



**FRAGMENTS
FOR STUDIES
ON ART
ORGANISATIONS**

Volume 1

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The Art Organisation project began with a series of video interviews with participants and protagonists of the Yugoslav and post-Yugoslav art scenes, which, together with other collected material, comprise part of the emerging archive. The collected material was presented on a timeline in order to organise material for future interpretation and translation activities. We do not want to use the timeline to say that there is some consistent linear history of the art of collective practices that we strive for, but to place them in a certain context and to emphasise the differences between individual moments determined by the ways of production and reproduction, ideologies, events, discussions, affects, in short, the atmosphere of struggle. The main goal of this project is to establish a field of research, which will be focused on collective processes in the (post) Yugoslav space rather than the products of such work.

In the period from 2017 to 2020, the following were interviewed: Dunja Blažević, Dejan Sretenović, Branka Stipančić; Janka Vukmir; Nebojša Vilić (Небојша Вилић); Zdenka Badovinac; ОНО group (Marko Pogačnik); Family of Clear Streams (Božidar Mandić); IRWIN (Miran Mohar and Borut Vogelnik); ŠKART group (Đorđe Balmazović and Dragan Protić); Labin Art Express (Dean Zahtila); Magnet group (Jelena Marjanov, Ivan Pravdić and Siniša Rešin-Tucić); Multi-medijalni institut (Tomislav Medak i Petar Milat); WHW – who, how and who for (Ivet Ćurlin and Ana Dević); Janez Janša, Janez Janša, Janez Janša; FOKUS group (Iva Kovač and Elvis Krstulović).

Video archive *Art Organization Through Time* was presented at the *Exhibition Art Organization* in the Gallery SULUV in Novi Sad during July 2020 and can be viewed at: <https://kuda.org/en/art-organization-through-time-video-archive>

Nebojša Vilić (Небојша Вилић), The DENES Group and The ZERO Group

1951

1952

1953

1954

1955

1956

1957

1958

1959



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Umetnička organizacija predstavlja kolektivno umetništvo. Umetničke organizacije stvaraju zajednički prostor, zajednički prostor i zajednički govor i zajednički način umetničke produkcije. Naša formacija razmišlja o umetničkoj produkciji na načinu drugog organiziranja stvaranja i o umetničkoj produkciji koja je podložna kolektivnoj umetničkoj produkciji. Umjetnička organizacija je kolektivno umetništvo. Umetničke organizacije stvaraju zajednički prostor, zajednički prostor i zajednički govor i zajednički način umetničke produkcije. Naša formacija razmišlja o umetničkoj produkciji na načinu drugog organiziranja stvaranja i o umetničkoj produkciji koja je podložna kolektivnoj umetničkoj produkciji. Umjetnička organizacija je kolektivno umetništvo. Umetničke organizacije stvaraju zajednički prostor, zajednički prostor i zajednički govor i zajednički način umetničke produkcije. Naša formacija razmišlja o umetničkoj produkciji na načinu drugog organiziranja stvaranja i o umetničkoj produkciji koja je podložna kolektivnoj umetničkoj produkciji.

Art Organization analyzes the phenomenon of artists' self-organization and relations within art groups and collectives in the past Yugoslav region during the last 70 years, and the way it influenced the profile and quality of their artistic production. Through the phenomenon of self-organization, the project questions the role of self-organized organizations in regional development plans in society through time and art. The project issues a study based on the self-organization and the participation of these practices from the 1960s until today, with a focus on the contemporary heritage of organizing and relations in the recent past of local and national art life. Through the two main goals of the 1960s and 1970s and the broader context of the 1930s. During July 2023, a collaborative research across group was created through the project: organizing the studies on art organizations in their own and further explore the materials created during the project. The working group will issue a piece for collective critical meeting of the art history of the Yugoslav region and its socio and cultural work with the project. Marko Pogačnik, director of public, urban communities, Institute of Collective Organization in Art, is having ideas, adding an organizational perspective to their production. The entire theme of the organizing events and activities was oriented due to the strategic importance period of the 1960s for culture and represents a challenge of its kind for relating with art and organization heritage. In light of this, the whole project and public arrangements are available on the kuda.org website.

Uz pomoć udruženja likovnih umetnika Vojvodine
the Union of Associations of Fine Artists of Vojvodina

1953 - 1988
Nebojša Vilić (Небојша Вилић), group DENES and group ZERO

Interview with Nebojša Vilić about the group DENES and ZERO, Skopje

At the congress they decided to encourage artists to organize themselves around certain ideas, around common interests.

kuks.org / artforum.org

Marko Pogačnik, The OHO Group

2000-2020

Katja Praznik, Slovenia/USA; Sezgin Bojnik, Kosovo/Finland

The political economy of art collectives is the third in a series of discussions within the Vectors of Collective Imagination in Art segment, which will revolve around the influence of dominant economic models on the dynamics of work in art, ways of perceiving political economy in art and organising artists as cultural workers. Katja Praznik tackled art as labour issues and the questions of the tactical advantages of such thinking for artistic organisation. Sezgin Bojnik dealt with the role of art groups during the period of 'transition' in the former Yugoslavia. His focus was on the art system and the specific relationship between art and ideology.

Public talk: The political economy of art collectives within the program Vectors of collective imagination in art

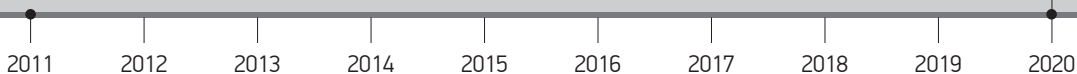
bojnik.org / artkollekt.org

Katja Praznik, Slovenia/USA; Sezgin Bojnik, Kosovo /Finland

2002 2003 2004 2005 2006 2007 2008 2009 2010

Sezgin Boynik, from the conversation Vectors of collective imagination in art, August 2020.

I think that the cultural production in YU was quite rich. If we just focus on the publications addressing the question of the cultural policy we'll see quite a diversity in there. There was a journal dedicated only to that question called *Cultural Worker* (Kulturni Radnik). Very serious journal. Then there was a journal that was called *Culture* (Kultura). Most of the 'experts for cultural policy in YU' including Stevan Majstorović who incidentally also wrote a report to UNESCO called *Cultural Policy in Yugoslavia* (Paris, UNESCO; 1972), was writing for this journal, and also Milena Dragičević Šešić, who later became an internationally recognized expert on the cultural policy also published some of the first articles in *Kultura*. Now with me, I have one issue of *Kultura* that I took from Baraba book shop (in Belgrade). This issue 13–14 published in 1971 is illustrated by a concrete and visual poet called Žarko Rošulj, who was a member of a Signalist experimental visual poets' group, unfortunately, like most of Signalist's group members, he also became extreme nationalist already in 1980's. The diversity strikes from the very first page of this randomly selected issue of *Kultura*: on the cover is the work by Žarko Rošulj called 'The Flowers of the Self-Management' (Cveće Samoupravljanja), but the special issue, and the large dossier of the journal, is dedicated to the religion. The longer text in the dossier is written by Alija Izedbegović, author of *Islamic Declaration* of 1983 and the future president of Bosnia and Herzegovina; then you have another dossier focused on the discussions around Struggles on the Left in Literature in the thirties in Yugoslavia, struggle happened between surrealist and realist leftist artists. Within one single issue, you have all kinds of very antagonistic strong positions. This alone shows that the culture in Yugoslavia was understood as a field of struggle.



A View on the Fragments on the Yugoslav Artistic 'Non-institutional' Collective (self-)Organisation

In the ideology of Yugoslav self-management, one had already been part of the collective, either as a worker or as a citizen who (self-)managed one's working collective or one's territorial community.¹ In Yugoslav reality, there was a contradictory relationship between the theory of collectivity and the mode of its realisation in practice in the processes of dynamic structuring of this historically new form of social property through self-management.² Those who acted as a 'systematic' or 'non-institutional' alternative between the 1960s and 1980s, Srećko Pulig writes, 'had the unique fortune to be in a society whose official ideology was anti-systematic', including the demise of the state and the party. In 'socialist' social and production processes, certain avant-garde ideas, such as the aspiration to merge life and art, were introduced into the mainstream. Art was involved in the production process in order to build a revolutionary society through democratisation which was carried out via the institutionalisation of amateur art, but also the cooperation of artists with workers in situations such as art colonies organised in factories. For example, an art colony was organised in the ironworks in Sisak, which enabled the production of

1 Srećko Pulig, 'Pokušaj samoupravne transformacije kulture', in: *Jugoslavija: Zašto i kako?* Ildiko Erdej, Branislav Dimitrijević, Tatomin Toroman (ed), Muzej Jugoslavije, Beograd, 2020, p. 103.

2 Milan Rakita, *Prostorno-političke i memorijalne infrastrukture socijalističke Jugoslavije*, RLS SE, Beograd, 2019.

works of art from the raw materials produced by the factory, which were dangerously close to readymade art.³ These works were signed both by the artists and the workers. It remains to be seen whether the initiative for such collaborations came from the workers themselves or whether it was a systematic attempt to cover up the internal crisis of the Yugoslav society with culture.⁴ Simultaneously, as Rastko Močnik put it, the autonomous aesthetic sphere in art was being restored through neo-avant-garde and post-avant-garde, and mostly collective, artistic practices typical of the period after 1968.⁵ Such artistic practice was articulated in contrast to the art of socialist modernism, which was the dominant form of art in Yugoslavia, and which also integrated certain aspects of the pre-war avant-garde.⁶ In 'transitions',⁷ collective 'non-institutional' self-organised artistic practices have been inscribed in the canon of contemporary art, which were constituted as a kind of neo-avant-garde and post-avant-garde 'alternative' in the Yugoslav experiment. Rastko Močnik believes that the revolutionary potential of the historical avant-garde had fallen by the wayside in the processes of modernist and postmodernist rehabilitation and integration of the avant-garde into the system of contemporary art.⁸ What was happening to the remnants, traces or 'autonomist' rejection of that potential in the neo-avant-garde and post-avant-garde in Yugoslavia, while

3 Vladan Jeremić and Rena Readle, *Ironworks ABC*, Sisak, 2015.

4 See: Conversations on Yugoslavia 11/2, www.muzej-jugoslavije.org/program/razgovori-o-jugoslaviji-11/.

5 See: Rastko Močnik, 'U umetnosti, savremenost počinje 1917', in: *Nova povezivanja. Od scene do mreže*, Jovan Čekić, Miško Šuvaković (ed), FMK, Beograd, 2017, p. 53–93. and Vladan Jeremić, *Funkcije umetničkih praksi u uslovima tranzicije u Srbiji 1991–2008*, PhD thesis, FPN, Beograd, 2019, p. 224.

6 Jeremić, *Ibid*, p. 2.

7 Gal Kirn describes Yugoslav history as history of transitions. See: Gal Kirn, 'A Critique of Transition Studies on Postsocialism, or How to Rethink and Reorient 1989? The Case of (Post)Socialist (Post)Yugoslavia', in: *Beyond Neoliberalism*, Marian Burchardt i Gal Kirn (ur), Springer International Publishing, Cham, 2017, str. 43–68.

8 Močnik, *Ibid*.

they were co-producing the autonomous aesthetic sphere, and does it have anything to do with artistic (self-)organisation? We may be able to read or guess the answer to this question from this fragmentary research, in the spaces around and between interviews, texts, comments and footnotes, but also from conversations that were conducted officially and unofficially during its duration.

Publication *Fragments for the study of art organisation* is part of the project *Art Organisation* which has been conceived as an introduction to the research of the ways of (self) organisation, group action and working conditions (collective production and collective generation) of 'non-institutional' artistic practices in the Yugoslav and post-Yugoslav space. Our interest in art organisation goes beyond artistic frameworks. What we are really interested in is how to act collectively in society today. The project was initiated with a series of video interviews with participants and protagonists of the art scene of the Yugoslav and post-Yugoslav period, which, together with other collected material, comprise a part of the emerging archive.⁹ The collected material has been prepared on a timeline whose role is to organise material for future interpretation and translation activities. With the timeline, we do not want to say that there has been a consistent linear history of art of such collective practices that we strive for, but to place them in a certain context and emphasise the differences between individual moments determined by production and reproduction, ideology, events, discussions, affects, in short – this is the atmosphere of struggle. The main goal of this project is to establish

Artistic (self-)organisation is a method of work that is typical of different historical periods in art and society:¹ This method realises different intentions or outcomes: from articulating common ideas, political actions, connecting art with life, experimenting, facilitating the process of producing work in the arts to the production of a market brand, in non-hierarchical or hierarchical groups, collectives and/or families. (Self-)organisation in art can be chaotic, but it can also contain procedures that define relationships, tasks and decision-making processes very precisely. Artistic (self-)organisation is often presented as a 'de facto' progressive practice. However, the mere fact that some work is being done collectively does not mean that such work is necessarily progressive. Such ways of working can be aimed at promoting conservative tendencies but can also be aimed at articulating and practicing

9 Video archive *Art organisation through time*: <https://kuda.org/en/art-organisation-through-time>. A series of video interviews conducted from 2017 to 2020 with: Dunja Blažević, Dejan Sretenović, Branka Stipančić, Zdenka Vukmir, Nebojša Vilik, Marko Pogačnik, Božidar Mandić, Zdenka Badovinac, IRWIN: Miran Mohar i Boruit Vigelnik, ŠKART group: Đorđe Balmazović i Dragan Protić, Labin Art Express: Dean Zahtila, Magnet group: Jelena Marjanov, Ivan Pravdić and Siniša Rešin-Tucić, Multimedia institut: Tomislav Medak and Petar Milat, WHW – what, how and for whom: Iveta Čurlin i Ana Dević, Janez Janša, Janez Janša, Janez Janša, FOKUS group: Iva Kovač and Elvis Krstulović.

1 Jacopo Galimberti, *Individuals against Individualism – Art Collectives in Western Europe (1956–1969)*, Liverpool University Press, Liverpool, 2017, p. 1.

progressive or even radical emancipatory (anarchist, communist, communalist – leftist etc.) ideas and forms of organisation. 'Non-institutionality' is also not a guarantor of subversiveness. On the contrary, non-institutional practices often served non-emancipatory policies. Still, in practice, artistic institutions have often been places of aesthetic, production and procedural restrictions, pressures, exclusions and punishments, and consequentially, they have been the subject of aesthetic, political, theoretical and organisational, institutional and non-institutional struggles.

a field of research, which will be focused on collective processes in the (post-)Yugoslav space rather than the products of such work.

The intention of this publication is to point out certain phenomena of artistic self-organisation 'outside' of official institutions and relations within and without artistic groups, 'ad-hoc' groups and collectives in Yugoslavia. The publication analyses specific examples of collaboration rather than fetishizing the initiatives from the recent past, which led to works and exhibitions positively evaluated by critics that have secured them a place in art history. In that sense, the focus is not on the formal qualities of artistic production, in comparing the results of individual and collective work, but on the mechanisms of cooperation and their implications. The importance of this topic is emphasised by the fact that these groups and collectives emerged in a society in which socialist self-management was the official state-legal ideology. Examples presented in the book include political and activist practices, but also Dionysian¹⁰ and escapist missions, internal and intimate work¹¹ and 'anarchoid' incidences. *Fragments for the study of art organisations* are an introduction to an attempt to think collectively about contemporary problems and potentially about the future of artistic organisation in the post-Yugoslav space through the continuation of the struggle in the field of knowledge production, material historical conditions of social production of art in Yugoslavia.

What kind of art history do we inherit when it comes to 'non-institutional' art collectives and groups? What is the unique experience with our history of artistic

10 Lefebvre used this term to describe the gatherings around Praxis summer school on the Island of Korčula. See: DelVe / Ivana Bagoi Antonija Majača, 'Izvadeni iz gomile Fragment i disocijativna asocijacija – Neprogramske prakse udruživanja u umetnosti šezdesetih i sedamdesetih godina u SR Hrvatskoj', Izložba *Političke prakse (post) jugoslovenske umetnosti: Retrospektiva 01*, Muzej istorije Jugoslavije, Beograd, 29. 11–31. 12. 2009.

