exploration and reduction. There were multiple reductions: the reduction of the author himself to his work, then the reduction of narration, of expressive means in the film, of rational metaphor, traditional communication with the viewers, etc.

Soon after, in 1963, the biennial **Genre Film Festival (GEFF)** was established in Zagreb (the last event was held in 1969). Analogous with the **Music Biennial** and **New Tendencies**, the festival brought together film enthusiasts, some of whom would later become renowned film directors, and the films of cinema clubs from the whole of the former Yugoslavia.



◀ Petar Blagojević-Arandelović, Belgrade, 1964, photos shots on the set of Tomislav Gotovac's *Circle* (Jutkević-Count)

Due to constant demands for professionalisation in all social systems, especially

those related to art, from today's perspective it is almost impossible to correctly interpret the meaning of the terms amateur film and amateurism, but fortunately there is the first *GEFF Book* that documents in detail the so-called *five discussions on anti-film* and the first **GEFF** event. At the same time, this is the only document that testifies to the festival activities and the emergence of the concept of *anti-film*.<sup>02</sup>

The cinema clubs offered the opportunity for avant-garde experimentation and self-organisation in the spirit of socialist self-management, and a certain form of political engagement. In that regard, cinema clubs, and later the student cultural centres, became extra-systemic spaces of autonomy, and bear witness to the development and coexistence of parallel systems of culture in relation to the official one. The institutional framework has therefore shown itself as being prone to reconfiguration, reinvention and adjustment, and has enabled paradigmatic twists in film and artistic production.

Radical film, as well as other types of art, can be a catalyst for positive social changes. "Amateurs are voluntary film lovers. This gives them freedom and directs them towards the avant-garde and non-conformity. They can ask *forbidden* questions and give *illicit* answers."<sup>03</sup> ✖

ANA JANEVSKI

<sup>02</sup> In the introduction to the *GEFF* book it was recorded: "During these discussions the concept of anti-film appeared. At the end of the third discussion, in May 1962, anti-film was more or less defined for the first time. The texts about the *New Tendencies* and *Gorgona* were actually paraphrased, and in this way their influence on anti-film was confirmed, *GEFF Book* 63.

<sup>03</sup> "Summary of the Fourth Conversation", *the GEFF Book* 63, p. 65.



# MIHOVI PANSINI anti-film - what is it?

The term 'anti-film' was coined accidentally. I wanted to show that a particular photograph suited a cover, and to add some kind of graphic element, so I wrote *Anti-film i mi* [Anti-film and us] on it. Later on, we organised discussions on the subject at the Club, and eventually, during these conversations the idea of anti-film developed. The term we are dealing with, therefore, is accidental and inappropriate. But since this is generally the case with definitions, changing the term is futile, and it would be especially futile to replace it with another equally inadequate word.

The title *Anti-film - what is it?* is similarly inappropriate, since anti-film cannot be defined.

I will, therefore, limit myself to offering a few tendencies of anti-film, as I understand them today. **John Cage:** "I think people are wonderful, and I think this because there are instances of people changing their minds. (I refer to individuals and to myself.)"

New film has meant depicting the truth, while ANTI-FILM IS A CREATION WHERE TRUTH IS UNDERSTOOD, ACCEPTED AND EXHAUSTED, WITH AN AWARENESS THAT IF EVERYONE HAS THEIR OWN TRUTH THERE IS NO NEED TO WARN AGAINST IT. Furthermore, there would be no truth if there were one, and only one, truth. Only the existence of other truths justifies a truth – without being the only one, it shows no danger of terror, and remains a free choice.

The guidelines to our thoughts, the mental horizon around which our experience and expression rotate, have led us in a natural way to anti-film.

This is an intellectual and critical attitude towards oneself, the world and others.

From Descartes onwards we have had knowledge, awareness and understanding; today, however, we have knowledge about knowledge, awareness of awareness, and understanding of understanding. Film has also become a more experimental and exploratory activity of the spirit; it is dominated by trial and reflective analysis, which blurs the border between film and science.

ANTI-FILM IS NO LONGER FILM BY AN AUTHOR WHO IS CONVEYING, EXPRESSING, AND COMMUNICATING WITH A VIEWER, BUT RATHER AN ACT OF DISCOVERY AND EXPLORATION.

The position of the author is important: one of contemplation not expression.

Gestalt theory, multi-sensory perception, or a cybernetic motor sensory model, all point to the unity of nature.

There are sculptures about which we have our doubts, whether or not they are parts of a machine, there are paintings that resemble sculptures, there is music composed of sounds; why, therefore, must a film resemble the type of film we have been exposed to in the past? Why can't it look more like the life and elements of the civilisation in which we live?

WE NEED TO COMPLETE THE DEMOLITION OF THE BORDERS BETWEEN DIFFERENT MEANS OF EXPRESSION, EXPLORATIONS AND LIFE.

Anti-film expresses the most current spiritual state of the contemporary human being, his/her essence and ability to experience.

ANTI-FILM IS AN INTEGRAL PART OF LIFE.

Physics becomes ever more distant from the assumption of causality; it experiments by breaking conventional principles. Heisenberg's indeterminism carries a specific meaning. We are not able to understand the internal causal links between things and phenomena. Hence we have Hume's scepticism and Kant's agnosticism. In the domain of psychology, on the other hand, it has been enough to look into the subconscious to disrupt the internal cohesive links in the world of our psyche: we doubt whether deeds are indeed our own.

Critical consciousness is the human rebellion against false certainties.

The individual can assign a sense to his/her existence by demystifying the world in which he/she lives.

We need to shed tradition if it limits us.

We need to liberate the imagination.

ANTI-FILM MEANS LIBERATION FROM MYTHS, AUTHORITY, RULES, RIGHTS, AND TERROR.

All freedoms are allowed. This permits diversity, which can be a characteristic of anti-film.

The viewer assesses the value of a given work. The value varies, since each time a different experience is proposed. The work changes internally, in the viewer; it is different for different viewers, at different times and epochs.

Thus it is not possible to assess a work. The assessment is always relative, subjective, and devoid of universality.

We are not able to determine what a work of art actually is; we are not able to say what is art. Personally, I am not sure whether such a thing exists.

A broad audience has slowed down the development of film.

A film cannot help an audience, nor can an audience help a film. Film has no such possibilities; hence it should not have such aims. Anti-film is devoid of didacticism or flattery.

When creating a film, one must not think of the public, as this is distracting.

Anti-film is not a medium with which to convey something to the public, as it is in itself a phenomenon. During the act of creation, it should be the only thing that is thought of, everything is subject to it. We are not the ones defining its future relations.

Closing the circle of author-work-viewer should be understood as redundant.

One of the important problems thus far has been alienation.

Once we demystify the author's creation, remove the

mediatory role from the work and the role of judge from the viewer, alienation will be taken to the extreme, and will cease to exist.

There is no such thing as one truth, and nobody should be terrorised by the truths of others.

Anti-film is the result of a new social position of the author and the work:

It is a relationship without sentiment.

No relationship.

This is the revolution of our experiences.

Being aware of the relativity of everything around us and of our own behaviour,

I consider

anti-film to be the opposition to the purposefulness of a work of art, the opposition to evaluating a work, I strip it of the value of the medium, I renounce the terms 'art' and 'work of art'

(as this would make it subject to the judgment of the viewer).

Removing the viewer is not absolute, just as the previous acknowledgement of the viewer never was. On the one hand, getting rid of the viewer leads anti-film to an absurd position, but acknowledging the viewer would be even more troublesome for the work.

The awareness that everything has already been tried makes the game the only sensible option. One

should live in the act of creation, with no concern about the effect. The aim of creation is creative play, not the final work. It is a game that is free of charge, free of gambling, and absolutely selfless – this is the most primal means of human survival. The work has no future, and so what.

ANTI-FILM EXPLORES THE INTERNAL ABILITIES OF FILM, GIVING TO THE WORK THE MEANING OF A GAME. ANTI-FILM IS A GAME THAT HAS DEVELOPED IN ITS OWN TIME AND FROM ITS OWN TIME, ANTI-FILM DESTROYS AND DISCOVERS.