11 See: Jadranka Vinterhalter, 'Umetničke grupe – Razlozi okupljanja i oblici rada', in: *Nova umetnost u Srbiji – 1970–1980 pojedinci, grupe, pojave*, MSU, Beograd, 1982, p. 17.

organisation from Yugoslavia? How to extract socially formative, emancipatory knowledge about (self-)organisation from the ruins of the past? And how does one tear down the present which has turned that past against the future?¹²

An overview of the distortions of the past, present and future: interpretations, mythologising and fetishizing art collectives

The history of art, both the one that emerged in the Yugoslav and post-Yugoslav periods, and the one that emerged in the globalised space of art history production, is a specific field of struggle for the narrative, for positioning, for the present and for the future. The history of Yugoslavia is the history of post-socialist transitions, in Gal Kirn's opinion.¹³ In that sense, art itself is part of the same or similar, globally and locally conditioned, processes. In one part, the art of 'non-institutional' art collectives and their interpretation represents the history of work on the integration of Yugoslav art into the global field of contemporary art and its modernisation during the Cold War. As Vladan Jeremić writes in his doctoral dissertation, the role of modernisation and production of the expanded canon of contemporary art in the United States was to neutralise the avant-garde revolutionary potential, which was seen equal to the communist threat. This process was spilling over into 'auto(neo)colonial' interventions in Yugoslavia by inscribing this art in the Western canon that was in the process of being established.

The period of the 1970s is especially important for the recognition of the local collective 'non-institutional' experiments, when the process of institutionalisation of such artistic practices in the local context began thanks to art historians who worked in official institutions,

12 Boris Buden, 'Muzej praznih ruku – Čemu jugoslovenske studije', in: Ildiko Erdej, Branislav Dimitrijević, Tatomir Toroman (ed), *Jugoslavija: Zašto i kako?*, Muzej Jugoslavije, Beograd, 2020, pp. 79–101.

13 Kirn, *Ibid.*

Stevan Vuković and

kuda.org: 'Today,' wrote in 1969 'there is a natural movement that brings artists together and forces them to be support to each other, to complete each other or to jointly oppose and confront each other, so that they could step over the line of expressing individual feelings and experience requirements of the collective towards a new sort of society in the making!'¹ This edition of the Paris Biennale focused on self-management and consequentially the work of art groups and collectives. Still, no artists from Yugoslavia were present there.² In order to somehow compensate for, Jerko Denegri, who was a curator of the Museum of Modern Art in Belgrade at the time, when he accepted the position of the Commissary for the national selection for the Paris Biennale in 1971, selected the OHO Group from Ljubljana, groups KÔD and E) KÔD from Novi Sad, as well as the group Pensioner Tihomir Simčić from Zagreb.

1 Jacques Lassaigne (ed.), *Sixième biennale de Paris, manifestation biennale et internationale des jeunes artistes du 2 octobre au 2 novembre 1969*, Paris: Musée d'art moderne de la ville de Paris, 1969.

2 Georgi Franck, *L'autogestion en France, des années 1968' aux années 1980. Essor et déclin d'une utopie politique*, La Pensée 156, December 2008.

as well as independent critics and art historians who wrote or were contractually engaged by institutions at individual exhibitions, and who were interested in such art. For example, the first exhibition of the Gorgona group was held at the Gallery of Contemporary Art in Zagreb in 1977, and the text for the catalogue was written by Nena Dimitrijević.¹⁴ Gorgona was institutionalised in its formal appearance, as opposed to the original avant-garde Gorgonian behaviour that opposed the production of aesthetically pleasing objects, and settled in Duchamp's rather than the avant-garde tradition. On the other hand, artistic collective phenomena such as those that emerged as part of the New Art Practices, a term coined by Ješa Denegri to make a distinction between dominant modernist tendencies in art and conceptual, neoconceptual and neo-avant-garde practices, were institutionalised in the process parallel with experimental actions of the collectives.¹⁵ Such historicisation aimed to establish genealogical lines of local art with tendencies that developed in the West. Even constitutive exhibitions of that period, such as the *Drangularium* exhibition held in 1971 in the Belgrade SKC, were organised in the image of similar exhibitions in the West, as Bojana Pejić¹⁶ wrote in the catalogue for this exhibition. This institutionalisation was taking place in constant friction with the artistic institutional apparatus and cultural policies that were turning 'socialist modernism'¹⁷ into a (semi-) official artistic doctrine. In such endeavors, **ingratiating** with worlds of art from the West which clearly empha-

14 Nena Dimitrijević, 'Gorgona – umjetnost kao način postojanja', Catalogue of Gorgona retrospective exhibition, Galerija suvremene umjetnosti, Zagreb, 1977. This is the first interpretation of the group's work since its dissolution. The group had a very fruitful activity and there are several texts about the work of the group.

15 Ješa Denegri, *Sedamdesete: teme srpske umetnosti, 1970–1980*, Svetovi, Beograd, 1995.

16 Bojana Pejić, *Drangularijum*, Catalogue, SKC, Beograd, 1971.

17 Ješa Denegri, 'Inside or outside Socialist Modernism? Radical views on the Yugoslav art scene, 1950–1970', in: Dubravka Đurić and Miško Šuvaković (ed), *Impossible Histories: Historical Avantgardes, Neo-avantgardes, and Post-avantgardes in Yugoslavia, 1918–1991*. The MIT Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 2003.

sised the difference from the art of the Eastern Bloc often occurred in contextualisation and interpretations. For example, Miško Šuvaković describes the cultural policy of Yugoslavia as a deliberately contradictory policy designed to send different messages to different 'audiences': "such art sent a message to the Western public about the liberalism of the Yugoslav socialist society; and to the Eastern Europe the message sent was about the diversity of the Yugoslav socialist course".¹⁸ Such cultural policy was also reflected in the so-called non-institutional practice, which was sometimes marginalised and banned in the local context, while at the same time it was shown at exhibitions and festivals in the Western Bloc. Also, it is important to say that in the local context such practices did not share an equal place with socialist modernism which was the art of the mainstream in Yugoslavia. For example, the works of artists who embarked on 'radical experiments', as Ješa Denegri said in an interview for KIOSK, were then bought for collections such as the Museum of Contemporary Art in Belgrade for a meagre amount of money.¹⁹

The fall of the Berlin Wall and the disintegration of Yugoslavia in the 1990s brought a new European revealing atmosphere that influenced the interpretations of art collectives in Yugoslavia. The fact that the art of the collective had not been sufficiently canonised outside the local context until then, it was used for its canonisation in the continuation of the 'dialogue with the West'. **Such a climate**, by singling out the criticising art practice of neo-avant-garde and post-avant-garde art collectives aiming to show that there was disagreement in Yugoslavia led to the uncritical convergence of those practices and to their alleged 'anti-totalitarian and dissident agenda'.²⁰ These are interpretations that see Yugoslav art, as Jelena Vesić

A part of such a climate is, for example, the intervention of the Erste Bank, which bought many pieces of art for its collection of East-European Art.

18 Miško Šuvaković (ed) *Istorija umetnosti u Srbiji XX veka – Radikalne umetničke prakse*, Orion art, Beograd, 2010, p. 284.

19 Ješa Denegri, Interview, 2016, Kiosk NGO.

20 Gal Kirn, 'New Yugoslav Cinema – A Humanist cinema? Not Really', *Surfing the Black: Yugoslav Black Wave Cinema and its Transgressive*

writes, as a firm division into 'official' and 'alternative' art,²¹ which is a division that is not easy to make when talking about the Yugoslav period.²² By drawing a clear dividing line between institutional and non-institutional art, 'non-institutional' collectives became material used to sing praises of 'brave artists' who opposed the supposedly totalitarian Communist system, plastering a new layer of interpretations onto the history of self-organisation. In parallel with this process, art was fragmented and become part of the production of new national art histories that were consolidated in the new nation-states.²³ Such is the case, for example, with the monumental first volume of the book *Art history in Serbia of the XX century – Radical art practices*, edited by Miško Šuvaković and which, together with a new reading of radical artistic practice, does the 'dirty work' of regionalizing art history.²⁴ Although the book emphasises that it is not art history in the national sense but a hybrid view of things, the book indisputably draws new boundaries in art history.

In the future, it would be important to articulate an analysis that would make a radical departure from the described neo-colonising and auto-colonising narratives, functional for emptying art of its revolutionary potential, radically criticising content and 'sovereignty',

Moments, Gal Kirn, Dubravka Sekulić, Žiga Testen (ed), Jan van Eyck Academie, Maastricht, 2011, p. 13. and Jelena Vesić and Dušan Grlja, 'Političke prakse (post)jugoslovenske umetnosti: Retrospektiva 01', *Izložba Političke prakse (post)jugoslovenske umetnosti: Retrospektiva 01*, Muzej istorije Jugoslavije Beograd 29. 11–31. 12. 2009, p. 8.

21 Jelena Vesić, 'Od alternativnih prostora do muzeja i natrag. O simultanosti promocije i istorizacije Novih umetničkih praksi u Jugoslaviji: beogradski kulturni prostor', in: Dejan Sretenović (ed), *Prilozi za istoriju Muzeja savremene umetnosti*, Muzej savremene umetnosti, Beograd, 2015, p. 287.

22 kuda.org (ed) *Za ideju protiv stanja: Analiza i sistematizacija umetničkog stvaralaštva Želimira Žilnika*, kuda.org, Novi Sad, 2009.

23 Jelena Vesić, 'Političke prakse (post)jugoslovenske umetnosti: Retrospektiva 01: Kustoska izjava povodom desetogodišnjice održavanja izložbe', *Jugoslavija: Zašto i kako?* in: Ildiko Erdej, Branislav Dimitrijević, Tatomir Toroman (ed), *Muzej Jugoslavije*, Beograd, 2020, p. 284.

24 Šuvaković, *ibid*, p. 2010.

but also 'surviving' all those dependent on the contemporary art industry. However, this publication did not set that goal to itself. Its contribution lies in a shift of focus from individual artistic production of artifacts, which remained dominant in both described periods, to the collective practice of neo-avant-garde and post-avant-garde groups and their 'nature', created in the dialectical relationship between individualism and collectivism, self-organisation and institutionalisation, visibility and invisibility, professionalism and amateurism, state (or social support) and (aesthetic) autonomy.²⁵

Collective Work on the Preparation of the Fragments

My involvement in the research process coincided with the state of emergency that was declared due to the coronavirus pandemic in March 2020. We held the first meetings and exchanges of ideas through conference calls, while we isolated ourselves more or less voluntarily in the spaces of our more or less safe homes converted into our offices, our prisons, our hospitals, schools and kindergartens after the Republic Crisis Headquarters had decided so. Although our practices are different and our policies mostly irreducible, in these extraordinary circumstances we tried to think together, and also with other participants in the project. Everyone did their part as much as anyone was able to contribute, and we also worked together, respective of how we understood **collective work**.

In an attempt to articulate the heterogeneous collected material for the publication in a better way, we introduced the method of collective evaluation. An integral part of the preparations for the production of this publication were online meetings where we discussed and collectively reviewed written interpretations of

An important lesson of this process is the need to establish a clear theoretical and methodological framework at the beginning of the research project. Without a precisely defined framework, there is a danger of misunderstandings, disputes, and the appearance of splits in the work collective. The schizophrenic movement between 'I' and 'we' in this introductory text indicates the reach of our joint work. Where 'we' is not established, it is replaced with 'I'.

25 Ivana Bago, 'Collective Work – Đuro Sedlar' s response to Gorgona group's homework assignment', u: *Paralel Chronologies An Archive of East European Exhibitions*, n.d. <http://tranzit.org/exhibitionarchive/category/yugoslavia/>.

'non-institutional' artistic organisation, the working versions of which we had previously received from the authors. We were discussing these while the protests were going on outside and while tear gas, which the police threw at the protesters in Belgrade, entered our apartments, online spaces and lives. With us were: Vahida Ramujkić, Maja Stanković, Lina Džuverović, Leila Topić, Andrej Mirčev, Ana Peraica, Anthony Iles and Sasha Kahir. During three-hour sessions, which were held every Monday during July 2020, we talked about the context, about the practices, about the structure of the texts, we recounted our experiences of working in collectives, our memories of conversations with artists while certain topics and problems were not mentioned on purpose or otherwise. This process resulted in new versions of authorial texts that were given new complexities due to our confronting opinions on the topic.

In parallel with these meetings, I designed three webinars, *Vectors of collective imagination in art*, where we discussed the political economy of art collectives, the socio-political engagement of art groups, as well as imagining and practicing anti-systematic collective practices during the pandemic. I spoke with the artist Cassie Thornton, with the theorist and artist Tomislav Medak, with the theorists Katja Praznik and Sezgin Boynik and with art historians Jacopo Galimberti and Vida Knežević. My intention was for us all to try to consider the genealogy of artistic self-organisation in art from the beginning of the 20th century until today. These day-to-day conversations were coloured by new escalations of old wars, struggles that brought new views on everything: the global Black Lives Matter movement that began in the U.S. after the murder of George Floyd, a black man killed by a white police officer; mutual aid, which, together with the virus, spread where it was most needed in a state of emergency; rebellions against the economic, social and political repressions of authoritarian capitalism and the accumulative state around the world; but also very local struggles like the one for the Black House in Novi Sad.

A publication that has arisen from the whole²⁶ process with its structure intentionally emphasises the fragmentary status of research that does not end here. The publication is just a stopover, we all agree on that. It consists of parts of interviews and conversations, traces of discussions, a timeline in the making and of selected case studies the writers have opted for.

The backbone of the publication is comprised of six texts which have been conceived as case studies. The publication starts with the text written by Lina Džuverović 'Collaborative Actions, Continued Omissions: Notes Towards Feminist Revisiting of Yugoslav Collectives in the 1960s and 1970s – the Case of the OHO Group'. In this text, the author questions the idea that the female artists played a secondary role in the collectives. Not only is Lina Džuverović interested in the implicit position of artists, but she also wants to find a wider range of voices that were in the orbit around the collectives. This is followed by Milica Pekić and her text 'Art collectives as platforms of confrontation – case studies: January/February, Assassination' in which the author examines art production models focusing on short-term art collectives within and around the Youth Forum in Novi Sad. These experimental collectives were perceived as a certain threat, which is why its actors and those who supported them experienced a strong reaction from the managerial structures. In his text 'May 75 and First Issue in the framework of infrastructural activism', which follows, Stevan Vuković deals with 'DIY' art magazines as temporary places to meet, talk and share experiences. His focus is on magazines *May 75* (Maj 75), which was the work of the Group of Six Artists and *First Issue* (Prvi Broj) which arose within the Working Community of artists Podroom from their pursuit of independence from the established system of art. This text is followed by Andrej Mirčev's 'The split and dialectic of the collective: the Case of Kuĝla Glumište' in which the author tells us about the collective dynamics of this group's work

26 Including three years of field work on collecting the material.

through the process that led to the disintegration of Yugoslavia. He defines the practice developed by this collective as an 'ethical critical theatre' that criticises the socio-ideological 'status quo' from the leftists' position. The text by Leila Topić follows the "Miki, look at that!' potentially important activities of ViGo Group and musical improvisation' which analyses the 'friendship' between Tomislav Gotovac and photographer Žarko Vijatović. This duo engaged in intimate, spontaneous and antagonistic activities mediated by friendship that the author of the article compares to musical improvisation. The publication ends with the auto-ethnographic text of Ana Peraica '24 hours inside the *Red Peristyle*', in which the author deconstructs the myth of that collective and that action through her personal reflection of acquaintances with artists and life near the Peristyle. The article is a deeply personal story of life in a small town, but also tackles the 'criminal gallery scene' and its role in fabricating narratives about the *Red Peristyle*.