▲ Book of GEFF 63 [Knjiga Geffa 63], GEFF Committee, Zagreb, 1967



## POSTSCRIPT

In order to show the breadth of anti-film, I would like to offer a few more quotes, not necessarily mutually consistent.

Radical reflexivity makes film explore the internal possibilities of the very phenomenon of creating cinematography.

Aware of the subjective nature of our experiences, we want to be as concrete as possible: more clarity is more real.

The camera brings about its own world, its own reality, different from our experience. It decodes the world in a new way, unknown to us. The camera unveils a new image of the world.

The camera can explore the deformation of time and space, and their mutual dependencies; it can simultaneously study and observe from different angles, objects and things that we cannot capture with the naked eye, which escape our senses. The specificity of the film technique, of material, editing, and screening, should be used to the full.

Anti-film deals with visual explorations and studies, a visual game. It studies surroundings, objects, perception, psychology and ambience.

Anti-film releases frames and images constructed from related meanings; researching the possibilities presented by a pure, isolated image. Frames are not words, codes, or symbols to discuss. They are life, which should be observed, if we are interested in life.

To sense the unknown, to seek, to be surprised at one's own discovery.

Anti-film rejects story. It presents and studies.

It rejects dialogue as a means of narrative. Dialogue is a musical element.

Art is reflected both in the form of the work, and in the position of the author: he doesn't care about the work, it doubts its duration, and does not believe in the possibility of the message.

The rational indirect metaphor is a means of telling stories; hence it must be refuted by anti-film. Only irrational direct metaphors are to be retained.

Science has acknowledged and accepted indeterminism, hence indeterminism has become an element of anti-film, and is visible both in the attitude of the author, as well as in the formal structure of the work.

The train of thought does not run clockwise, but

◀ EXHIBITION VIEW:  
*As Soon As I Open  
My Eyes, I See  
a Film (Cinema  
Clubs and GEFf),  
in Art Always Has  
Its Consequences,*  
PHOTO: IVAN KUHARIĆ

Ivan Martinac, *I'm mad*, 1967, film still,  
COURTESY OF THE CROATIAN FILM ASSOCIATION



Vladimir Petek, *Encounters*, 1963, film still,  
COURTESY OF THE CROATIAN FILM ASSOCIATION



rather moves back and forth. There is no time continuum. Anti-film explores the notion of time and space, their interdependencies and interactions.

Anti-film means precision of production, a certain balance of ideas, maximum simplification of the work, a rejection of the traditional means of execution.

Anti-film ceases to be a reflection of a specific person, it is not an expression of a particular sensitivity, by becoming a phenomenon that is purely visual and acoustic, it deals with kinetic and optical phenomena.

We are returning to the ancient interdependencies in aesthetics.

Anti-film is an act of existence, liberated from purposefulness and any reflection *a posteriori*, without any aesthetic consequences. It disappears as quickly as it was created. The object of anti-film is free of any psychological, moral, or symbolic meanings. It demands no work and no effect. Its world is a clean field, here and now. It is suspicious of exaggerated clarity and rejects standard shapes and ways of thinking.

#### NOTE

Anti-film is aware of the exhaustion of the means of expression in film, and that nothing great, or new will be invented. That's it as far as attitude towards the future goes. When it comes to the past, anti-film is a repetition of many tendencies which have appeared from the very beginnings of cinema. They were started by people who loved film.

If film received sufficient attention, there would be no need to talk about anti-film.

As an expression of acceptance, excerpts from five conversations about anti-film have been used, as well as quotes from Ann Halprin, Lutosławski, Scheffer and Cage. ✕

ZAGREB, 9 JUNE 1963.

TEXT PUBLISHED AS "ANTIFILM AND US" [ANTIFILM I MI], IN THE FIRST BOOK OF GEF 63 [KNJIGA GEFFA 63], MIHOVIL PANSINI, VLADIMIRE PETEK, ZLATKO SUDOVIĆ, KRUNO HAJDLER, MILAN SAMEC, EDS., GEF COMMITTEE, ZAGREB, 1967

# GEFF

The idea of GEF originated in 1962 during a series of discussions on the topic of *anti-film and us*.

#### 1962

##### THE FIRST VISION OF ANTI-FILM

In the development of contemporary film, the next step could be called 'anti-film'. Its characteristic features run parallel to those in other fields of art:

- technical precision
- balance of ideas
- clarity of expression
- maximum simplification of the art work
- a departure from traditional means of production
- film ceases to be the reflection of a specific individual
- it ceases to be the expression of a sensibility
- it becomes a pure visual and acoustic phenomenon
- it is freed from all philosophical, literary, psychological, moral and symbolic meanings.

#### 1963

##### THE SECOND VISION OF ANTI-FILM

Slow time; fast time; non-chronological time; reversed time; the projection of six frames per second; subframe animation; filmic deformations of time and space; a change in the relationship between two frames; manipulation of montages of frames: all these open new possibilities for examining the world.

Such examination shows our everyday reality from a new angle: not that of our eyes, but one registered by the camera. Man used to be the measure of all things. Let us try to surpass our physiological limitations, as is done by contemporary science. Let film cease to be the means, the medium, for the author to tell the public about himself; let it become a way of examining the world and life, as if the author himself was a surprised viewer, an observer, a researcher.

#### 1964

A group of amateur filmmakers has come to believe that the problem of alienation has reached absurd proportions in contemporary film. Confident that film is always

revitalised by a return to realism, they have consequently initiated a new realism. This new realism has acquired the name anti-film because it embodies a rebellion against filmic conventions. A logical and historical continuation of the intellectual and hermetic 'new cinema', anti-film is also in opposition to it, as film that locates its enquiry in the basic materiality of film stock, of the camera, and the projector. Instead of alienation and auteur cinema, anti-film advocates limited authorial intervention. Anti-film objects to the narrow bounds that cinema has set for itself, and to the mystification of film as art. Therefore it avoids such terms as 'a work of art', or 'the value of art', and attempts to make film an integral part of life, which participates in all spheres of life.

All these attempts at a critical approach to film, which in conversations, and in films themselves tried to combine concepts of anti-film, exploratory film and new realism, are embraced by GEF.

#### 1965

GEF wants to encourage exploration as an existential topic. Just like scientific and economic institutions – film requires the appropriate conditions for these explorations to take place, and an opportunity to initiate dialogue.

For GEF, all forms of exploration are interesting:

- exploration of the means of recording, editing and reproduction,
- exploration of everyday reality using the tools listed above,
- analysis of the maker using the work,
- analysis of the viewer from their reaction to the work.

GEF wants to liberate film from its narrow cinematic framework, to expand the foundations for new film by erasing the boundaries that divide it from different spiritual spheres. New film cannot exist separately from contemporary philosophical thought, from new tendencies in painting, sculpture, architecture, music, literature, ballet, from technology and science, from society and nature, for all of the above are part of our

existence, and part of our fascination with the phenomenon of life. Film has to partake of the culture and civilisation of today and tomorrow.

### THE THIRD VISION OF ANTI-FILM

GEFF is broadening its scope: beginning with explorations in the area of the phenomenological world of the film medium, and moving on to an examination of the filmmaker's attitude to the world as an integral value.

Is that only a superficial broadening of scope, a one-dimensional opening of the circle?

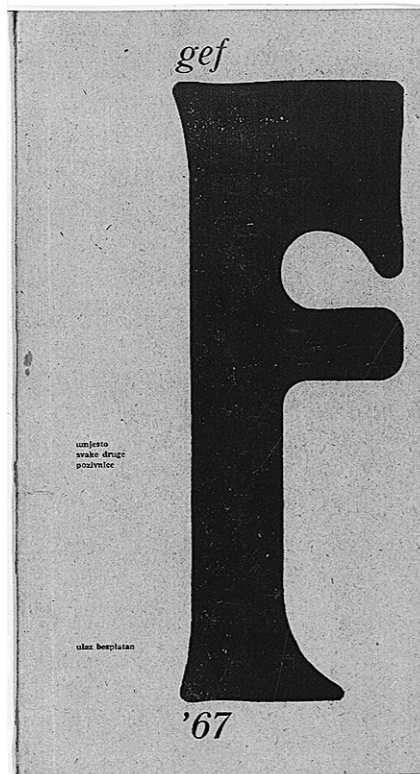
GEFF has faithfully followed the evolution of its offspring, anti-film. Anti-film appeared in a new light and has necessitated a broad understanding of exploration.

Among the concerns of anti-film today, there are not only explorations of the film medium on an ontological level, but also a search for transcendental values.

Two years ago, we, the witnesses to the birth of this new experimental form, thought that what we were dealing with was, at best, a tool of limited range. We thought we had arrived at a method of discerning how the external world reacts to its mechanical registration on film, a method, which was the result of the ultimate reduction of the so-called 'means of cinematic expression'.

We claimed, and we still claim today, that the very phenomenon of registering the visible world of the senses – understood as the passive relationship of a man with a camera to the world – is a discovery in its own right. Anti-film has been content to use 'gestalt' in the process of creation, and psychoanalysis in examining the impressions of such reduced registration.

We didn't know until we looked back, and were able to make a deduction based on experience rather than proclaiming our programmes and theories *a priori*, that



▲ Invitation card for GEF 67, Zagreb, 1967

anti-film is not only an experiment, but a complete vision of the surrounding world: a poetic act.

Each reduction of the excess layers of the basic material – with material understood to be the visible and sensual aspects of the external world, registered photo- and phonographically – led to an optical and aural fixation on the specific object.

It is as if in contrast to the seventy years of the art film tradition, which focused mostly on movement, and made movement an aesthetic and ontological credo of the whole, single, expressible field of human spirit, anti-film has been consumed by static observation. One needs to delve into the space-time continuum. One needs to examine the sense of lifeless existence. Within the limited scope of one's sensory perception, so vulnerable to the imperfections of the senses, one needs to discover the general stream, flowing in veins that are invisible to our eyes; this continuous pulse, which is so elusive to the ear. With a concentrated

invasion of spirit into matter, anti-film wanted to make up for the limitations of the senses. It achieved much more than that.

Fixation, which is one of the ground rules of anti-film, has introduced us to the transcendental sphere, at the very moment when it has been empirically proven that it is possible to exchange the senses for the intellect. Thus we began – and here is the dream of surrealism come true, here are the beginnings of the ideals of happenings and pop art – to discover the deep meaning of existence in the 'accidental' relations of the phenomenological world. We were attracted by the dialectical imperative, which lies at the foundation of cinema, and which combines the dynamic and the static, the relative and the absolute, the absolute and the relative, and that is how we were taught to see, not with the nervousness of the live and anxious eye, jumping from one fragment of reality to the next, but only with enduring concentration on one, single, object,

which shamelessly hides sense behind the illusion of the accident of its position and shape.

### 1967

#### HUMANISTIC UNIVERSALISM.

Exploration without prejudice.

A combination of art and general cognition.

A synthesis of knowledge and skill. A synthesis of complete human experience and creativity. The need for interdisciplinary investigation and broad international cooperation.

New ideas are the source of change.

The ability to create is demonstrated in two ways: through the discovery of new connections between disparate intellectual trends, or through the integration, joining and synthesis of new totalities, from the single elements of disparate intellectual trends.

Creation and progress are the effect of the dissatisfaction of the gods with what they see. The persistent refining of our ideas, and a conscientious approach to mistakes, liberates us from the tyranny of eternal truths and dogmas.

Conditions have to be created which are conducive to initiative, originality and creativity.

When we have to admit that electrons are the result of discovery and invention, they may seem strange to us, but not illogical. But when we have to assign to them the mutually exclusive qualities of particles and waves, they are no longer strange but stop making sense. Serious doubts appear as to whether reality fits these types of contradictions. We begin to realise that this is not exclusively the domain of the world, but of our own thoughts, symbols, concepts, and logic. It is the latter that we need to change, and replace with something new. ✘

PUBLISHED IN GEF 67, MEETING OF FILM RESEARCHERS, THIRD BIENNIAL, ASSOCIATION OF CROATIAN FILM WORKERS, CROATIAN CINE UNION, CINE CLUB ZAGREB, ZAGREB, 1967



▲ GEF 67, Association of Croatian Film Workers, Croatian Cine Union, Cine Club Zagreb, Zagreb, 1967



▲ EXHIBITION VIEW: As Soon As I Open My Eyes, I See a Film (Cinema Clubs and GEF 67), in Art Always Has Its Consequences, PHOTO: IVAN KUHARIĆ

# Didactic Exhibition: Abstract art

Didactic Exhibition:  
Abstract Art, City Gallery of  
Contemporary Art, Zagreb,  
1957, PHOTO: NENAD GATTIN

In the month between 27 March and 30 April 1957, an exhibition entitled *Contemporary Art 1. Didactic Exhibition on Abstract Art* took place at the City Gallery of Contemporary Art in Zagreb, which was still a very new art space (since it was officially founded in 1954). The selection of texts and reproductions, as well as the layout of the exhibition, were decided and realised by artists and art critics who had previously been connected to **EXAT 51** (by that time, the art group had already ceased its activity) and the journal *Čovjek i prostor*: painter and designer **Ivan Picelj**, art critic **Radoslav Putar**, **Tihana Ravelić**, architects **Vjenceslav Richter** and **Neven Šegvić**, painter **Edo Kovačević**, and the Gallery's manager **Vesna Barbić**.

Although the idea of continuation suggested by the number 1 in the exhibition's title didn't occur, some of its ambitions were obviously satisfied, since in the following years the exhibition travelled through a number of Yugoslav towns.

In the interpretation of the exhibition, on one side there is the myth about the complete outbreak of artistic freedom, expression and creation – this was an educational exhibition about abstract art in a socialist country, 'reaching the village' in an almost **Ilf-and-Petrovian** sense. This myth emphasises the fact that in those dire circumstances, with almost no specialised literature, insufficient access to information, and few opportunities to see original artworks by international artists, that an exhibition of a

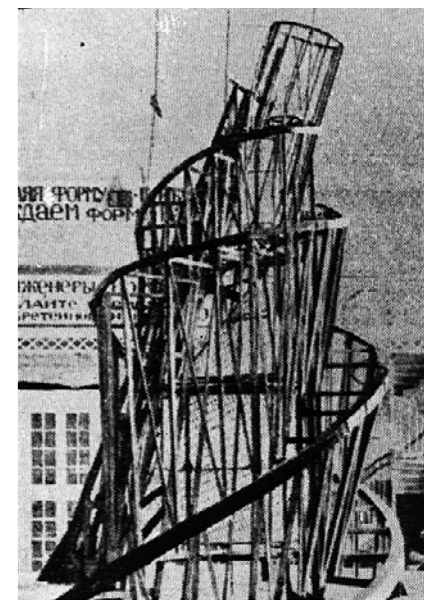
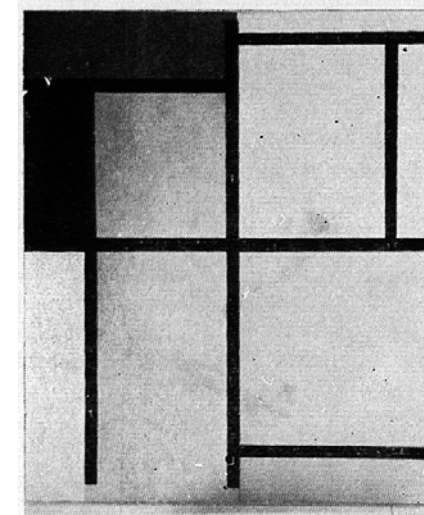


didactic character and a relatively modest number of exhibits meant much more than one might presume today: an opportunity for learning and obtaining information, which was part of the overall strategy that the members of **EXAT 51** systematically practiced. The exhibition catalogue, with its extensive biographical information, excerpts from manifestos and artists' texts, and a comprehensive bibliography, was the first historical overview of abstract art in our language.<sup>01</sup> A version of this approach claims that the label 'didactic' was an efficient means of countering possible accusations of ideological undesirability.