Some insights from the work process (or Contributions to the mini glossary of myths and real effects of collective endeavors)

'Non-institutionality'

Although the New Art Practice of the 1970s was characterised by a rebellion against institutional values, when it comes to Yugoslavia, it is difficult to speak of an exclusive non-institutional origin of art. The binomen 'official art' opposed to 'alternative' or 'marginal' practices is not sustainable.²⁷ Simultaneities of promotion and historicisation were present, according to the research done by Jelena Vesić, who was mostly delving in the art of the 1970s.²⁸ For example, the works of certain actors of the so-called non-institutional art were exhibited at the Museum of Contemporary Art, mostly thanks to Ješa Denegri, the museum's curator, who showed keen interest in such art. On the other hand, some actors of 'non-institutional' collectives worked in parallel within amateur and student infrastructures that significantly contributed to the formation of neo-avant-garde and post-avant-garde artistic practice. For example an exhibition *At the moment* organised by the then students Nina Baljković and Braco Dimitrijević in the entrance hall of the building at Frankopanska 2A in Zagreb in 1971 without the support of official institutions, only a few months later it was repeated at the Student Cultural Centre in Belgrade and was called *At another moment*. The exhibition featured works by artists such as: Giovanni Anselmo, Robert Barry, Stanley Brown, Daniel Buren, Victor Burgin, Jan Dibbets, Braco Dimitrijević, ER Group, Barry Flanagan, Douglas Huebler, Alain Kirill, Jannis Kounellis, John Latham, Sol LeWitt, Goran

27 Jelena Vesić, 'Od alternativnih prostora do muzeja i natrag. O simultanosti promocije i istorizacije Novih umetničkih praksi u Jugoslaviji: beogradski kulturni prostor', in: Dejan Sretenović (ur), *Prilozi za istoriju Muzeja savremene umetnosti*, Muzej savremene umetnosti, Beograd, 2015, p. 286.

28 Ibid, p. 289.

Trbuljak, Lawrence Weiner, Ian Wilson, and KÔD and OHO groups.²⁹

Individual vs. Collective

Ješa Denegri states that the transfer of emphasis from institutional to individual values was followed by the transfer of emphasis from art to the term artist and the so-called artistic 'first-person singular'. It was not one current or a kind of art of the 1970s, as he further explains, but its psychological or even ethical component that was indicative of the understanding of the general atmosphere.³⁰ Individualism also emerged from within compact work of art groups, as Jadranka Vinterhalter states.³¹ When she writes about the Group of Six Artists who were gathered around the SKC gallery in Belgrade, she emphasizes that with them, individualism was not only an attitude but also a concept that was strengthened in the collective. The situation is similar to the Group of Six from Zagreb, whose members simply exhibited mostly individual works together, as Branka Stipančić says in her interview for this project. In this group, according to her insights, they talked operatively and there was not much philosophy about it. Being in a collective allowed them to obtain the necessary permits from the police to use public or 'non-institutional' spaces such as squares, beaches or educational institutions without which their exit from art institutions would not be possible. In contrast to this atmosphere, other art collectives paid much more attention to the issues of collective. That is the case, for example in the KÔD Group, where a conscious suppression of

29 Ivana Bago, 'At the Moment – first international exhibition of conceptual art in Yugoslavia', u: *Paralel Chronologies An Archive of East European Exhibitions*, n.d. <http://tranzit.org/exhibitionarchive/category/yugoslavia/>.

30 Ješa Denegri, 'Govor u prvom licu – isticanje individualnosti umetnika u novoj umetničkoj praksi 70-ih godina', in: *Nova umetnost u Srbiji – 1970–1980 pojedinci, grupe, pojave*, MSU, Beograd, 1982, p. 7.

31 Jadranka Vinterhalter, „Umetničke grupe – Razlozi okupljanja i oblici rada“, in: *ibid.*

individualism was at hand because the members of the group were ashamed to act as individuals, as Miroslav Mandić explains.³² Group OHO also turned its visit to a foreign gallery into a discussion about collective work.³³ According to Marko Pogačnik, the OHO group nurtured unity as something that had connected all their activities. They worked both individually and together, but no one had their own practice outside the collective. They found the division of roles very important, and it enabled everyone to have their own place in the team, although they did not necessarily respect that in practice.

Fetishization

Although the problems that collectives that were being dealt with in theory were often articulated in connection with the processes of dematerialisation of art and democratisation of the process of its production, the **focus in interpretation remained on the products of artistic work**, and not on the dynamics of self-organisation. Such is the case with the majority of texts that describe or contextualise these New Art Practices. The piece of work that reached the pinnacle of fetishization was the *Red Peristyle* (Crveni peristil), which was done in Split in 1968, when the floor of the peristyle of Diocletian's Palace was painted red (orange, more precisely). This was done by Split art students who were then punished for this, and later this action was canonised as the first action in the public space in Yugoslavia, both in the international space of contemporary art, and in the local context. In local and international narratives, this collective action and the gathering of individuals who took part in its performance became a kind of 'historical-artistic' and 'urban legend' that conceals 'inappropriate' parts of that history and testifies to the need for rebellion (against the Communist Party of Yugoslavia?) more than about the rebellion itself that was articulated

Milica Pekić: As early as 1973, Nena Dimitrijević notices this tendency regarding the conceptual practice: 'Never really having accepted the basic premises of conceptual ideology, due to their inertness or dogmatism, most of audience, and the professionally involved onlookers (gallerists, theoreticians, organisers) simply put on the new clothes and applied the principles of the old formalist methodology to the products of the new art.'

The mechanic application of old visual methods to the inappropriate newly created quality caused the identification of conceptual art with its means of presentation. Paradoxically, the artistic act, which operates with extra-plastic and non-material, has been equaled to a certain form of presentation. Thus, due to the prejudice that one communicates with a work of art exclusively visually, the technology of conceptual art (photographic originals, schematics on millimetre paper, texts typed on a typewriter) took over the yesterday's role of aestheticism... Forms of concretisation of a 'concept' into an object suitable for sale and appropriation make up a considerable part of this phenomenon.'

Nena Dimitrijević, 'Platno', Tendencije 5 (catalogue), Galerija suvremene umjetnosti, Zagreb, 1973.

32 Ibid, p. 16.

33 See interview with Marko Pogačnik for this project.

through that action.³⁴ The intention of the artist has remained unclear to this day, and the mystification, as art historian Branko Francesci notes, has become the medium of this action and the pledge of its duration.³⁵

Production Conditions

Understanding production processes is key to understanding 'non-institutional' artistic self-organisation. The period of the 1960s and 1970s, as Katja Praznik showed in her paper, is a time of political restructuring of the material conditions of artistic work – from social security and workers' rights to the model of self-employment and work on temporary jobs. By the 1980s, this transformation turned artists self-sufficient into socialist entrepreneurs.³⁶ Praznik finds the causes of this transformation in the introduction of market elements in Yugoslav socialism, but also in the application of the Western philosophical and aesthetic tradition of artistic autonomy and mystification of artists as creators to art workers in Yugoslavia. One of the answers and an ironic comment of a sort on this situation, but also on the situation of inadequate financial compensation by the institutions for artistic work, was the Working Community Podroom (Radna zajednica Podroom), which operated from 1978 to 1980 in the studio of Sanja Iveković and Dalibor Martinis. One of the goals of this group's work was to organise a place that would function as a kind of front for improving the social and economic position of artists.³⁷

34 See more in Peraica's text in this publication.

35 See: Red Peristyle, www.dalmacijadanas.hr/crveni-peristol-to-je-prva-javna-intervencija-u-bivsoj-jugoslaviji-koja-je-apsolutno-prodrma-la-citavi-prostor/

36 Katja Praznik, 'Artist as Workers – The Undoing of Yugoslav Socialism and the Politics of Unpaid Artistic Labor', *Social Text* 144, 2020.

37 DelVe / Ivana Bagoi Antonija Majača, 'Izvađeni iz gomile Fragment i disocijativna asocijacija – Neprogramske prakse udruživanja u umetnosti šezdesetih i sedamdesetih godina u SR Hrvatskoj', Exhibition *Političke prakse (post)jugoslovenske umetnosti: Retrospektiva 01*, Muzej istorije Jugoslavije, Beograd, 29. 11–31. 12. 2009, p. 113.

One of the places of articulation of these efforts was a collectively composed *Contract* that articulated the relationship between the artist and the gallery, which was never officially activated, and which was published in a magazine the *First Issue* (Prvi broj). In addition to the contract, a table that shows the ratio of the income of independent artists and those employed in institutions was published, which clearly showed the exploitation of those who were not employed in institutions. The creation of an alternative production model was also pursued by members of the NSK group in the 1980s in order to, as they say, achieve 'independence from institutions'. They constructed a financing model that included sponsors and donations so as to gain independence from the Slovenian Ministry of Culture, which at the time, as they say in an interview for this project, confused the establishment. That way, they became the forerunner of the project neoliberal way of financing in art, which has dominated the post-Yugoslav space since the 1990s. In addition to the above, artistic self-organisation was also a space for 'refusing to work', i.e., the way the work was standardised in the art system and the celebration of the subversiveness of leisure;³⁸ and it was also a space where one could attempt to articulate 'alternative economies'. In the late 1950s and early 1960s, the Gorgona Group had a common coffer that stood in the *Napred* bookstore in Zagreb. Membership fee money was kept there, which covered expenses of the group, while, for example, the Family of Clear Streams (Porodica bistrih potoka) was at one time dedicated to creating the economy in which money was insignificant within the framework of a small commune that existed in the countryside.

38 kuda.org, Kristian Lukic, Gordana Nikolic (ed), *Umetnik/ca u (ne)radu*, kuda.org and Muzej savremene umetnosti Vojvodine, Novi Sad, 2012.

Contradictions of Self-management

Two opinions prevail in interpretations today; the first is that the network of amateur and student cultural centres in Yugoslavia was a means of normalising the revolt (Šuvaković), while the second one tends to present these places as autonomous spaces for artistic experimentation (Pejić).³⁹ Although the work of most institutions went on without much friction, there were cases in which neo-avant-garde art was compared to false intellectualism and political avant-garde that deviated from the interests of the Youth Alliance. Such was the situation with the Youth Forum, in which a decision was made in November 1970, according to which the rights of the self-management body were transferred to the founder. In such a situation, the self-organisation of artists was a direct response to the actions of those in power. Such is the case with the groups January, February and Assassination, which profiled their work as revolt and rebellion. Their work consisted of speeches and actions in which the party leadership was publicly insulted, books of Marxist classics were riveted, and slogans were chanted that toyed with petty-bourgeois moralism.⁴⁰ Because of their texts, two actors of these activist groups were sentenced to eight and nine months in prison.

Alternative Infrastructures

In order to gain their autonomy from the production and representation mechanisms imposed by art institutions, artists in Yugoslavia worked on the creating alternative infrastructures such as galleries and other exhibition spaces (Studio G, Podroom, etc.), points of sale (OHO movement), but also publications/projects

39 See: Prelom kolektiv, 'Dva vremena jednog zida: Slučaj Studentskog kulturnog centra sedamdesetih godina', Exhibition *Političke prakse (post)jugoslovenske umetnosti: Retrospektiva 01*, Muzej istorije Jugoslavije Beograd 29. 11–31. 12. 2009, p. 128–158.

40 See: kuda.org, (ed), *Izostavljena istorija*, Revolver, 2006 and text of Milice Pečić in this publication.

(*October 75*) and magazines (*Gorgona*, *May 75*, *First Issue*, etc.) which were places to meet, discuss and articulate ideas and express views. As Jelena Vesić writes, the artists thought that socialist modernists lacked the attitude, hidden behind the monumental aesthetics of objects which the official art institutions were (co-)producing by being complacent.⁴¹ Self-organisation produced the infrastructure to express the 'attitude'. Within such infrastructural activism,⁴² important topics such as the relationship between art and self-management were sometimes articulated. As Jelena Vesić writes, this was not a direct criticism of workers' self-management in state institutions and in the production sector in favour of alternative culture.⁴³ Many of the texts published in the *October 75* publication, for example, criticise the bourgeois aspects of the institution of art in socialism and their ritualised and ossified practices.

New Linguistic and Performative Forms

Non-institutional association in the artistic life in Yugoslavia was often a spontaneous or organised form of the search for new linguistic and performative modes of expression. In the 1950s, while the dominant official art was still social realism the Exat 51 Group, for example, advocated abstract art and total design. A bit later, the group Denes, according to Nebojša Vilić, united around the democratisation of art and the synthesis of art – combining architecture, sculpture, and painting – to produce the language of avant-garde modernism modelled on the art of Bauhaus. Group 143 was a space for experiments with analytical art

41 Prelom kolektiv, 'Dva vremena jednog zida: Slučaj Studentskog kulturnog centra sedamdesetih godina', Exhibition *Političke prakse (post)jugoslovenske umetnosti: Retrospektiva 01*, Muzej istorije Jugoslavije Beograd 29. 11–31. 12. 2009, p. 142.

42 See the text of Stevan Vuković in this publication.

43 Jelena Vesić, 'October 75 – An Example of Counter-Exhibition (Statements on Artistic Autonomy, Self-management and Self-Critique)', in: *Parallel Chronologies An Archive of East European Exhibitions*, n.d. <http://tranzit.org/exhibitionarchive/category/yugoslavia/>.

and articulations of the field of art through analytical philosophy, as opposed to the political current of Belgrade's new art of the 1970s.⁴⁴ Also, the group Kugla Glumište, precisely because of its non-institutional status in relation to the theatre in the 1980s, managed to develop poetics outside the dominant directorial paradigm and to establish a new pattern based on 'joint work' – on the border between theatre and visual performative forms such as performance and happening.⁴⁵ According to Branka Stipančić,⁴⁶ the reason for the artists to leave the institution and go to public spaces was that the artists did not want to be judged and selected, they wanted to test their works directly with the audience immediately after their creation.

Experiments with Life

Experiments with life rather than experiments with culture were often the main focus of 'non-institutional' collectives. Informal gatherings, socialising, experiments in friendly relations through art (Gorgona, KÔD, OHO, The Six, ViGo, etc.), striving to establish a common sensibility (KÔD), and even translating life into art through living in a commune, were an integral part of the group work.⁴⁷ The group ViGo, for example, emerges as a result of the association of Tomislav Gotovac and photographer Žarko Vijatović and a somewhat spontaneous expression of affections and existential states. At the time of their creation, the hidden performances of Gotovac, which took place in private spaces or at exhibitions of other artists, and which Vijatović documented, were known only to the closest friends. At the same time in Yu-

44 Nikola Dedić, 'Umetnost i politika tokom 1970ih godina', in: Miško Šuvaković (ed) *Istorija umetnosti u Srbiji XX veka – Radikalne umetničke prakse*, Orion art, Beograd, 2010, p. 489–508.

45 See the text by Andrej Mirčev in this publication.

46 See the interview for this project.

47 Marijan Susovski (ed), *Nova umjetnička praksa 1966–1978*, Galerija suvremene umjetnosti, Zagreb, 1978.

Yugoslavia, artistic communes were created: the urban commune at Teslina 18 Street in Novi Sad, the Family from Šempas (Porodica iz Šempasa) in Slovenia and the Family of Clear Streams on Rudnik Mountain in Serbia – in which life was proclaimed art and art was life. Their goal was the ‘deinstitutionalisation of art’.⁴⁸ It was a search for a third way between the two options that were offered at the time, as Boža Mandić explains in the interview for this project. These were terrorism and bureaucracy. Instead of the commune as the basic administrative-territorial unit in Yugoslavia, these groups offered an alternative in the form of ‘new age’ rural communes that were very quickly reduced to the dimensions of the nuclear family.

Patriarchate

A specific problem in collective artistic practice and its interpretation is the absence of a systematic questioning of the reproduction of patriarchal relations in artistic collectives. Generally speaking, patriarchy in the work of ‘non-institutional’ art collectives was very rarely questioned. And when questions about gender relations were raised, it was mostly at the level of representation without essentially questioning the established gender hierarchies in the collectives (e.g., the OHO Juno and Tinza comic strip). Women who were close to the collectives, although in many cases they actively contributed to the shaping of ideas and the realisation of works of art, sometimes as performers, were not mentioned as active members of the collective. They were mostly assigned the role of reproductive workers or, as Lina Džuverović writes in the text for this publication, ‘everyone’s mothers’. Although the interviews with the actors for this project clearly emphasise their role in performing the emotional work that kept the collectives together by organising meetings in their own homes and

48 Mirko Radojčić, ‘Aktivnost grupe OHO’, u: Marijan Susovski (ed), *Nova umjetnička praksa 1966–1978*, Galerija suvremene umjetnosti, Zagreb, 1978.