The opposing hypothesis claims that the exhibition is of little interest for us today, except perhaps as an interesting attempt at setting up an educational exhibition, and that it took place when the main part of the struggle for the freedom of artistic expression had already passed. After all, it was 1957, when **EXAT 51** no longer existed and the chief polemics had long since become entrenched... Some critics interpret the didactic character of the exhibition as an indicator of its servitude to the ideological apparatus of the state rather than its 'non-ideological character'. ✘

WHW

<sup>01</sup> Michel Seuphor's book on Abstract Art was published in 1959 by Mladost from Zagreb, translation Radoslav Putar.



▲ Mondrian and Tatlin, reproductions from the catalogue, *Didactic Exhibition: Abstract Art*, City Gallery of Contemporary Art, Zagreb, 1957

Godina '68. je posejala same preispitivanja – šta da radi umetnik u društvu tržišta, šta da radi umetnik u društvu ideoloških polarizacija, itd. 1968. godina je ključni ambijent oko kojeg se kreće opisana problematika. Ono što je interesantno reći jeste, da sva ta gibanja tangiraju područje dizajna. Nije dizajn nešto što se odvija u kabinetima, na crtačim stolovima, u fabrikama ili u radnjama...

Jerko Denegri

**Na kraju krajeva, EXAT 51 je jedna čitanka proboja ka modernoj, društveno odgovornoj umetnosti.**

Stane Bernik

Kapital je podržavao kontrarevoluciju. To što je on naslavio raditi i dalje, pretvorilo se u nešto što je suprotnoga smisla. Pad Berlinskoga zida ima dva značenja: to nije samo pad mentalnih ostataka jedne deformirane revolucionarne ideje koja se danas zove samo komunizam i komunizam se čita samo u tome smislu i nikakvome drugome, nego je to pobijeda kontrarevolucije, konačno je ostao samo jedan moćnik na svijetu, a taj moćnik je nametnuo svoju moć. Ideološki, ona se danas klasificira kao ideologija neoliberalizma. Niko u ovim zemljama koje su podlegle tom nastretju nije u stanju distancirati se i reći: pa to je kontrarevolucija, jer je ona prava revolucija davno, davno, otišla u zaborav.

Matko Meštrović

Takođe, postojala je borba da se dizajn postavi kao tema dana u socijalističkom društvu pod devizom: trebamo društvo uzdignuljeg socijalnog standarda, a ne društvo potrošnje kao takvo. Upravo se u ovome vidi zanos prvih posleratnih generacija.

Jerko Denegri

Jasno se može videti da su pedesete godine jedan prelomni momenat. Možda je upravo rezolucija Informbira izazvala duboku krizu, i moralnu i političku i ekonomsku, ali je kriza bila već početkom pedesetih godina prevladana i snaga kolektivnog bića je proradila, jasno, s nekom vizijom.

Matko Meštrović

**Fenomeni kao što je Bauhaus, Ruska avangarda, futurizam, De Stijl, itd. - veliki su pokreti koji postavljaju dizajn kao vrlo važan segment unutar svog delovanja. Bilo je jasno da je dizajn integralni deo vizuelne kulture i kulture oblikovanja XX veka.**

Jerko Denegri

Postojala je jedna izuzetna strategijska, načelna politika, a to je solidarnost u pomaganju da se zemlja što cijelovitije razvija... nije bilo produbijavanja razlika, nego je nastojanje bilo da se one smanje.

Matko Meštrović

Na tim žiriranjima [zvaničnih konkursa za politički plakat] se moglo jako puno naučiti; ta žiriranja su prosto bila jedna dodatna edukacija onima koji su tek počinjali, meni naročito u to vreme s početka 1970-ih godina.

Branislav Dobanovački

**Ovim stavom, da u prošlosti nije bilo ništa ukoliko je bilo obojeno crveno, ružičasto, itd. - mi ne možemo ukinuti da neko tako misli - ali time se lišavamo nečega što ja zovem leva kulturna baština, koja je daleko od toga da je za bacanje. Pošto ni Nemci nisu odbacili jednog Brehta, bilo bi pametno da ni mi ništa od tog nasleđa ne bacamo.**

Branko Vučićević

Čovjek mora zapravo započeti tu priču iz društvenih prilika i situacije. Mi govorimo o planskoj privredi, a zapravo moramo govoriti o tržištu, jer sve što se planski proizvodilo se i prodavalo; svako je tražio bolju robu. I tu je bilo mjesto oblikovanja i dizajna.

Stane Bernik

Tada su alatke bile cirkle, lenjir, lepak i makaze. Makaze naravno dovode do osnovnog načela onog što je bilo dobro u istoj toj umetnosti XX veka, a to je montaža. Dakle, grafički dizajn za mene je jedna od formi montaže.

Branko Vučićević

Kad bi se pravio nekakav bilans umetnosti prošlog veka, po meni on bi izgledao sasvim drugačije nego što izgleda u istoriji umetnosti. Ako hoćemo da navedemo ono što je bilo najbitnije u toj umetnosti XX veka, ja počinjem od toga da to u svakom slučaju nije slikarstvo, već su to fotografija, arhitektura, delimično film i grafički dizajn.

Branko Vučićević



▲ EXHIBITION VIEW: Timeline of Graphic & Industrial design in Yugoslavia from 1945 to 1990 (Dejan Kršić & kuda.org)



▲ EXHIBITION VIEW: kuda.org, Ideology of Design, PHOTO: IVAN KUHARIĆ

## IDEOLOGY OF DESIGN: FRAGMENTS ON THE HISTORY OF YUGOSLAV DESIGN

The project *Ideology of Design* is dedicated to contextualising the theories and practices of Yugoslav design that took place during the 'long' history of this socialist country. Through a series of documentary video interviews, protagonists of design theory and practice, architecture, urbanism and art history, talk about design as an interdisciplinary field, which includes achievements from culture, science, architecture, technology and artistic practice, and which accordingly represents fertile ground for sociological and philosophical discussions on technology and the marketplace, on social and political-economical dynamics and the labour process. The project placed particular emphasis on discussions and practices that took place at the time of socialism in Yugoslavia, which tried to define the role of design in a (non-)market socialist economy, its functionalism and its being conditioned by the market, or its social engagement, and the role of design in shaping "man's new relationship towards material objects". Developing progressive, critical and contradictory positions, design was simultaneously presented as a symbol of the post-war reconstruction of a country under the wing of industrialisation, and the liberation of man from material privation, but as decades went by it played an increasingly central role in building a

socialist market society. The exhibition *Ideology of Design* was presented for the first time at the end of 2009 in Novi Sad (<http://www.kuda.org/en/project-and-exhibition-id-ideology-design>). Documentation was in the format of video interviews with some of the most important protagonists of Yugoslav theory and practice of design and art history, among them: **Matko Meštrović** and **Fedor Kritovac** from Zagreb, **Stane Bernik** from Ljubljana, **Jerko Denegri** and **Branko Vučićević** from Belgrade, and **Branislav Dobanovački** from Novi Sad. The historical perspective of design in socialism was complemented with the intervention of contemporary design and theory by the collective **Metahaven** (Amsterdam /Brussels), who presented their latest work, *Join In to Sign Out*. Designed by **Vinca Kruk**, **Dimitri van Loenen**, **Daniel Melse**, **Daniel van der Velden**, *Join In to Sign Out* is a game that proposes a shift from 'socialism' to 'sociability'. An advertising slogan, 'Geopolitics. Easy to play – Hard to win.' was adapted from the 'Mastermind' game and printed onto a 122 × 170 cm jigsaw puzzle, combining the unassuming colours of political maps with the operational controls of online social networking. ✘

KUDA.ORG



◀ EXHIBITION VIEW:  
ID: Ideology of  
Design, PHOTO:  
IVAN KUHARIĆ

The currents of communication in all fields of social existence are increasingly wider, deeper and more intensive. they multiply much faster than we could have expected. moreover, their growth is of such magnitude that the average eye almost cannot grasp it. the volume of events is increasing all the time and at every location where we work, live and rest, and this volume is not only connected to quantity, but to the quality of the traffic of matter and messages. the messages of management (which should at times be separated from governmentality) especially, show a tendency for growth in their number, and each falling behind in this respect is tragic, very expensive, and in many places causes fatal consequences. together with numerous professionals who had clear insight into this fact, we have to conclude that the essential problem, as well as our position in the general flow of progress, lies in our belatedness in the field of quality information.

we have still not completely mastered all of the techniques of the information channels, which are in a way 'classical', such as the written word, and the static, congruent 'picture' of an object on a surface. we are still not used to it and we have still not exhausted all of the possibilities of communication that our technical capacities and the degree of managing human beings offer to us. we are submerged in problems that have occurred and we are threatened by new presences in our consciousness. a dialogue with a machine has been announced to us, as well as – the symbiosis with machines, which will be extended, 'arms' of our contemplation. new languages emerge that have not come from any ethnical system. we have to count on new measures of time and space. we still have not clearly trodden our chosen path. we cannot expect a balance sheet of this position that would be available to everyone and we are left only to determine the direction.

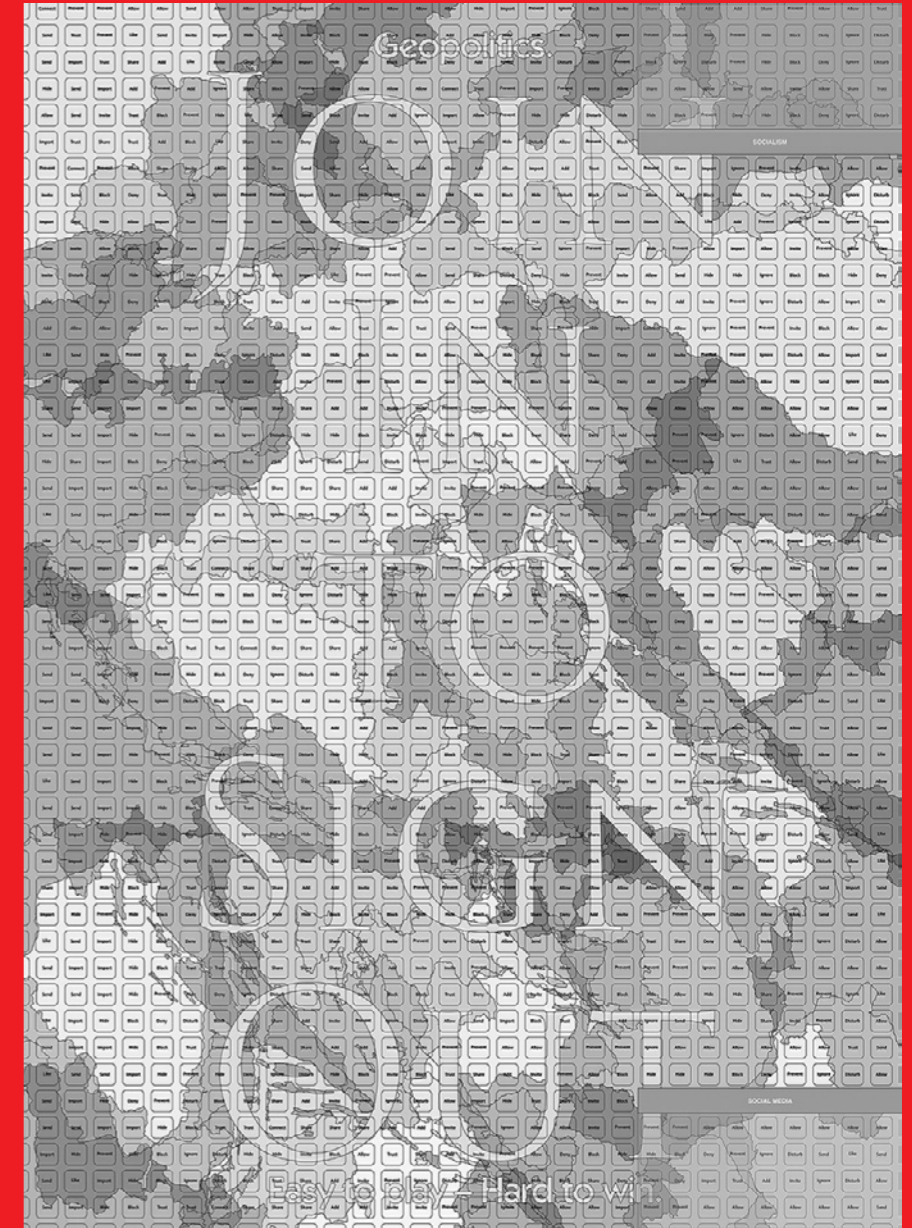
in the field of graphic design, our standard is low. in many areas it is below average. the educational institutions where we create the capacity for graphic industry produce a workforce that cannot meet the most advanced requirements of this environment. On the one hand the technical means we are using are modest, and on the other they are underexploited in relation to what is possible and necessary today.

for this reason we are always being directed towards the efforts and advanced visual orientation of individuals who are creating new results and relations in this field. this thin layer of creators in the field of visual means of communication is constantly overburdened and is not involved in its environment in a way that would be satisfactory for both sides.

that is why it is necessary to establish many contacts between people; among people and problems, using many areas of information gathering on as many levels as possible; within a wide range and with ambition on the most modest levels with the most modest intentions. we need to take a good look at the results achieved as often as possible and in as many ways as possible, it is also necessary to develop specific sensitivities for visual communication.

therefore it is necessary to make the new practice of designing posters, books, stationery more relevant for us, as well as using other opportunities where a message is repeated thousands of times with the assistance of a printing press. it is for this reason that this collection of valuable and appropriate examples of visual communications design has been created and exhibited here – with the modest hope that one day it will be extended, increased and made more universal and efficient. ✘

RADOSLAV PUTAR, INTRODUCTION TO THE FIRST KONTAKT EXHIBITION, FEBRUARY 1971



▲ Metahaven: *Join In to Sign Out*, 2010

◀ EXHIBITION VIEW: ID: Ideology of Design;  
Metahaven: *Join In to Sign Out*, 2010, PHOTO: IVAN KUHARIĆ

◀ *Kontakt*, poster, 1973, design: Slobodan Mašić

# SYMPOSIUM WROCLAW '70

The *Symposium of Fine Arts*, also known as the *Symposium Wrocław '70*, was held as part of a political event celebrating what came to be called the twenty-fifth Anniversary of the Return of Western and Northern Lands to the [Polish] Motherland. According to the organisers, the official goal of the gathering was to serve as "an attempt at confronting different ways of modern thinking that will result in developing outstanding art works in the city of Wrocław". The projects submitted by the artists ranged from drawings, models using various materials, technical schemes to urban planning. Projects for the Celina housing estate, which were prepared under the direction of **Marian Bogusz** were aimed at changing the environment for this new build block of flats. **Oskar Hansen** interpreted the official aims in a more interactive way, creating a platform for the citizens of Wrocław, which would allow them to see both the past and the future structure of the city. For some artists the event was an excuse to experiment with different artistic and social approaches, for example, **Anastazy Wiśniewski's** Art Centre (*The Pillory*), which used strong and ironical gestures to show the dynamics of the artistic scene in relation to officialdom. **Włodzimierz Borowski's** dialogue directly advocated a conceptual approach.

The artists invited by the board of twelve art critics and theorists, representing various avant-garde

positions, were asked to submit projects that would contribute to the shaping of a new urban structure for the city, still in ruins after World War II.

The projects were shown to the public in the exhibition, which opened on 17 March 1970 at the city's Museum of Architecture and Restoration. The original assumption that all of them would be realised within the site-specific conditions of the city, in solid materials, negotiated between artists, architects and critics became a field of symbolic play between the local political establishment and the committee of art critics and artists. From among the submitted proposals only two were completed, including **Henryk Stażewski's** *Unlimited Vertical Composition*, which was the only work produced during the *Symposium* itself. Artists, critics and officials took part in a series of debates during which the official goals and logistics were intensely discussed. From a contemporary perspective this is one of the most remarkable documents on Polish art in relation to politics.