A group of women curators, art historians and artists interrupted the round table Large exhibitions as a *Field of Social Power* protesting against the way the round table was organised because only men participated in it – curators, professors and artists. The forum was held at the Museum of Contemporary Art of Vojvodina in Novi Sad on 12 September 2019.¹

1 See: <https://www.masina.rs/?p=10805>

Like the theses presented in the text of Sezgin Boynik,¹ in which it is claimed that the specific ideological interpretation of Yugoslav art collectives played an important role in establishing neoliberalism in the local context. This interpretation claims that the new artistic collectives that emerged during and after the 1990s participated in the processes of changing self-management and its liberation from socialist content through neo-managerial theories and practices. Such ‘transitional collective art’ allegedly participated in the project of

1 See: Sezgin Boynik, ‘New Collectives: Art networks and Cultural Policies’, in *Post-Yugoslav Space, Retracing Images*, Karamanić Slobodan and Šuber Danijel (ed), Brill, 2012, p. 81–105.

producing a secondary historical-artistic narrative about the groups, it is clear that this contribution was not enough to enter the boys’ intellectual club. Work on articulating and historicising the role of women in Yugoslav art collectives is ongoing, and the current struggles promise that books like the one written by Ješa Denegri *Contributions for the Other Line 3*,⁴⁹ in which only men are represented, will be challenged.

Where to?

Global and local ‘transitional’ crises in different phases of Yugoslav and post-Yugoslav society, but also the ‘demand’ for inclusion in the global currents of contemporary art, as well as the desire for autonomy, but also the desire to change the social system, posed challenges to art that sometimes led to self-organisation ‘non-institutional’ experiment, with different (political, social, cultural, institutional, organisational, etc.) implications. This publication is our small contribution to the reflection on these and such organisational, artistic, poetic and life practices and struggles. In the continuation of the project, our intention is to tackle the issues of artistic organisation after 1991 in order to discuss dilemmas and **disagreements** that we have regarding the genesis and function of such practices, and whose neuralgic points have already appeared during this process and at its end. At a time when the whole world is going through a partial paralysis, in which new forms of life are being established, with unforeseeable consequences, the urgent question becomes how to (re)organise everything, including the ways we organise. Fragments of our research are an invitation to continue to deal with issues that arise from them, but also from the contemporary moment. Between the lines of what is written, there may be evidence of something we still do not understand, or do not want to understand, and whose language we are

still trying to speak (together).⁵⁰ How we shall learn and what we shall learn from them largely depends on us. This conversation is not yet over.

overcoming the Eastern European ideological heritage, by reducing the idea of collective work and organising to agonistic relations. However, it is certain that the new generation of art collectives also opened new spaces of cultural production, questioning the history of art, new media, art and artistic organisation. Today, this history is rarely questioned, and it is precisely this history that has partially established the positions we speak from.

50 Tariq Jazeel, 'Singularity. A Manifesto for Incomparable Geographies', *Singapore Journal of Tropical Geography* 40, no. 1, 2019, p. 5–21.

On the role of art organisations and the conditions of art production in Slovenia. Interview with Marko Pogačnik – OHO Group, Ljubljana, October 2018.

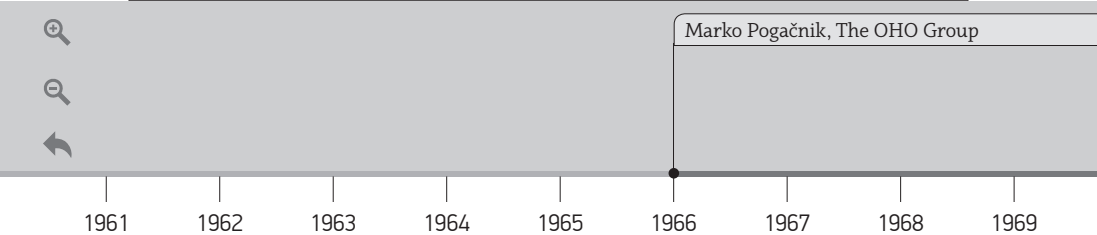
Together with the OHO book, the OHO Manifesto was published in 1966 in the Studentska Tribina, and that manifesto did not predict that a movement would emerge, but it defined the relationship between man and the world. And it did so in a revolutionary way where every possible thing in the world around us was autonomous, unlike our current civilization where everything stood in relation. Iztok Geister said: “The relationship is that you measure everything from your own nose that you see; you measure all distances anthropocentrically – everything starts from man.”

OHO set it up so that the book reads the person reading the book. It was a new kind of democracy, which was present not only among people, but among all things, including the human race and animals and plants, etc.

1966-1973
Marko Pogačnik, OHO Group

Marko Pogačnik, artist, founder of the movement and art group OHO, initiator of the transformation of the group into a new artistic initiative Družina v Sempaslu (Družina v Sempaslu), is today an artist-researcher active in the international network. Members of the OHO group developed various strategies and approaches that they first called "reism", with elements of arte povera, land art and body art, process and conceptual art. They sought to "liberate" situations and objects and present them to the public outside of their fixed functions. A specific approach to objects, away from the weight of meaning, is evident in the Oho Edition (Edicija Oho), where literature and visual art are reduced to objectivity. Artists created their "books" by printing objects, drawings and sentences on individual pages. These books-objects are different patterns that can be handled, mixed letters that must be arranged to form a sentence. A book should be heard, looked through. It is an "open work", one which, demonstrating "reistic" tautology, suggests a game.

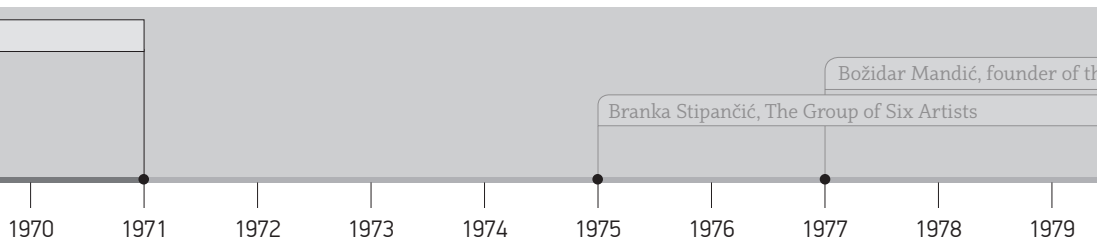
Interview with Marko Pogačnik (OHO group), Ljubljana



The movement was created when some new young people noticed it as inspiration, and the movement became organically. That movement had some foundation in a manifesto that no one understands even today. Iztok Geister wrote it that way because the whole fabric of civilization needed to be turned inside out, and only today am I actually working on it with my associates, as it is practically coming out true. But the movement began with that. ██████████

Otherwise, we had always worked together yet individually. Simultaneously individually and together, and togetherness connected it all. It wasn't that I did something special in art without it being with the group. ██████████

There was a very fine balance between the individual and the group. There were no hierarchical relationships in the group – instead, roles were assigned. In my concept of the OHO group, I tried to define what the roles of each of us would be. We need not have followed it strictly, but it was important to define it as a concept, when a group of people works together, and where everyone has their own individual place and role, in order to create a larger whole. I think that relationship between the individual and the group is very important. If it is too much about a group, then it loses its force and can be repeated. If it is too individual, it can become egocentric. Of course, we were experienced there – we were constantly looking for some way or another between those two extremes. But we didn't argue. They were friendly suggestions. No, there were no conflicts, because we had some sort of foundation, from that manifesto of OHO as a foundation and I think it had to do with the spirit of the 1960s. That inspiration was so strong that we could always overcome possible conflicts and be very tolerant of each other. And above all, we loved each other, and we lived together, and we went out together to pick mushrooms often, too. I think important interpersonal relationships are important. ██████████



Lina Džuverović

Collaborative Actions, Continued Omissions: Notes Towards a Feminist Revisiting of Yugoslav Collectives in the 1960s and 1970s – the Case of the OHO Group

When writing about the formation and functioning of artists' groups, British literary critic Raymond Williams observed that 'the real point of social and cultural analysis, of any developed kind [is] to attend not only to the manifest ideas and activities, but also to the positions and ideas which are implicit or even taken for granted.'¹ His critique, written in 1980, addressed the perceived lack of attention and appropriate tools for the study of the workings of cultural groups, as opposed to larger social organisations like churches or the educational system.

Since Williams' observation, penned some forty years ago, multiple approaches to the study of artists' groups and collective practice have developed, emerging across fields as diverse as cultural studies, art history, sociology, curatorial and feminist studies, amongst others, drawing on existing conceptualisations of the

1 Williams, Raymond, *Culture and Materialism*, Verso 1980, 'The Bloomsbury Fraction', p. 356

relationship between the individual and the collective, but also complexifying the legacies (and ruptures) of collectivity of the 20th century. In *Collectivism after Modernism* (2007) Gregory Sholette problematised the shedding of collectivity's revolutionary past in contemporary practice, seeing contemporary collectives as propped up by what he terms 'enterprise culture', the gallery system and artworld's masterful coopting of anonymity, collectivity and ephemerality – lessons learned through the commodification of conceptual and live art. The terminology used in relation to collective practice – the frequently blurred notions of authorship and participation, often interchangeable terms collectivity, collaboration, cooperation, intersubjectivity, co-dependency etc. open a field of study that requires a whole essay to itself. Elen Mara de Wachter's neologism 'co-art' seeks to act as an umbrella term, with a view to surveying the diverse practices of contemporary artists' collectives, allowing for multiplicity and incongruities amongst the many approaches to collectivity today, evoking Richard Sennett's idea of 'a conversation that does not resolve itself by finding common ground'.² Maria Lind's focus on artistic agency has precisely asked to what extent collectivity can disturb and intervene into a system which is so profoundly set on celebrating individual genius as subject.

Such material has introduced a wealth of analytical tools enabling the study of not only artists groups' creative outputs but also their mechanics and operational structures. The crucial role of collaboration in art cannot be disputed, but the processes, relationships and operational dynamics within groups remains a field in need of further study. The question of the gendered nature of collectivity is of particular interest here. As Lind observes, 'even the lone artist in their studio is dependent upon contributions from others. This is especially true for many male artists who have been able to rely on more or less invisible

2 Richard Sennett as quoted in: Elen Mara De Wachter, *Co-art: Artists on Creative Collaboration*, Phaidon Press, London, 2017, p. 20.

support from surrounding women', and it is this aspect of collectivity that I wish to focus on.³ Even the most mainstream art manifestations today, such as art awards and prizes, which have historically tended to pit artists against one another, have begun to acknowledge that art-making – just like music, film or theatre – is not necessarily a solitary activity, despite what hegemonic art history and the market may have us believe. In 2019 for instance, the Turner Prize, the most highly acclaimed of all UK annual art events, saw the four nominated artists, Lawrence Abu Hamdan, Helen Cammock, Oscar Murillo and Tai Shani, form a collective, requesting that the prize be split across all four, with the funds being shared equally. The artists' unprecedented gesture resonated widely, sending the message that in the cut-throat neoliberal art marketplace, artists desire and need solidarity and mutual support more than glamour and lavish prize giving-ceremonies.

But even with the recent acknowledgment of the centrality of collectivity in art, in-depth intersectional analyses of factors that determine and shape the nature of artists' involvement in collectives and groups remain scarce. Structural questions examining how collectives are formed, who has agency in their formation, their mode of operation as well as their articulation, need to be underpinned by broader structural explorations of who has access to such networks in the first place and whose names remain associated with groups' legacies after they cease to exist.

Questions of intent and historicization, the analysis of what constitutes a collective, when a collective begins and ends, what differentiates an artists' group from a community of artists, the nature of artists' communities formed around a particular site or venue, a document, a manifesto or a set of beliefs, are all pertinent to this study. In short, the three aspects of collectivity that interest me are the mechanics

3 Maria Lind, 'Complications; in: On Collaboration, Agency and Contemporary Art', *Public 39: New Communities*, 2009, pp. 53–73.

and processes involved in collective practice, the question of terminology and the historicization of collectives.

In this essay, a starting point for a larger project entitled 'Collective Actions, Continued Omissions' which investigates the gendered nature of collective practice, I begin to unpack some of the above, using as a case study the work of the Yugoslav group OHO (1962–1971) and the follow up agricultural and artistic commune, The Šempas Family, within the broader context of collective practice in Yugoslavia of 1960s and 1970s. This was a period that saw a proliferation of artists groups, often sharing a post-revolutionary ideological basis with both Yugoslav socialism (while also engaging in its critical evaluation) and the anti-institutional, iconoclastic and subversive ethos of global student protests of 1968.⁴

My reason for focusing on the OHO group as the first case study of this project is twofold. Firstly, OHO's multifaceted body of work drew me to further investigate the relationship between their progressive ideas and the group's operational structure, asking whether their hippie, anti-institutional ethos, connection to nature, the challenging of rigid social structures, anti-war stance (i.e., anti-Vietnam war slogans depicted in their works) and commitment to collectivity, were reflected in the group's own structure and working methods. Secondly, the involvement of numerous women who frequently appeared in OHO's artworks but were rarely credited as their authors, inspired me to investigate the question of gender within the group's activity. What particularly intrigued me was the 'tension' between the fluidity and collaborative nature of OHO's ethos used in the production of their works and on the other hand the rigidity of the narrativisation citing only a small number of male authors. Ironically, this very tension – 'despite' OHO's rejection of many moral

4 The project Collaborative Actions, Continued omissions started in 2019 and will continue through a series of interviews, publications and a conference. <http://dzuverovic.org/?path=/research/collaborative-actions-continued-omissions/>.

structures of Yugoslav society-reveals unwittingly the internalisation of **patriarchal structures** present in the country at the time.

Moreover, whilst I am aware that the collective artistic practices of OHO and this generation of artists (New Art Practice, described below) are universally being recognised for their radical potential in breaking down the divide between the hitherto discrete sphere of art and wider publics, through the participatory and inclusive nature of the work, creating novel affective sensations and relations (artist/audience), they simultaneously fail to reflect on the very nature of the collective – its constitution, practices and production. The failure to attend to the ways in which collaborative works were produced through the collective reveals a tension between ideological beliefs (deinstitutionalisation, deindividualisation, artist freed from bourgeois beliefs and moral codes) and practice which inadvertently erases from the formal writing of the history of Yugoslav art certain subjects participating in the production of this sensual revolution. My point is simple. The history of these revolutionary artistic movements is incomplete if certain participants of the collective are erased (erasure not necessarily meaning complete omission but being written into narratives in particular ways). Ranciere's distribution of the sensible –the claim that aesthetics – artistic practices which are always already political – have the potential to refigure the political, by legitimising certain ways of seeing, acting, feeling and doing things, then these practices fall short in their revolutionary potential. My attempt here is to expand the revolutionary potential of these groups by writing women into the narrative.

Much has been written about the complexities of the women's position in post-war Yugoslavia. With the proclamation of gender equality Yugoslav women found themselves in a 'double-bind' with social responsibility of being active citizens, being equal in the workforce, while privately struggling with the deep-seated sexism in the private sphere!¹

1 For a detailed discussion see: Bojana Pejić, *Gender Check, a Reader: Art and Theory in Eastern Europe*, Verlag der Buchhandlung Walter König, Köln, 2010 and Jelena Petrović, *Women's Authorship in Interwar Yugoslavia – The Politics of Love and Struggle*, Palgrave Macmillan, Cham, 2019.

'Everyone's Mother' – The Adoption of Familial Structures

One of the most apparent ways in which the internalisation of patriarchal structures becomes visible in collective art projects in Yugoslavia is through the very absence of female artists from the narratives of these collectives of the period. Of course, the absence of female artists in art collectives was far from unique to OHO. The continued normalisation of such narratives is evident in the apparent acceptance of the glaring absences of female protagonists, an inequality seemingly universally accepted as part and parcel of the patriarchal order, even as recently as 2012, which is when I conducted my first interviews.⁵ Frequently, when pointing out this issue in my interviews with cultural workers from the region, the responses would inevitably be accompanied by a sigh: 'yes, I know, the art world was very sexist, it was a different time,' my interviewees would explain.

These terms were used in interviews with David Nez, Marko and Marika Pogacnik (OHO) art historian Beti Zerovc conducted between 2014 and 2019 and were used by the interviewees in conversations about collectives in general, not only OHO.

In discussions with both the members of the OHO group and other cultural workers from the region, certain linguistic discomfort in relation to female members of collectives became apparent. Terms like 'lateral women,' 'backing singers,' 'the soul of the collective,' 'everyone's mother' were used in interviews, by both female and male interviewees, pointing to the implied affective labour and the naturalised nurturing roles of the women involved in collectives. In many cases the career paths of my interviewees, most of whom came of age in the late 1960s and early 1970s, seemed to suggest that male cultural workers found a way to pursue art careers, while their female counterparts ended up in the roles of curators, organisers, administrators, archivists, art historians – roles that foregrounded organisational, promotional or contextualising skills

5 The research I refer to here explored Pop Art in Socialist Yugoslavia: Lina Dzuverovic, *Pop art tendencies in self-managed socialism: pop reactions and counter-cultural pop in Yugoslavia in 1960s and 1970s*, PhD thesis, Royal College of Art, 2017. <https://researchonline.rca.ac.uk/2850/>.

over artistic development. We are reminded of Lucy Lippard's observation made in 1971, stating that 'It is far easier to be successful as a woman critic, curator or historian than as a woman artist, since these are secondary, or housekeeping activities, considered far more natural for women than the primary activity of making art'.⁶

My aim here is to add to the already rich body of scholarship on gender and art in Yugoslavia by focussing specifically on the way collectivity is historicised. I aim to build on the feminist work of Suzana Milevska, Bojana Pejic, Jelena Petrovic on women's authorship in interwar Yugoslavia as well as Red Min(e)d collective, Ivana Bago, Antonia Majaca, Chiara Bonfiglioli on the conference Drug-ca Zena, Sanja Ivekovic's work with the distribution network of women's work 'Elektra', the foundational writing of Lydia Sklevitsky, as well as the work of the Centre for Women's studies Zagreb, amongst many others.

Tendencies in the Historicisation of Artists Groups

The phenomenon of male-dominated networks of course did not begin in 1960s but dated back to earlier artistic endeavours, those avant-garde groups formed in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia (1918–1941). Enormously influential networks such as the avant-garde movement Zenitism and the associated magazine Zenit, which operated in Belgrade and then Zagreb (1921–26), with its ties to Italian Futurists and a broad European network, consisted exclusively of male authors. Similarly, the group Traveleri (1922) included one woman, Višnja Kranjčević, whose limited biography states that she worked in administration of the Croatian National Theatre (HNK) but little else is known about her professional or artistic life.

6 Lucy Lippard, cited in: Bryan-Wilson 2009: 164, quoted in: Nanne Buurman, 'Angels in the White Cube? Rhetoric's of Curatorial Innocence at dOCUMENTA 13', *On Curating*, Issue 29 / May 2016.

This account is not intended to be a comprehensive history of groups or collectives across the ex-Yugoslav cultural space, but a small sample used as an illustration of an overarching tendency observed during my research. Drawing attention to these groups' structures is as a way of triggering a conversation about the relation between their activities and their very foundations. Many other groups such as Decembarska Group (1955, Belgrade), Bosch+Bosch (1969, Novi Sad), Group TOK (1968), group 143 (1975–1980) could equally be added to this list, as examples of histories in which women either played marginal roles or no roles at all.

This also was the case with the artists' collective Zemlja (The Earth) (1929–1935) whose ten founding members were all male, and which had only two women exhibiting within their later exhibitions, the designer Branka Hegeđušić-Frangeš and the Bauhaus-trained weaver Otta Berger. A few decades later, the Zagreb-based group of designers, artists, architects, Exat 51 (1950–1956), equally counted no female members, while the group Gorgona, the authors of the playful eponymous 'anti-magazine' whose activities started in 1977 in Zagreb, equally gathered an entirely male network of eminent artists and art historians.

1960s and 1970s brought in conceptual art and pop culture when many Yugoslav artists, now known as New Art Practice generation, began to experiment, in many cases through forming collectives, or from the early 1970s onwards, less formally gathering around the newly created Student Cultural Centres in Belgrade, Zagreb and Ljubljana. Even though by this point a much larger number of female artists were operating in the country, including the by now well-known names including Sanja Iveković, Marina Abramović, Katalin Ladik, Bogđanka Poznanović and others, the more formalised networks remained organised and led by male artists.

For instance, The Group of Six Artists in Zagreb (1975 onwards) whose members were Boris Demur, Željko Jerman, Vlado Martek, Mladen Stilinović, Sven Stilinović and Fedor Vučemilović, organised 'exhibition-actions' in non-art spaces. It is not until 1978 when the Group of Six Artists launched the self-published magazine *May -75* (*Maj -75*), which was printed in the studio of Vlasta Delimar and Željko Jerman, that both Delimar and Iveković's works were included in the magazine which appeared for **eighteen issues**.

Despite socialist Yugoslavia's (1943–1991) progressive political position vis-a-vis gender equality (at least in terms of its public proclamations) artistic networks showed no signs of challenging this particular aspect of

the country's promises of equality, at least not through their own structures. Women who came of age in the late 1960s and early 1970s in Yugoslavia matured into what would prove to be a conflicting value system. On the one hand they were brought up on the legacy of, and great respect for, the crucial women's organisation – the **Women's Anti-fascist Front of Yugoslavia** (Antifašistički front žena Jugoslavije – AFŽ), which was an active entity during the Second World War and central to women's post-war emancipation.

This perspective promulgated equality for women and men (including equal pay) and sought to enable women to be active working members of society. On the other hand, Yugoslav women found themselves facing a gradual return of pre-war bourgeois patriarchal traditions, which, dominating the private sphere, strove to make them once again solely responsible for domestic life and child-rearing (while retaining the outward image of their social equality).

To paraphrase Bojana Pejić's writing, Yugoslav women found themselves negotiating private (the home) and public (the state) patriarchy while also gradually becoming as Skevitsky has outlined 'the invisible subject' As Jelena Petrović has observed 'in the wake of WW2 women did gain equal rights but also a new kind of invisibility' and this was equally the case for female artists as for any other working woman.⁷

7 Jelena Petrović, *Women's Authorship in Interwar Yugoslavia – The Politics of Love and Struggle*, Palgrave, London, 2019.

The Women's Anti-fascist Front (AFŽ) was a women's social and political organisation founded on 6 December 1942 in Bosanski Petrovač in Bosnia, as part of the People's Liberation Struggle during the Second World War. The primary goal of the AFŽ was to unite all women in the struggle against the fascist enemy, which it strove to achieve through the inclusion of women in the partisan struggle, participation in armed operations and diversionary activities, organisation of childcare and actions related to the cultural and educational upbringing of women. Following the liberation of the country, the AFŽ engaged in addressing the consequences of the war such as health, social and cultural issues, particularly the care of the wounded and the children who had become war orphans. The AFŽ worked to enable the emancipation of women, investing great efforts into including women as broadly as possible in economic and political life. The AFŽ was active in the spheres of medical care, counselling, organisation of school cafeterias, collective laundries and dry-cleaning services. The AFŽ strongly opposed discrimination and disrespect towards women, and gradually grew into a powerful social and political force in the country. The AFŽ was dissolved in 1953, after a decision by the Socialist Alliance of Working People of Yugoslavia based on the argument that the goal of gender equality could be more effectively reached

through non-gender-specific agencies. The AWF was also criticised for allegedly becoming too involved in politics (or for being too successful/having too much power), which led to its demise.

Ovo je najčešći spisak umetnika povezanih sa grupom OHO, koji se spominje na veb-sajtovi-kuda.org, monoskop.org i drugima, pa su sledstveno tome postali nalog koji je najpraktičniji i najčešće se kopira u akademskim izvorima. Međutim, vredni napomenuti i autorstvo koje se menjalo unutar grupe, kao i način na koji su navedeni autori pojedinačnih projekata. Na primer, u Nemogućim pričama, u tekstu Miška Šuvakovića navode se različite faze grupe OHO, koje su poslužile u detaljnoj analizi pripisivanja autorstva.

Different Phases of OHO

OHO was an artists' collective formed in 1962, in Kranj, then Yugoslavia (today Slovenia). It comprised core members Milenko Matanović, David Nez, Marko Pogačnik and Andraž Šalamun and a host of collaborators including Iztok Geister-Plamen, Marjan Ciglič, Tomaž Šalamun, Matjaž Hanšek, Naško Križnar, Vojin Kovač-Chubby, Aleš Kermavner, Franci Zagoričnik, Marika Pogačnik, Zvona Ciglič, Nuša and Srečo Dragan. **Many other artists, poets and thinkers** had 'light' associations with OHO, referred to as 'OHO Katalog' (OHO Catalogue), through sporadic participation in their actions and projects. The group predominantly worked in Kranj, Slovenia, as well as in Ljubljana between 1962 and 1971, and then Šempas, a small village in the Vipava valley in western Slovenia. Their activities ranged from literature and visual poetry to film, happenings, land art and conceptual and participatory performances. OHO's early work was conceptually aligned with Arte Povera, land art, happenings and incorporated body art practices, which combined into what Tomaž Brejc termed 'transcendental conceptualism', referring to that which reaches beyond what our senses can represent. The group explored human connections to nature, the relationship between the body and its environment as well as taking inspiration from systems theory to create their installations. OHO was by no means unique in its broad range of activities, but their sudden and decisive withdrawal from the context of art in 1971 to form a commune and farm their own food, stood out as an unusual gesture. In what is today a heavily mythologised act, the group was dissolved in 1971, decisively performing an exodus from the art context and the urban environment to the Slovenian village of Šempas in the Vipava Valley, to live off the land as a commune, under the moniker 'Porodica iz Šempasa' (Šempas Family), in order to be closer to nature and to work as a group in harmony with the environment and the cosmos. The commune lasted for many years, despite the members' initial lack of knowledge of how to plant

vegetables or live off the land. Eventually it was only Marko and Marika Pogačnik and their children that continued to live at this location, where they remain to this day.

In relation to OHO, the central question that interested me was one of participation in artistic networks – who were the women we see in OHOs Super 8 videos and in documentary material of the group's actions? What was the connection these women had to the actions of this early hippie art group, why were they willing to take part in these works, and most importantly what happened to them? Are some of them artists today? The obvious answer, which I frequently encountered, was that these were girlfriends or friends of the male artists, who were, to put it crudely 'hanging around' as a form of entourage of the group. In some cases these relationships developed into creative partnerships (the topic of artist couples is closely related to mine but is beyond the scope of this essay), while in many cases today we hear of the artists' groups but rarely do we hear about those who were involved in informal ways. I became particularly interested in women who for whatever reason did not cultivate their own, individual artistic careers, but who repeatedly appear around the groups in question, often taking supportive and nurturing roles.

Interviewing OHO Members – Division of Labour, Authorship versus Participation

My interviews with OHO members so far have included a conversation with founding member David Nez, whom I interviewed in 2014 in Poreč, Croatia, and a joint interview with Marko and Marika Pogačnik, at their home in Šempas, Slovenia, in 2019.

Here I note the early findings of these interviews, which I will analyse in the continuation of this project. From a small section of transcribed interviews so far, a central question emerges about the different

conceptions of what constitutes 'authorship' versus 'participation', and the gendered nature of these ideas. Authorship in OHO, it emerged, is associated with the genesis of an idea, the 'birth' of the overarching concept, while the execution and realisation are seen to be in the realm of participation, or general 'support'. It is along these lines that involvement with OHO appears to have been delineated, albeit without the artists themselves feeling much of a need to search for such structuring devices.

In the process of preparing and conducting the interview with Marko and Marika Pogačnik the dynamics of the different roles within the group immediately became evident through Marika's reluctance to be interviewed. I initially approached the couple via Marko Pogačnik's email address, following on from our initial correspondence back in 2014. Despite my insistence that it was 'both' of them I wished to interview, I was repeatedly asked whether Marika's presence would really be necessary.

Some months later, in August 2019, the interview took place at their house in Šempas (the home of the Šempas Family commune where the couple still live), with both Marika and Marko hosting us (I was kindly accompanied by a fellow curator and museum director, Saša Nabergoj) on their veranda. The interview started with them asking me once again whether Marika really needed stay, making it clear that they would rather I spoke to Marko only. Upon my insistence on Marika's presence, she did remain for the duration of the interview, but it was Marko who took the lead in answering my questions. As the interview progressed, I occasionally interjected, interrupting the flow of Marko's answers, explicitly directing the same questions to Marika.

Marika frequently left the table, excusing herself in order to tend to the food that was being cooked. Her tone was filled with humour. As a way of explaining her reluctance to take part in the interview, she laughingly stated:

'I am a very bad speaker (conversationalist). I am a good worker but a bad speaker. So, it is all divided. Some of us work, some of us speak. (laughs).'

To this Marko added: 'Without her, nothing would work'.

Despite OHOs/Šempas Family's deep commitment to the unity of art and life, a profoundly ingrained hierarchy between the way ideas are generated and their delivery and production was evident, as demonstrated in Marko's explanation of OHO's working process:

'And authorship did not exist, really authorship did not exist. This work was collective. The only authorship were my concepts, I thought it was important that what we were doing would have a concept and to express that, for it to be conceptually clear, to be presented.'

Articulating simultaneously the lack of authorship and a clear attachment to singular authorship epitomises the dichotomy in OHO – the genuine belief in collaboration halted by a reluctance to unravel the structures that propped up the smooth functioning of the group. This double conception of roles involved in the making of an artwork was articulated differently by various members of the group. The nurturing, supportive role women played within OHO was also foregrounded by David Nez, a founding member of the OHO group, in an interview in which I asked him about the presence of female artists in OHO's works:

'That's a really good question. I don't know – we just never really had any women. They always played more of a supportive role. Maybe that was just the 60s... (...) It wasn't until feminism that women started coming out and having a voice. I mean, you could say that we were the continuity of the same old patriarchal... (...)

But it is a good question, I think it was just the fact that the 60s had not yet seen women's liberation, it wasn't 'till later than that really came along. We never even thought about that. There were not really any women that were involved in the avant-garde as far as I know.

I had a girlfriend and she was always kind of jealous of OHO but she was never a part of the inner circle. We just had a strong bond between us, the four or five of us. Marika was always...the soul in a sense, she'd invite everyone for dinner, she was like everybody's mother, she was like my mother, like my surrogate mother, you know?'

LD: 'Yes, nurturing, supportive and kind?'

For Nez, an American artist who studied in Ljubljana, who participated in early OHO activities as a founding member, but moved back to the US in 1972, the women involved were practically invisible, while he also implies a certain co-dependence and reliance on their presence, support and participation.

An example of such hierarchies can also be seen in the credits of the Super 8 film *Beli Ljudje* (White People) (1969/1970) featuring a large group of men, women, children and animals covered in white body paint handling white objects and eating white food in an entirely white environment. In the credits the author of the work is cited as Nasko Kriznar, another 'core' OHO member, with a host of collaborators working on the script, while the other participants are listed as 'bodies'. Art historian Kseniya Gursteyn has observed that: 'In *Beli Ljudje*, the term 'bodies' points not only to the transnational 1960s rhetoric of the sexual liberation of the body, but also highlights the uncertain status of the people we see on the screen as neither the actors' real selves (since the film is scripted), nor those of properly named or defined fictional characters.'⁹

The participants' semi-fictional roles in OHO's works, their willingness to take part and act out a script (or in many street actions, to follow set rules and instructions), bring forth the question of agency in the making of these works. The question of what con-

8 An Interview with David Nez, July 2014, Poreč, Croatia.

9 Kseniya Gurshteyn, 'When Film and Author Made Love: Reconsidering OHO's Film Legacy', *Kino! #11-12*, Ljubljana, 2010.

stituted authorship is highlighted in Nez's thinking about Marika Pogacnik's participation:

DN: 'Yes, but she wasn't really an artist.'

LD: 'She didn't think of herself in that way?'

DN: 'Yes, but she was very talented in terms of craft and sewing and all that and collaborated a lot with Marko. And she has, since then, assumed, very much, the role of a collaborator.'

The useful deployment of traditional gendered hierarchies of art and craft fits smoothly the relegation of women's roles to that of carers and the transposition of familial roles onto the collective. This is echoed in Marko Pogačnik's spatial analogy which depicts an binary gendered division between the 'internal' (private) and 'external' (public) sphere:

'That is Yin and Yang, something is towards the internal life of a group, not just the wives and friends but others that were part of this circle, that was facing internally. And facing outwardly were men. Internally women had the main role, facing outwards were the men. And there is some sense in that, in the end.'¹⁰

He goes on to state that later this changed and in their later works they searched for an equilibrium, as part of their quest for the unity of art and life. Pogacnik spoke about the works made as part of the Šempas Family in which the women and children were involved.