In the following decades the *Symposium* was either hailed as "the last convention of the avant-garde" or recognised as "the first manifestation of conceptual art in Poland". Recently the event became an area of interest for art historians who wanted to place it in a broader framework that takes it beyond the myth of the conceptual approach. ✖

MAGDALENA ZIÓŁKOWSKA & KATARZYNA SŁOBODA

▶  
Marian Bogusz group: Andrzej Bartyński,  
Krzysztof Coriolan, Roman Nyga,  
Project for the Celina housing estate / on the  
left: Kindergarten at Sudecka Street and on the  
upper right: Feeding tray / Spatial form, 1970,

PHOTO: ZDZISŁAW HOLUKA, COURTESY OF DOLNOŚLĄSKIE  
TOWARZYSTWO ZACHĘTY SZTUK PIĘKNYCH, WROCLAW





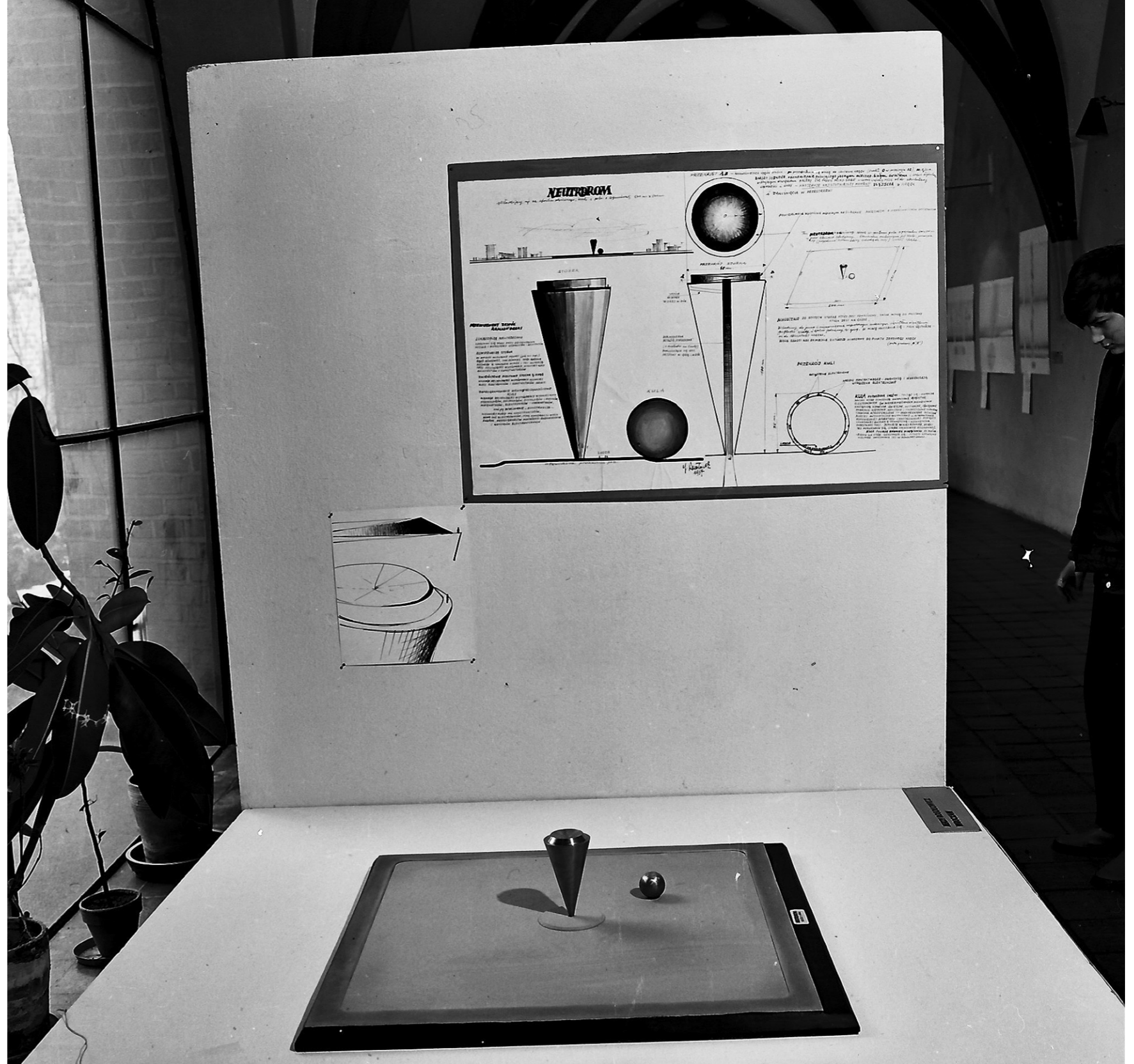


◀ Jerzy Rosołowicz, on the left: *Project for Concert for 28 Pillows and the Sunset*; on the right: *Travel Neutronikon*, 1970, PHOTO: ZDZISŁAW HOLUKA, COURTESY OF JANINA AND ALEKSANDER ROSOŁOWICZ; DOLNOŚLĄSKIE TOWARZYSTWO ZACHĘTY SZTUK PIĘKNYCH, WROCLAW



◀ EXHIBITION VIEW: *Open Archive / Symposium Wrocław 70* research project at Profile Foundation, Warsaw, 2010, CURATORS: JOLANTA GROMADZKA, MAJA KOKOT, MAGDALENA KOWNACKA, KATARZYNA SŁOBODA, ALBERT GODYCKI; PHOTO: MARCIN ŁAGOCKI

▶ Jerzy Rosołowicz, *Neutrdrom*, 1967/1970, PHOTO: ZDZISŁAW HOLUKA, COURTESY OF JANINA AND ALEKSANDER ROSOŁOWICZ; DOLNOŚLĄSKIE TOWARZYSTWO ZACHĘTY SZTUK PIĘKNYCH, WROCLAW



**Anastazy Wiśniewski**  
**Art Centre (The Pillory)**

Description for plate no. 1, the 'Art Centre', according to the following numbers:

The project is the result of the slogan 'Down With Plagiarism!', meaning that the only way of avoiding plagiarism is through a commission.

The commission is addressed to all artists – make a spectacle for the critics.

Café – a commission for women.

Commission for Rosołowicz – remain neutral on the stage.

Commission for Wł. Borowski – cover what has already been made (protection against rain).

?

AW – Sokołowska.

Commission for Marczyński (the design of a trapdoor).

Commission for Kantor (always first) – walk over Marczyński's commission convincing the Wrocław citizens to do the same.

Metal construction of the fourteenth grade of roughness.

Commission for an engineer not involved in art circles and a tinsmith (corner of Szewska street, near the commission-house).

[illegible]

Commission for M. S. Dżakarta – bring a lot of sea sponges.

'Centre meant for Wrocław School' – commission for Geppert – decide whose works are to be hung first.

Follow-up at the 'Centre' for Stażewski, Sosnowski, and others, not based in Wrocław.

?

Commission for Hasior – (deduct) count.

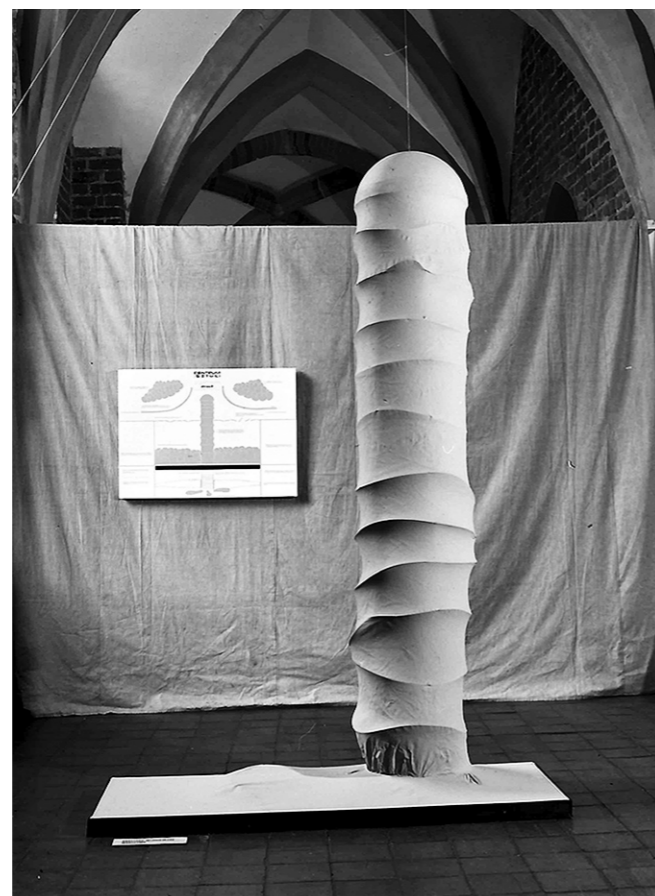
Commission for someone 'strong' – attempt to set

Anastazy Wiśniewski's painting on fire.

?

?

Commission for... tighten the screw.



▲ Anastazy B. Wiśniewski, *Art Centre (The Pillory)*, 1970,

PHOTO: ZDZIŚŁAW HOLUKA, COURTESY OF DOLNOŚLĄSKIE

TOWARZYSTWO ZACHĘTY SZTUK PIĘKNYCH, WROCLAW

**Celina Housing Estate**

№. 9 Roman Nyga, Andrzej Bartyński,  
Krzysztof Corolan

Kindergarten, Sudecka Street

Bird Table: Spatial Form

1:20 Scale Model

Height 7 m. On a 3.5 m high metal pipe (60 cm diameter), embedded in the ground and surrounded by metal pipes (5-7 cm diameter), rests a sheet metal form (5-7 mm thick). On the pipes there are shiny coloured spheres (enamelled metal or metal covered with artificial alloy) (15-30 cm diameter). The pipes also hold a metal ring covered with an artificial alloy (3.5 m diameter, 60 cm high). In the lower section of the form is a wooden shelf (bird table), attached to it is a vertical wooden batten.

1:200 Scale Model

Yard

Sectors:

Family – coloured glass

Childhood – games

P – sandbox: white, even concrete, glass, wood

E – paddling pool: coloured glass, ceramic alloys

Y – barriers: wood

U-s – swing, merry-go-round: wood, metal, alloys, concrete

Education

K – bird table (see above)

C – slide: wood, metal

O – sphere: glass

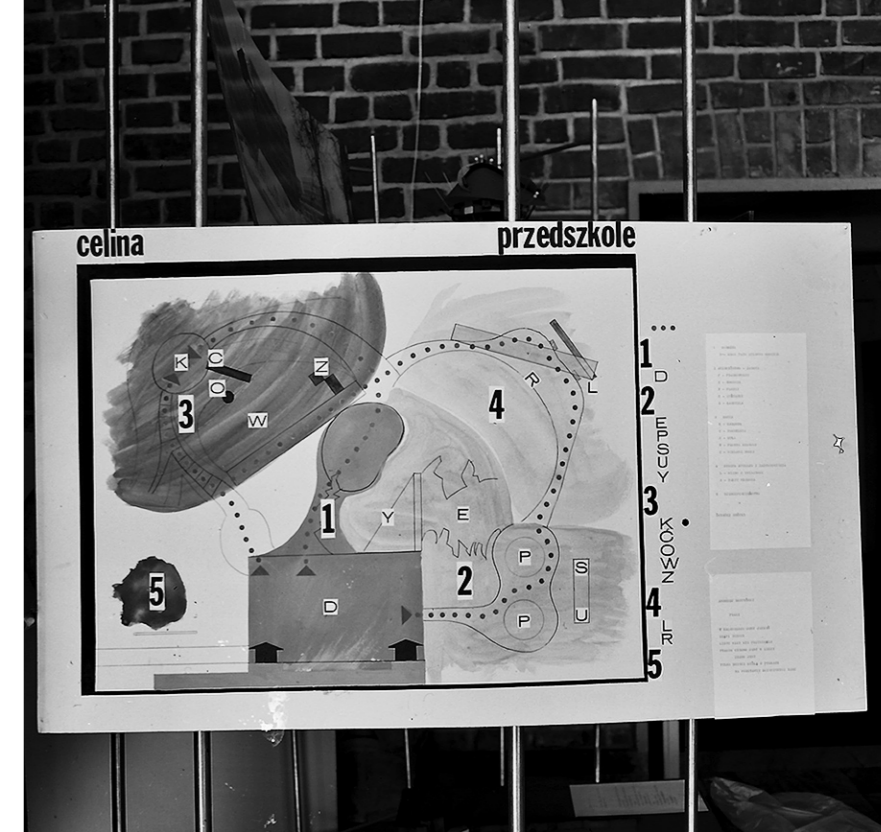
W – basic symbols: glass, alloys

Z – house of glass: transparent artificial alloy (height 3 m, width 1 m), glass or white grit on the ground

Zone of Rest and Contemplation

L – sky: bent metal (length 20 m, width 2.5 m)

R – poem: glass typography



Asphalt path, benches – wood, prism –

stone, striped zone – glass

Danger

Painted metal, coloured concrete

Fence: wood

Plate by the entrance: metal covered with artificial alloy, path to the kindergarten: coloured concrete.

All elements of the kindergarten yard should be made of colourful materials that are pleasant to touch.

▲ Marian Bogusz group: Andrzej Bartyński, Krzysztof Corolan, Roman Nyga, project for the Celina housing estate; Kindergarten at Sudecka Street, 1970, PHOTO: ZDZIŚŁAW HOLUKA, COURTESY OF DOLNOŚLĄSKIE TOWARZYSTWO ZACHĘTY SZTUK PIĘKNYCH, WROCLAW

**Oskar Hansen**  
**Work Title: *The Worldseer* (Światowit)**

*The Worldseer* (Światowit) is a device that enables one to perceive and appreciate one's surroundings to a greater extent. It is placed in inconspicuous and undervalued locations, which are, however, important from the point of view of perception.

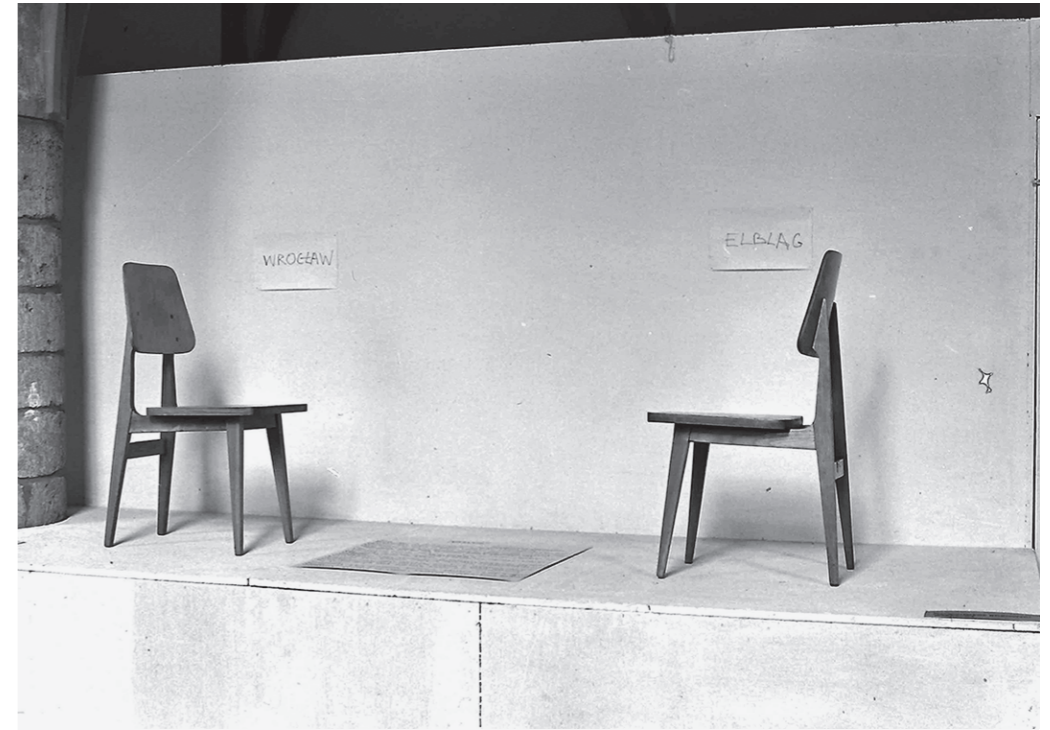
The aim of placing three such components in the historical centre of Wrocław, as part of the Symposium Wrocław '70, is to indicate potential locations that make it possible to appreciate the scale and cultural importance of the reconstruction effort on the twenty-fifth Anniversary of the People's Republic of Poland.