'That changed, later we were not happy with that, that was one of the reasons why we formed a commune, where that shared moment was at the centre, (...) we then moved onto works where women and children took part too. For example, the mobiles made of wool and wood, clay and steel, and drawings, Šempas family that we drew. That was life / work in the fields and in the workshops with clay and wool... we tried to find an ideal way to achieve an equilibrium.'¹¹

10 An interview with Marko and Marika Pogačnik, Šempas, Slovenia, August 2019.

11 Ibid.

While there is no doubt that Marko Pogačnik (alongside a number of other artists) had a leading role in the authorship of OHO's works, accounts also point to the agency of Marika Pogačnik beyond the roles of producer, nurturer and 'surrogate mother'. In the interview with art historian Beti Žerovc in *Art Margins* (2013) a number of Marko Pogačnik's statements reveal Marika's active involvement not only in the making of the work, but also in decision making:

'My wife Marika and I drew conceptual diagrams of all our projects so that we could make copies and distribute them.'¹²

Followed by:

'When Walter de Maria came to Kranj to visit Marika and me, he tried to talk us into that [becoming actively involved in the international conceptual art scene L.D], on the grounds that we could rank high, as it were, among conceptual groups internationally. In the end, though, we decided on a completely different step, based on our group spiritual schooling (...)'¹³

The role played by Marika Pogačnik in OHO/The Šempas Family is no doubt as crucial as that of her partner Marko Pogačnik. But it is 'the way' in which her role is articulated and the value that is assigned to the type of work she contributed that renders her input seemingly less valuable in the grand hegemonic narratives of art history. Just like in other work environments, artistic work is dependent upon the invisible, un(der)paid and undervalued work of social reproduction, without which even the basic structures would collapse. In the case of OHO, might it be possible to take Marko Pogačnik to task in his quest to 'achieve an equilibrium' of the Šempas Family, by broadening the realm of authorship to encompass (and make visible) 'all' of Šempas Family's activities, thus expanding the boundaries of what it means to develop a concept for

12 The OHO Files: Interview with Marko Pogačnik by Beti Žerovc, Ljubljana · Published 07/27/2013, *Artmargins Online*.

13 Ibid.

a work of art. As Mierle Laderman Ukeles' 'Manifesto for Maintenance Art 1969! Care!' has taught us, the visible, 'top layer' of art only exists because it rests on numerous invisible layers of work done to enable the visible i.e. the artwork. Ukeles aptly reminds us that the balance between the highly valued work that she terms 'Development' and the overlooked and undervalued work that is 'Maintenance' is never going to be equal because 'maintenance is a drag. It takes all the fucking time'.¹⁴ The equilibrium Pogačnik refers to can thus only be achieved if cooking, cleaning, raising children or producing craft-work are seen, valued and made visible as intrinsic to the highly valued concept development.

So, what is to be done about gendered art historical narratives which continue to reproduce hierarchies of highly valued 'authors' and undervalued 'support workers'? The tension underpinning the workings of OHO – a group ahead of its time which set to challenge set moral norms and, in forming the Šempas Family, also shunned the nuclear family structure – is the tension of deeply embedded patriarchal, heteronormative structures which even OHO's radical thinkers could not transgress.

Notes towards Feminist Interventions into Art's Histories

While a critical analysis of Yugoslav collectives based on gender differentiations may obfuscate the political potential of collective practices, and particularly the undoing of individualism running through the veins of the art system, it cannot be ignored, as collective artistic practices that aim to free us from individualism cannot reproduce the very inequalities (including gender) that they seek to undo. The perpetuating of inequality and subjugation of certain subjects within the collective fundamentally limits the group's

14 Mierle Laderman Ukeles, 'Manifesto for Maintenance Art 1969! Proposal for an exhibition 'Care'', *Journal of Contemporary Painting* Vol. 4, Br. 2, 2018, p. 233–237.

potential to deinstitutionalise and deindividualise. Simply accepting existing narratives of the achievements of these collectives is no longer acceptable and a paradigm shift is needed to allow for 'all' aspects of collective activities to be understood as constituent and equal elements of their work thus rendering the hitherto passive voices, key active agents of their operations.

In seeking to define a feminist approach to building contemporary paradigms of knowledge production about historical art practices we must think with Griselda Pollock that we are not creating 'a feminist art history but a 'feminist intervention' in art's histories'.¹⁵ Strategies for such interventions must transform not just our thinking but the discipline as a whole, drawing not just on art history itself but a much broader constellation of struggles, connecting to the legacy of the women's movement, building allegiances 'across' a number of fields. As Elke Krasny noted, in search for such an approach: 'it is indeed possible to initiate dialogue and to create temporary alignments between activists, artists, curators, educators, historians, museum directors, researchers, theorists and scholars who are actively involved in women's museums or in the field of feminist curating'.¹⁶

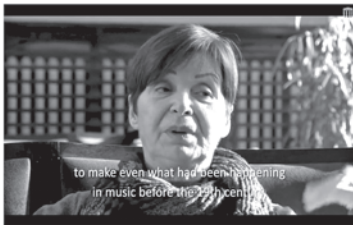
Lastly, in thinking with Angela Dimitrakaki and Lara Perry about the writing of art histories, we may ask what would happen if we might for a moment turn away from feminist artists to feminist curators? In the case of Yugoslavia, my research has, unsurprisingly, revealed myriad women's perspectives – these are the women whose careers turned away from making, towards contextualising, enabling, curating, producing, and, yes, supporting artists. The women I interviewed and continue to interview are the ones whose narratives have remained secondary, those so called

15 Griselda Pollock, 'Feminist Interventions in Art's Histories', *Kritische Berichte* 16, br. 1, 1988.

16 Elke Krasny, 'Rethinking Ideology – Emancipation/Facing Materialist Conception of History', in: *Women's Museum: Curatorial Politics in Feminism, Education, History, and Art*, Löcker Verlag Vienna, 2013.

'support workers' whose own achievements, conveniently for neat hegemonic narratives, fell outside of the boundaries of 'authorship' worth writing about, thus remaining invisible, or at best secondary. Thinking with Dimitrakaki and Perry: 'Could such a turn (imagined rather than actual at present) discover a different route into feminism's art histories? Would this displacement of the artist in favour of the curator permit greater insight into why feminism has not in fact succeeded at transforming a capitalist art institution (once belonging to the west but now globally hegemonic) that has, arguably and paradoxically, managed to both include women artists and exclude or neutralize feminist politics? the increasing dominance of capitalism over the field of cultural production, exacerbated by the global financial crisis of 2008, necessitates that feminist practice respond accordingly: material urgency rather than semiotic instability is defining the framework in which a responsive methodology of feminist curating must now come into being.'¹⁷

17 Angela Dimitrakaki and Lara Perry, *Politics In A Glass Case: Feminism, Exhibition Cultures And Curatorial Transgressions*, Liverpool University Press, Liverpool, 2013.



Interview with Dunja Blažević (ZVONO Group), Belgrade, Sarajevo

bulky.org / archive.org

1962-1992

Dunja Blažević, group Zvono

Dunja Blažević, art historian, curator, editor of the visual program of the Gallery of the Student Cultural Center (SKC) in Belgrade from 1970 to 1976 and director of the SKC from 1976-1979 and director of the Center for Contemporary Art / SCCA / pro.ba in Sarajevo since 1996-2010. Group Zvono (Sarajevo, 1962-1992) its members were Sosa Ozmić, Biljana Gavranović, Kemal Hadžić, Saško Hadžihanović, Narcis Kantardžić and Aleksandar Sasa-Bukvić, the initiators of the joint work of the group and the driving force of its organization and promotion. As newly graduated students of the Academy of Fine Arts in Sarajevo, familiar with contemporary art trends, they do not wait to be recognized in the existing system of art. Eager for change, they form a group that will operate outside the institutions and in a way hitherto unknown and unrecognized in our artistic environment. They organize art actions, performances, exhibitions in the most unusual places: bars, streets, shop windows, in nature. This was until then the most radical behavior in modern art in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Their group actions (stadium games, parodies and parties) are an expression of generational self-identification, while each of them in his individual work seeks and develops his own plastic form and poetics in a wide range of "New Images" of the eighties. The activity of the Zvono group (especially its extremely activist attitude towards the cultural space in which



Branka Stipančić, The Group of Six Artists

Božidar Mandić, founder of the Po

1971

1972

1973

1974

1975

1976

1977

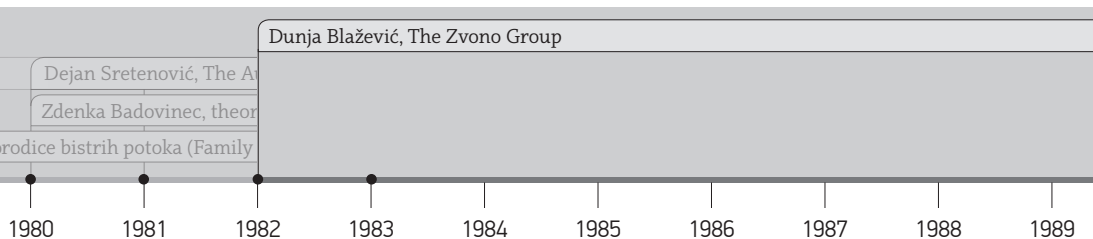
1978

1979

Interview with Dunja Blažević, art historian, Belgrade, November 2017.

We were thinking about how to make that revolution where we were, and Biljana (Tomić) pointed out an interesting exhibition in Rome that Benito Oliva (Achille Bonito Oliva) made in '71. Its title was – *Amore mio*. At that exhibition, *Amore mio* invited artists to bring along something they liked, something personal and so on. It was an inspiration for us to try it too. We called it the *Dragularium / Knick-knackarium* and invited whoever wanted to participate. About 30 people participated in that exhibition, but not with what they were otherwise known for as their artistic practice, not with their artistic work, but with something else. And then they appeared, what we call “the Six”. In this case they were the clearest, the most radical. Then Marina Abramović, who had been painting clouds until then, appeared with peanut shells on the wall, with lambskin, which were all associative of clouds, but no longer had anything to do with painting. Rasa Todosijević also – all of them individually performed something other than what they had been doing until then. They simply started coming to the gallery every day after that. They started coming up with initiations – I have an idea! I have an idea! I have an idea! And I said – great! But please talk about that idea first – does it make any sense; is it worth anything. After that, I said – well, we are going to realise it, the gallery is your space, and whenever you have a new idea that is somewhat articulated, you come to check it out in public.

That check is necessary, you can have innumerable ideas, but nothing will happen until you face people. They did not need any formal, group action, because they gained priority in the work of the gallery whenever they came with a new project. Of course, along with everyone else, along with Goran Trbuljak, Tom Gotovac, Dalibor Martinis, Sanja Iveković, Nuša and Srečo Dragan, and God knows who else – everything that started from that Yugoslav area. As far as the Belgrade context is concerned, the Six were the most important for us, or for me.



Milica Pečić

Art Collectives as Platforms of Confrontations – a Case Study: January / February, Assassination¹

Exploring the collective action of art organizations provides insight into art production models that examine the potential of the alternative in the dominant art system. Although there was a long tradition in Yugoslavia of creating art collectives and groups, but also other forms of self-organization of artists and cultural workers, in this paper I shall focus on short-living art collectives created within or around Tribina Mladih (Youth Forum) in the early 1970s in Novi Sad, whose formation and work were directly related to confrontation as a tactic of resisting the pressures and restrictive measures of the ruling party.

Youth Culture from the Late 1960s and Early 1970s

The atmosphere of the global student protests in 1968 revitalized revolt, struggle and direct confrontation as mechanisms of articulating the counter-position and constituting alternative models of social organisation. The artistic experiment moved away from the art object towards the artistic experience, revived the avant-garde demand for erasing the line between art and life, and once again the dominant hierarchy in

1 The text was created from fragments of the doctoral dissertation *Art in Serbia from 1968 to 2000 – politics of confrontation*.

the relationship artist-work of art-audience was broken. The global revolt was focused on the increasing commercialisation of art and the dominance of market logic in shaping the work of art. Institutional critique defined the artistic institution as bourgeois and one that was aimed at supporting the hegemony of capital. Confrontation as a tactic of artistic action arose in opposition to the existing art system and its models of production, distribution and communication, and collective work and the establishment of artistic groups opened the possibility of alternative subjectification and articulation of the counter-position.

Yugoslavia was in a unique position because it was representing an alternative to the domination of capital and to what the free market dictated. The model of self-managed socialism was supposed to add to the increasing decentralisation of power, shifting the decision-making process and the domain of management from bureaucracy to workers and producers. Anomalies within the system, the creation of party elites and the inconsistency of the implementation of self-management logic caused a revolt of students who demanded a greater degree of democratisation of society. **Youth institutions and magazines**, founded by the state as a training ground for the development of self-management potentials of young people, became carriers of avant-garde ideas and the most common place where the constitutive potential of new practices was tested in direct confrontation with the dominant policy of the League of Communists. The centres for generating new progressive ideas were youth magazines (*Student, Index, Polja, Új Symposion* and others) and institutions such as: Tribina Mladih (Youth Forum) (Novi Sad), Studentski Centar (Student Centre (Zagreb)), Studentski Kulturni Centar (Student Cultural Centre (Belgrade)). These magazines and institutions, articulated criticism of the art system in Yugoslavia as a system isolated from social life and based on hierarchical relations within which the opportunity to participate was limited to privileged individuals and a certain style that was promoted.

It should be noted that editorial teams and associates of magazines and youth institutions changed relatively quickly, often as a result of new progressive editorial policies, but most often youth institutions were the bearers of change and as such the first to be hit by restrictive policies of governing structures, of which I shall write more herewith.

Changes in the understanding of the goal and role of art, the production and reception of a work of art were the bases on which this critique was formulated. Direct expression, research, process, situations and experience replaced the art object, and communication with the audience was done directly and was often aimed at inclusion and participation in the art process. The mechanism of representation and mediation of art inherent in the institutional framework was thus dubious and new models of institutional action were formed within youth institutions, based on horizontal inclusion, experimentation, openness, dialogue and self-education as opposed to existing educational models nurtured within art academies. Students, art historians, artists and critics in the editorial positions of these institutions created new programme formats that turned the institution into an open laboratory of continuous practical and theoretical experiments, thus providing conditions for the productive development of new ideas and practices.

It was within these institutions that the development of new organizational models could be monitored, as well as conflicts, struggles, antagonisms of avant-garde movements and dominant power structures. In that sense, the example of Youth Forum in Novi Sad was especially important because the pressures of party structures and restrictive measures aimed at stifling the freedom of independent management of the institution reached probably the most drastic proportions in relation to other youth institutions in Yugoslavia.

Judita Šalgo was a writer and poetess close to artistic and literary experiments and research related to avant-garde phenomena from the early 1970s.

Bogdanka Poznanović was an artist, pedagogue and professor, who used her practice (performances, interventions in public space, mail art, etc.) but also her pedagogical and curatorial work to contribute to the development and promotion of avant-garde aspirations in the art of Vojvodina in the late 1960s and early 1970s.

Is there self-management for Youth Forum?²

During the period from 1968 to 1971, the editor of Youth Forum was **Judita Šalgo**, and her close associate was **Bogdanka Poznanović**. Being interested in progressive and avant-garde practices, but also with their own engagement focused on experiment and exchange, both Šalgo and Poznanović greatly contributed to shaping the young generation of artists. Through communication established globally and new formats of pedagogical-curatorial and critical work, they both clearly directed their activities on the art scene towards the initiation, promotion and development of new avant-garde practices in Novi Sad and their connection with the Yugoslav and international scene. And, as Bogdanka made the Information and Operations Centre for Contemporary Art DT20 from her art studio, which was a dynamic place of meeting and exchange with the youngest generation of Novi Sad artists, Judita Šalgo, with her model of management and her programme policy, increasingly changed the nature of the institution from representative to democratic.