The proposed device consists of three telescope-arms pointing in directions that represent a given location. Each look inside shows a composition formed by the juxtaposition of two elements: 1) Wrocław '45, 2) Wrocław '70. Wrocław '45 is a photographic document capturing the city environment in 1945, presented in an illuminated glass vitrine. Wrocław '70, on the other hand, is the actual view of a historical part of Wrocław, as seen through the telescope, dependent on the character of forms and the colour climate of the observed landscape.

WARSAW 15.03.70

Oskar Hansen, *Światowit / The Worldseer*, 1970, PHOTO: ZDZISŁAW HOLUKA, COURTESY OF ZAKŁAD NARODOWY IM. OSSOLIŃSKICH, WROCLAW

Natalia Lach-Lachowicz at the exhibition near the project of which she was a co-author: Zbigniew Dłubak, Natalia Lach-Lachowicz, Andrzej Lachowicz, *Set of Optical Instruments*, PHOTO: ZDZISŁAW HOLUKA, COURTESY OF ZAKŁAD NARODOWY IM. OSSOLIŃSKICH, WROCLAW



Włodzimierz Borowski,  
*The Dialogue*, 1970,  
 PHOTO: ZDZISŁAW HOLUKA,  
 COURTESY OF DOLNOŚLĄSKIE  
 TOWARZYSTWO ZACHĘTY SZTUK  
 PIĘKNYCH, WROCLAW

**Włodzimierz Borowski**  
**Work Title: *The Dialogue***

A year ago, at the 3rd Biennale of Spatial Forms held in Elbląg, I set out to realise the 'Chair' project. Its design was modelled on a typical metal chair, as is often found in milk bars or café gardens.

Fabricated with the same material, and made to the highest standards of production, the chair was to be situated on a hillside near the so-called 'Pheasant Park' [*Bażantarnia*]. The project was developed at the construction facilities of the 'Zamech' plant. The organisers assured me that the design would be realised.

Developing this idea further, I would like to place an identical 'Chair' in Wrocław.

I have named this situation 'Dialogue'.

Both chairs should be situated along the Wrocław-Elbląg axis, facing each other.

**The Chair**

Its monstrous form confounds the chair's original function. On the other hand, the impossibility of viewing the chair at close distance confounds its symbolic meaning. We are left with the conceptual sphere as well as the relationship between the chair and its surroundings (scale).

**Dialogue**

The distance between the chairs makes the situation impossible to perceive. Relationships between the two are of a conceptual nature, likewise those between the chair and its surroundings.

**Realisation**

The construction should be made of welded steel pipes. The seat and the back-rest should be made of sheet metal.

The construction should be painted black, while the seat and the back-rest should be red.



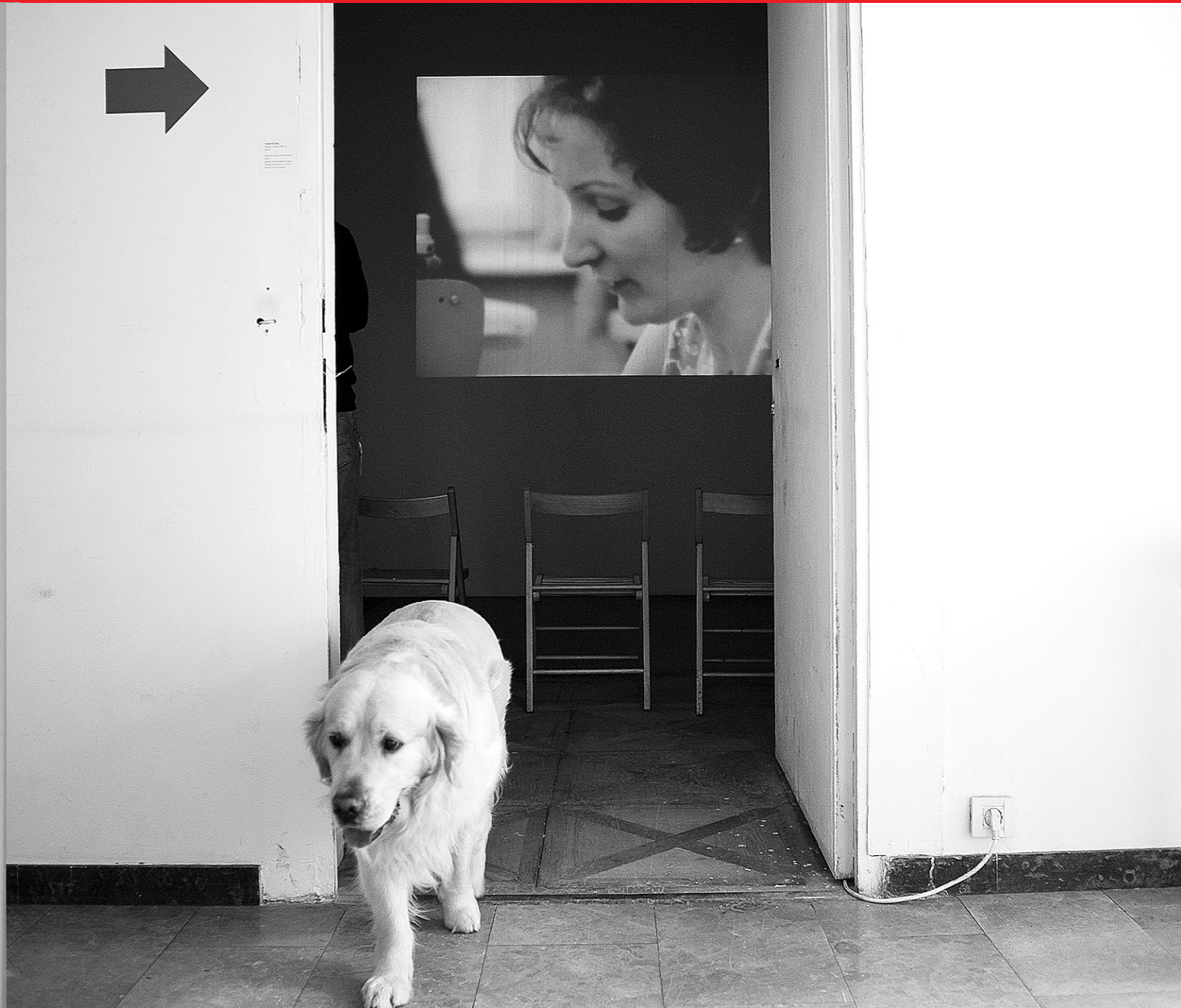
▲  
Zdzisław Jurkiewicz talking to the viewers about his project *The field of perception*, PHOTO: TADEUSZ ROLKE



▲  
Zdzisław Jurkiewicz, *The Field of Perception*, PHOTO: TADEUSZ ROLKE

▶  
Henryk Stażewski, *Unlimited vertical composition*, realised in Wrocław on 9 May 2010, PHOTO: ZDZISŁAW HOLUKA, COURTESY OF DOLNOŚLĄSKIE TOWARZYSTWO ZACHĘTY SZTUK PIĘKNYCH, WROCŁAW





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