Šalgo elaborated on the concept of the institution that she had tried to implement in the magazine *Index*, and as stated that the basic characteristics of the work of Tribina were:

‘The possibility for all those who follow the programme to give their suggestions, remarks, to participate in the work of the existing editorial office; programme wise, the aspiration to transcend local frameworks; to distort the pastoral and schematic notion of one environment and to establish contacts with fresh ideas and unconventional thinking in our country and in the world; the principle of openness is also present when dealing with all social, political and artistic topics and is reflected in the attitude, analytical and critical,

2 According to the title of the text by S. Milovanović, ‘Is there self-management for Tribina Mladih’ in the magazine *Student* No. 4, 23 February, 1971, p. 10.

as well as in the method that is free of scholarly and daily political didactics.³

During the editorial mandate of Judita Šalgo, KÔD group was formed and was operating, and they developed their own ideas about art and their possible manifestations, and this research led them to their engaged struggle for democratisation and liberation of art from the institutional mechanism of the art system. A regular contributor to the magazine *Polje* and Youth Forum at that time was the artist, poet and activist Vujica Rešin Tucić, an active advocate of art as an activity of shaping new social realities ‘... against suppression and anachronisms of cultural institutions, against CULTURAL BOURGEOIS AND MINOR RULERS – one has to grab the power over the social funds from the presently quite mightily consolidated individuals.’⁴

The progressive programme scheme of Youth Forum; nurturing a radical artistic experiment; engaging a large number of artists; editors and other collaborators; promoting free opinion; interdisciplinary approach and intensive international cooperation created a potent creative environment. Art is understood as a field of critical re-examination of reality, self-education, free expression in all forms of expression regardless of formal education, connecting different disciplines, experimentation in the domain of new organizational formats, as a field of free play, openness and inclusion. Such changes provoked a strong reaction from the local party leadership. The autonomy of management guaranteed by the Law on Self-management was abolished after the accusations of false intellectualism, political avant-gardism and deviation from the interests of the Youth Alliance. Slobodan Milovanović gave an analysis of the situation in the text ‘Is there Self-management for Youth Forum’ in which he stated that the

3 Judita Šalgo, ‘Tribina mladih, otvorena – zatvorena’, *Index* br. 202, Novi Sad, 1970.

4 Isak Crnogorski, ‘Na novosadsku kulturu je pao mrak’, interview with Vujica Rešin Tucić, *Student* No. 2, Beograd, 19. January 1971, p. 13.

Provincial and Municipal Conference of the Youth Association had made a decision on the programme of the Youth Forum without any prior consultations with the Council of the Forum and the people who should implement such a programme orientation, regardless of the results achieved during the previous year. Milovanović concludes:

‘By the existing decision, the Youth Forum was essentially abolished as an independent institution because it is in conflict with the existing law on institutions. The law provides for the rights of the institution to independently (through the governing body) adopt its programme and work plan while, by decision, the rights of the Council (as the highest self-management body) are reduced to a minimum and transferred to the founder who thus acquires the right to appoint the Council, directors, editors-in-chief, gives consent to the statute, the members of the editorial board and the editorial concept.’⁵

According to Milovanović, the decision was submitted to the Youth Forum on 24 November 1970, so we can easily connect the atmosphere of pressure and restrictions of party elites and the emergence of a new format of group artistic organisation and action.

January / February and Assassination Groups

In January 1971, a platform of avant-garde artists of the scene in Vojvodina was formed, and they decided to oppose their ideas to the rigid bureaucratic system by performing together within a group that will be named after the month they performed in. The group consisted of Vujica Rešin Tucić, founders and members of group KÔD: Branko Andrić, Slavko Bogdanović, Janez Kocijančič, Miroslav Mandić, Slobodan Tišma, Mirko Radojčić, Peđa Vranešević, as well as other artists and associates of the Youth Forum: Ana Raković, Vladimir Kopicl, Čeda Drča, Božidar Mandić, Dušan

5 Slobodan Milovanović, ‘Ima li samoupravljanja za Tribinu mladih’, *ibid.*, p. 10.

Sabo and Milan Živanović. The first performance called *Work Day of the Group January* was organised in the Youth Forum premises from 12 to 9 pm, on the day Vladimir Ilyich Lenin died – January 21. Already the first performance, and especially the poster with swear words written below the ten-dinar banknote, clearly positioned the group as a platform of revolt, rebellion and counter-speech, where excessive statements, effects of shock and provocation challenged the domineering system. Artwork, as an ephemeral event, was generated within the field of experience with an uncertain outcome which, in turn, made possible the articulation and subjectification of tendencies that remained repressed, marginalised and invisible in the dominant system of both art and society. The performance revved up fierce public criticism directed both at the Youth Forum and the authors themselves, and even the financing of the Youth Forum programme was also called into question.

The second performance of this group of artists was organised in the Youth Centre (Dom Omladine) in Belgrade on 9 February 1971 and was called *A Snack of New Arts* and the group name was February (Februar). The event was organised as a happening lasting many hours, during which verses were read, artists took turns at the microphone demonstrating their views. According to art historian Nebojša Milenković, Vujica Rešin Tucić swore and insulted the members of the Province political leadership which persecuted artists.⁶ Actions such as Slavko Bogdanović's riveting Marxism classics, and in addition to this, individual works by artists were exhibited, among which 10 messages by Miroslav Mandić explicitly toying with risky political slogans and petty-bourgeois moralism, examining the limits of artistic freedom using elements of shock and provocation. On the occasion of the Belgrade event, the group February also wrote an Open Letter to the Yugoslav Public in which they strongly criticised the situation in the culture in Novi Sad and Vojvodina,

6 Nebojša Milenković, *Vujica Rešin Tucić – Tradicija avangarde*, Muzej savremene umetnosti Vojvodine, Novi Sad, 2011, p. 49.

and which positioned the entire performance as a manifestation of direct confrontation with such a situation:

‘In the culture of Novi Sad (Vojvodina), during the last two years, the policy of a firm hand has been in effect, in addition to complete bureaucratisation and institutionalisation of cultural activities, as well as the expansion of the monopoly of groups and individuals in positions of responsibility. Arbitration appointed by political bodies and officials in art and culture has become a common method for disqualifying new phenomena. There is a hierarchical relationship between cultural workers and an *a priori* disqualification of young artists and contemporary tendencies in art. Dealing with culture has become a source of gaining political and material power. Political and administrative way of resolving issues has created an atmosphere of fear; it has endangered progressive thought and made freedom of creativity and engaging in art squalid and risky. The self-management practice is impossible in such a tyrannical atmosphere because the authorities always give trust to politically ‘correct’ individuals. All this prevents the democratisation of culture and the inclusion of art in social processes and is followed by condemnations that art is separated from society and the people. The mass media misinform the Yugoslav public and act as an extended arm of the monopoly in the political and cultural structures. Our language is the language of art and we do not want it to become a political language.’⁷

The criticism of the work of the January (Januar) group initiated by the press, cultural workers and the competent Provincial party bodies, culminated after the Belgrade performance of the group February. A large number of articles were aimed at discrediting and belittling artists. Still, conflicts among critics generated some of the most advanced articulations of confrontational practices in the avant-garde art in the 1970s. The most significant contribution to the

understanding of the nature of new art was given by Jovica Aćin in the text 'Revolt as an Artistic Activity'. Aćin clearly points to the potent nature of revolt as an artistic activity, which alone can generate changes and a progressive space of emancipation from ossified and bureaucratized structures:

'After a recent global eruptive politicised action of students and young people, using the tactic of *novum* that was socially and utopianly engaged in a good sense led to a dialectical turn: revolt has become an extremely modern artistic activity – a very useful and creatively strong content and form... This modern turn has broken both the boundaries of the artistic space and the boundaries of the rigid social life, especially its bureaucratic structures. The tactic of revolt as an artistic activity is very risky and has not yet shown its final results, but they hint to us that they are the only realistic true hope today that human life can change, as well as its style and way of thinking, simply said – of cultural progress... The freedom of such a creation is necessarily inviolable, and if that is limited, it should be grabbed without further considerations by oneself.'⁸

According to Aćin, destruction lies at the heart of the tactic of revolt, i.e. the destruction of the old in order to establish the new, where he sees destruction not as ephemeral anarchist destruction and terrorism but as the realisation of a new programme from which a new man, life, society and world is born. He further uses the performance of the February Group to prove the thesis of revolt as a progressive and renewing artistic practice:

'The tactic of that anti-group was provocation as the first element of destruction... Provocation as a means of struggle in dealing with a bureaucratized political/cultural structure that can in no other way be made to listen, is by no means beautiful or tasteful: it must be unpleasant, ruthless and insulting, it must be exposed,

8 Jovica Aćin, 'Revolt kao umetnička aktivnost', *Student* No. 4, 23. februar 1971, p. 10.

sworn at, insulted and be evil and mean – otherwise it will not fulfil its purpose (in that sense, Karl Marx also speaks about it in *Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Law*).⁹

We see that Aćin sees revolt, disagreement and resistance as important elements of artistic tactic of opposing the dominant framework that produces social relations, but also as legitimate forms of artistic expression. Aćin uses the term 'anti-group' which clearly indicates that he notices a difference in the logic of association and collective action of the group January/February in relation to traditionally understood art collectives. The transformation of the existing framework of producing subjectivity also presupposes a complete autonomy from the norms that define this process. The structure of the January/February groups opens the possibility of subjectification that deviates from the established criteria of the dominant art system based on the values of authenticity, excellence and originality. The only stable determinant of the group is the decision to call the group by the month in which the group performs. The number of members and the dynamics of activities thus remain open and the format of a collective action is defined by an open, dynamic and changing structure that changes in relation to the circumstances of the action. This way, the group becomes a kind of framework that enables the destruction of the dominant models of representation, creating an agonistic space for the struggle of all those interested in fighting for the right to speak where such speech is erased. It is in the field of agonist struggle that theorist Chantal Mouffe recognises the potential of artistic activity to make antagonisms visible, to encourage disagreement and to give 'a voice to all those who are silenced within the existing hegemony.'¹⁰ The

9 Ibid, p. 10.

10 Chantal Mouffe, 'Umjetnički aktivizam i agonistički prostori', *Operacija Grad: Priručnik za život u neoliberalnoj stvarnosti*, Zagreb, 2008, p. 226, Original title: Chantal Mouffe, 'Artistic Activism and Agonistic Spaces', *Art & Research. A Journal of Ideas, Contexts and Methods*, Volume 1, No 2, Glasgow, 2007.

experience of disagreement introduces us to the aesthetic regime of art, as defined by Jacques Rancière, within which the very uncertainty of aesthetic experience as a dissensual space calls into question the stable setting of the world and opens the possibility for change¹¹.

The authorities responded with drastic measures: replacement of the entire management of the Youth Forum headed by Judita Šalgo, replacement of the editorial board of the magazine *Polje*, including Vujica Rešin Tucić, appointment of the new management in magazines *Index* and *Student*. The group crumbled and the activists' counter-action aimed at direct confrontation and resistance to the party mechanism of the state was continued by some artists who published texts in the existing youth magazines such as *Index* and *Új Symposion*, but also in self-published publications such as *L.H.O.O.Q.* started by Slavko Bogdanović in the autumn of 1971. In a series of texts, Slavko Bogdanović and Miroslav Mandić elaborated a new underground revolutionary programme of artistic activity based on provocation and destruction as manifestations of revolt and rebellion. *L.H.O.O.Q.* was issued six times as the *Magazine for the Destruction of Everything That Exists*, three times as the *Underground Magazine for Developing Interpersonal Relationships*, three times as the *Underground Magazine for a New Revolution* and the last issue came out as a *Magazine for Friends*.

Because of their texts, both Bogdanović and Mandić were soon sentenced to eight and nine months in prison, respectively, and the group Assassination (Atentat) continued with the tactic of provocation and revolt which was confronting the existing art conventions, the institutional system of art and its Party leadership. The work of this group focused on exposing illogicalities and anomalies within the system, opposing the idea of equality to existing hierarchies, insisting on freedom of

11 Jacques Rancière, *Dissensus. On politics and Aesthetics*, Continuum International Publishing Group, London, New York, 2010.

expression and publicly exposing censorship, pressure, bans and punishments on artists and cultural workers. Vujica Rešin Tucić, Vicko Arpad and Milan Milić participated in the work of the group, and had their first action-performance called *A Mad Cow* in 1972 on the plateau in front of the Student Cultural Centre (SCC) in Belgrade as part of the programme of the First April Encounters.

A construction resembling a boat made of rough canvas and scaffoldings was mounted on the street in front of the SCC building as a platform for the event itself. Slogans like 'Ultra Frenzy', 'Mad Cow', 'Freedom to the People and Chewing Gum to Me' were written on the canvas and a microphone was placed inside the structure. Artists, city-dwellers, passers-by were invited to write slogans and express their views via the microphone. The *Bulletin of the First April Encounters* invited 'everyone to join the realisation because participation in this project is necessary'¹².

According to Nebojša Milenković, Vujica Rešin Tucić focused his boat performance on publicly exposing the local party elites and their actions aimed at stifling freedom; sanctions, censorship and lawsuits against the artist.¹³ The structure of the action, the construction of the boat, the choice of the venue (one of the central Belgrade streets – Marshal Tito's Street at the time) suggested a clear commitment of the group to the activation of public space and the involvement of citizens. Everyone was invited, from associates, passers-by and audience, to come aboard the construction and share their position with those around. A journalist from the *Borba Daily* gave his view of the atmosphere that this action caused on the streets:

'... On the deck of an improvised ship, decorated with various trinkets and strewn with signs of student pacifist symbols, the 'Assassins' invited and called out

12 Slavko Dimitrijević, 'Projekt pobesnela krava', *Bilten Prvi aprilski susret*, SKC, Beograd, 1972.

13 N. Milenković, 'Vujica Rešin Tucić – Tradicija avangarde', n.d., p. 154.

bystanders for dialogue. What was almost unusual, numerous observers were happy to speak and answer the questions having climbed the podium, which for a moment resembled a fairground with all the shouting and frenzy, but it also seemed like a successful student satirical forum.¹⁴

At the next performance called *Hot Byer – the emergence of the group Assassination* in the Novi Sad Youth Forum in May 1972, the group created a multimedia installation (documents, personal archive comprised of photographs, texts, excerpts from the press, court verdicts for artists, film, slides, audio work) wherein the ideas of the Novi Sad circle of avant-garde artists from the early 1970s directly confronted the system's reactions to their activities and work. In the form of a documentary/archival installation, the work combined the materials comprised of personal archives with the official documentation and texts written by the artists, which created a self-portrait of the time from the subjective actors' point of view. The conflict around the Youth Forum with the state mechanism became the content of the work and as such becomes a memento, an active monument to the fight of a group of artists against the system.

14 G.B, 'Aprilski susret studenata u Beogradu – umorna avangarda', *Borba*, 09. April 1972.

Thin Lines of Continuity

Although we have only two performances in our archive, both of the January/February Groups and the Assassination Group, from today's perspective we can clearly detect lines of continuity that lead us to the activities of the Magnet Group during the protests in Belgrade in the 1990s or the April Group performance on the occasion of the opening of the reconstructed Novi Sad Cultural Centre in 2011. The Magnet group was founded by the students of Vujica Rešin Tucić's school called *Avant-garde Tradition* led by Tucić in the early 1990s. Within the school, the nationalist manipulation of traditions was opposed by the counter-tradition, the tradition of confrontation, resistance and rebellion. The very performances of the Magnet Group on the streets of Belgrade were performed as a manifestation of counter-speech that produces an agonistic space of conflict within which the resistance and repression of the then regime of Slobodan Milošević intersect.

The April Group directly followed the work of the January/February Groups and some forty years later they organised an action called *History Class No. 2* in front of the renovated building of the Cultural Centre in Novi Sad (former Youth Forum). During the action, a large number of artists and passers-by, associates and bystanders, held a paper with the message: 'History was erased at this place after the decision of the city administration. April Group' the group intervenes in the dominant narrative of the cultural policy of the city, which erases any trace of the history of the Youth Forum and its creative contribution to the culture of the city. The official press release of the April Group points out that the action is a continuation of the first *History Class* performed in February 2011 by artists and activists Ana Vilenica, Saša Stojanović and Aleksa Golijanin at the entrance to the Belgrade Youth Centre (Dom Omladine) on the occasion of the removal of a memorial plaque stating that the Youth Centre was opened in 1964 at the initiative of the then authorities

and with the support of Josip Broz Tito. And it was exactly in the same Youth Centre, founded with the support of Josip Broz Tito, that Februar's *A Snack of New Arts* had been performed forty years before. It was an action of resistance to the party attacking the independence of a related youth institution in another city. This paradox also points to the specificity of Yugoslav cultural policy, which provided the infrastructure for the development of youth culture and, after its subjectification and articulation, it tried to stifle the constitutive potential of new ideas or neutralise it within the existing art institution. Contemporary cultural policy, on the other hand, demonstrates the need to completely erase the past in order to move from question: 'Is there self-management for the Youth Forum?' to a question: 'Whose beautiful house is this?'

Concluding remarks

We have seen that new avant-garde practices in Novi Sad were initially developed under the auspices of the Youth Forum, which, with its programme scheme and engagement of a large number of artists, editors and other associates, intensively promoted critical thinking, connecting different spheres of cultural production and encouraged international cooperation and artistic experimentation. Guided by the demands of students, the Youth Forum demonstrated the potential of the logic of self-management, changing the nature of the artistic institution from authoritarian to democratic. Overcoming the boundary between art and life led to a change in the logic of production that no longer depended on artistic academic education and the skills of a privileged individual. The nature of artistic work changed radically and turned towards research, experimental and open processes aimed at experience. The presented experiments gravitated towards the complete democratisation of art in terms of the topics covered, the role of art in society and everyday life, but also towards the expansion of

The question is a quote from a mural made jointly by Katarina Šoškić and Dušan Rajić on the wall of a residential building in Kraljevo in 2007.

opportunities for inclusion and participation in the artistic process. All these characteristics were already enough for individuals within the party structures to see the changes on the scene as an attack on the institution of art and to initiate sharp reactions by the system. Paradoxically, in the system that produced the mechanism of self-management as a developmental instrument of society that was supposed to lead to decentralization of power and more equal economic distribution, a mere hint of changes that such a system produces is met with strong resistance from governing structures. Even more paradoxically, this indication of changes in the work of the Youth Forum and the young generation of artists was aimed at criticising the bourgeois status of the autonomy of the institution of art as a closed system of hierarchies and privileges of the chosen. And it was precisely the generation that brought about the anti-bourgeois revolution during the Second World War that was not ready to support the institutional transformation that such a revolution implies in its consequences. The capacity of the young generation, educated and brought up in the tradition of the revolution, was severely sanctioned the moment it manifested its constitutive and operational potential. The abolition of the right to independent management, which was the lawful right of the Council of the Youth Forum, led to the radicalisation of artistic activity of the young generation that bravely took its activities aimed at democratisation of art to direct confrontation, active artistic revolt and provocation of the system. The ensuing sanctions clearly point to the subversive potential of art and the difference between the autonomy of aestheticised bourgeois art and avant-garde autonomy where the former, politically neutral and isolated from life practice, is nurtured in a society built on the idea of political avant-garde. Avant-garde autonomy, projected by the ideology of self-management, capable of generating new social relations, proved to be a dangerous weapon against the privileges of the ruling party bureaucracy. Once won, the position of power of the Commu-

nist elite should not have been doubted even when criticism is carried out by young people revitalising the forgotten revolutionary potential of that same elite.






Interview with Zdenka Badovinac, Ljubljana

1980-2020

Zdenka Badovinac, theorist and curator

Zdenka Badovinac, theorist and curator, director of the Modern Gallery and Museum of Contemporary Art in Ljubljana (MG + MSUM). In her research so far, she has covered a large part of the practice of contemporary art in Slovenia, which includes the work of art groups.

▶ Zdenka Badovinac, Activist

Branka Stipančič, The Group of Six Artists

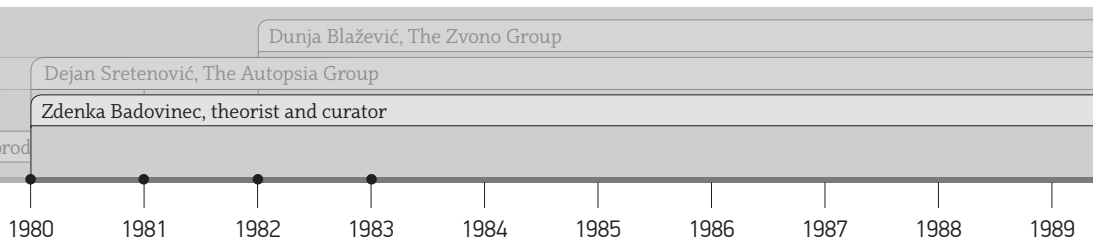
Božidar Mandič, founder of the Po

1971
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Interview with Zdenka Badovinac, Director of the Modern Gallery and Museum of Contemporary Art Metelkova (MSUM) in Ljubljana, Slovenia, October 2018.

And there are many other elements, for example, the collective work itself is closer in artistic groups than at the level of some ideology of collectivism. There is more socialism in what it was like than in socialism itself. Therefore, they were not dissidents, they were groups that did not work against the system, but worked against the degeneration of the system, against bureaucratisation, against the red bourgeoisie, against the cultural establishment, which was in fact bourgeois, not in line with the ideas of socialism as we had expected them to be. In that sense, these groups were more consistent with the ideas of socialism, as they were written.

Important questions were how the Eastern European context spoke of its presence even when it was absent. When the artists themselves were not so aware of it, but this experience was already present in the collective habitus itself, as was the case in Yugoslavia. So, it didn't matter if the artists were always fully aware of it, because they had already been living in a non-Western environment.



Stevan Vuković

“Maj 75” and “Prvi broj” in the Framework of Infrastructural Activism

The Emancipated Subjects of Infrastructural Activism

The essential precondition for the **New Artistic Practices** in Yugoslavia to emerge as a new paradigm in local art, was ‘the changed model of the subject of art’, the ‘emancipating subject’¹. The new subject was often collective, and in opposition to the official art system. For instance, at the very early stage of the development of New Artistic Practices in Split, on January 11, 1968, a temporary collective was formed to execute a site-specific intervention in Diocletian’s Palace, on its main court (peristyle) painting it red. Two years later in Zagreb, Braco Dimitrijević and Goran Trbuljak have both founded The Group Pensioner Tihomir Simčić², and developed experimental exhibition practices of their own works on city streets, and have started using the lobby in Frankopanska Street 2a, for exhibitions involving other artists as well, in order ‘to emancipate themselves from the gallery system in

1 Sonja Briski Uzelac, ‘Art as a Trace of Culture’, in: Tihomir Milovac (ed), *Conceptualist Strategies in Croatian Contemporary Art* (exhibition catalogue – textbook), Museum of Contemporary Art, Zagreb, 2002, p. 22.

2 The group was founded on 1. 11. 1969, according to the text published by Dimitrijević and Trbuljak in *Novine Galerije Studentskog centra*, Studenčki centar Sveučilišta u Zagrebu, Galerija Studentskog centra, Zagreb 1970, No. 12, p. 5, and the Frankopanska 2a exhibition project started in 1970, according to the text by Nena Baljković in the catalogue of *The New Art Practice in Yugoslavia 1966–1978* exhibition.

The very term New Artistic Practices was coined by Ješa Denegri, art historian and critic, who was at the time, in 1960’s and 1970’s curator at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Belgrade, to name the profile of art production he has considered relevant on the local art scene for that period. It was first used for the title of the exhibition on art in Yugoslavia from 1966 to 1978, which took place at the Gallery of Contemporary Art in Zagreb, Yugoslavia (now Croatia), in 1978. Denegri has appropriated it from the title of a chapter of a text by Catherine Millet on Conceptual Art, and used it to differentiate the profile of some samples from the local art production in Yugoslavia (that he was advocating for) from Conceptual Art proper, stressing the heterogeneity of those practices, which were influenced also by Arte Povera, Fluxus, Postminimal Art, Process Art, Body Art, etc. New Artistic Practices were, according to Denegri, installing a radical break with all traditions in local art production, except the early avantguards and, perhaps, some neo-avant-guard practices from 1950’s, relating more to the international art scene of the times, and producing, therefore, the first generation of local artists ‘without deferral’. These artists were referring their works not to the works of previous generations of artists from the local art scene, but to the works of artists of their generation from other places, in an attempt to debate the role

of art in societies of the times, outside the frame of reference of local art histories. In defining New Artistic Practices, Denegri wrote that the word 'NEW' in that expression meant that it was to name an neo-avantguard phenomenon, which has significantly differed from the previous ones on the local art scene (such as Moderate Modernism, Informel, New Figuration, Neoconstructivism), the word 'ARTISTIC' was to eliminate any doubt on the legitimacy of those practices as art proper (not Outside Art, Non-Art or Anti-Art), while the word 'PRACTICES' was to stress that they were related to processes, doings, performings art actions, not to producing finalized aesthetics objects such as paintings or sculptures.

order to be able to show their works without depending on the annual programme and exhibition policies of galleries³. On those grounds have Boris Demur, Željko Jerman, Sven Stilinović, Fedor Vučemilović, Vlado Martek and Mladen Stilinović started working and exhibiting together as the Group of Six Artists, and subsequently formed a place Podroom in Mesnička 12, in Zagreb and a new collective entity called Radna zajednica umjetnika (RZU), which was to run it. *Prvi broj* was a magazine published in the process of reflecting on the interpersonal relations and the social dynamics within RZU, while *Maj 75* was considered to be another, parallel 'place for artist gatherings'⁴. According to Branka Stipančić these magazines were 'financed by the artists themselves'⁵, and 'never sold in bookstores or galleries'⁶. They were meant to be means of communication and critical reflection, not objects to be owned and exhibited. The emancipating subjects, according to Sonja Briski Uzelac 'are not tied to a specific object, medium or craft', so that all material manifestation of their works 'are used as the means for changing themselves, their own world, but also the society'⁷. The effects these subjects had on the local art infrastructure can lead to answers on Paula Marincola's provocative question: 'Can we ever get beyond the essential conservatism of displaying works of art in conventional, dedicated spaces?' in the context of infrastructural activism of art collectives.⁸

3 Nena Baljković, 'Braco Dimitrijević – Goran Trbuljak', in: Marijan Susovski (ed), *The New Art Practice in Yugoslavia 1966–1978*, Documents 3–6, Gallery of Contemporary Art, Zagreb, 1978, p. 30.

4 Branka Stipančić, *Mišljenje je forma energije: tekstovi i intervjui iz suvremenehrvatske umjetnosti*, Arkzin & Hrvatska sekcija AICA, Zagreb, 2011, p. 145.

5 Ibid.

6 Ibid, p. 146.

7 Sonja Briski Uzelac, *ibid*, p. 22.

8 Infrastructural activism is defined by Smith, Terry: *Thinking Contemporary Curating*, New York: Independent Curators International, 2012, and is the topic of the final chapter of this text.

“Maj 75” in the Lineage of Experimental Magazines Published by Artists in Yugoslavia

Magazines made by independent artists, art groups and collectives in Yugoslavia in the times of the Avant-gardes, Neo-avant-gardes and Post-avant-gardes make a specific historical lineage that is still to be thoroughly researched. Selected examples from that lineage, ranging from the *Zenit magazine* (published in 43 numbers in 34 volumes in Zagreb, from February 1921 to May 1923, and Belgrade, from June 1923 to December 1926), to *Mentalni prostor* (published in Belgrade, in four thematic issues, from 1983 to 1987), were described and interpreted Darko Šimičić in his contribution to the *Impossible Histories* textbook, published by IMT press. So far, it was only him to consider them both as ‘independent and complete works of art, executed in the layered form of collages consisting of textual and visual elements’, and as being ‘of crucial importance in building a strong network, thereby establishing the effective communication system of art, primarily among artists but more broadly among the cultural centers of Western, Central and Eastern Europe’⁹. The scope of such network was made quite visible frequently on the back side of *Zenit* magazine, advertising for other Avant-garde magazines, or, for instance, of the *Ma* magazine, published in Budapest, and later in Vienna, by Lajos Kasák, that featured similar ads.

These Avant-garde, Neo-avant-garde and Post-avant-garde magazines were mainly experimental in content in design, and usually made in D.I.Y. manner (or do-it-yourself), which was defined by Robert Jude Daniels as ‘an ethos or a style’, whose main feature is the desire of those practicing it to ‘be independent, or at least ‘self-reliant’’¹⁰ *Maj 75* magazine was a typical example

9 Darko Šimičić, ‘From Zenit to Mental Space: Avant-garde, Neo-avant-garde, and Post-avant-garde Magazines and Books in Yugoslavia, 1921–1987’, in: Dubravka Đurić and Miško Šuvaković (eds), *Impossible Histories*, MIT Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 2003, p. 316.

10 Robert Jude Daniels, ‘Shit-Good and Doing it Myself (With a Little Help From My Friends)’, in: Robert Jude Daniels, (ed) *D.I.Y.* University of Chichester, Chichester, 2014, p. 7.



MAY 75 A, Zagreb, 1978
(cover page detail)

of that – printed in A4 format, fixed with a stapler, with no International Standard Serial Number (ISSN), no publisher nor editorial board mentioned, so the only contextualizing data was the year of publishing. The first issue, which came out in the summer of 1978, featured a statement of his ‘authors’, saying that it was meant to be the ‘alternative to contemporary trend of forming an artwork through the division of media, and presenting it through institutions only’¹¹. It was printed in Zagreb, in the studio of Vlasta Delimar and Željko Jerman, edited by the *Group of Six Artists*, comprising of Boris Demur, Željko Jerman, Sven Stilinović, Fedor Vučemilović, Vlado Martek and Mladen Stilinović. It was an extension of their artistic work which had as medium ‘the public, open and informal space, as the space for communication and intervention in which remain the signifying traces of processes and behaviours, authorial gestures in the exchange of the possible world of art, culture and life practice’¹². The first (A) issue of *Maj 75* magazine featured only their works on paper, but already from the second (B) issue other authors from Zagreb joined, such as Goran Petercol, and from the third (C) also from Belgrade, such as Jovan Čekić. The eleventh (F), published in 1981, was fully dedicated to female artists from the region whose works could be ‘placed into the problematic of New Artistic Practices’, as Vlasta Delimar, the uncredited editor of the issue wrote.¹³ The full list of authors whose works were presented in that issue is the following (in the order of appearance in the issue): Breda Beban, Rada Čupić, Vlasta Delimar, Sanja Iveković, Jasna Jurum, Vesna Miksić, Vesna Pokas, Bogdanka Poznanović, Duba Sambolec, Edita Schubert, Branka Stanković,

11 *MAJ 75 A*, Zagreb, 1978, p. 2.

12 Sonja Briski-Uzelac, ‘U auri avangarde – glasovi razlike’, in: Janka Vukmir (ed), *Grupa šestorice autora. Boris Demur, Željko Jerman, Vlado Martek, Mladen Stilinović, Sven Stilinović, Fedor Vučemilović*, exhibition catalogue, SCCA, Zagreb, 1998, p. 84.

13 She was subsequently credited for that in the catalogue titled *Vlasta Delimar: To sam ja / This Is I*, made for the occasion of her solo exhibition at the Museum of Contemporary Art Zagreb in 2014.

and Iris Vučemilović. The total number of issues was seventeen, plus one issue published later, in 1990, as *EX-Maj 75*.

In order to decipher the position of *Maj 75* magazine in the lineage of experimental magazines published by artists in Yugoslavia, it is important to mention the participation of Mangelos in the second (B) issue.¹⁴ He was a founding member of *Gorgona* group, whose main collective work was the magazine which was also named *Gorgona*, upon a poem written by Mangelos, and that group was considered to be the direct predecessor of the *Group of Six Artists* in the concept of the *Other line* of art in Croatia by art historian Ješa Denegri.¹⁵ The members of the *Gorgona* group were: Dimitrije Bašičević Mangelos, Miljenko Horvat, Marijan Jevšovar, Julije Knifer, Ivan Kožarić, Matko Meštrović, Radoslav Putar, Đuro Seder and Josip Vaništa. It has operated in Zagreb and internationally from 1959 to 1966, but the first retrospective of their activities was made by Nena Baljković (later Dimitrijević), in 1977, in the Gallery of Contemporary Art in Zagreb, and, subsequently, in the Gallery of the Student Cultural Center in Belgrade, and the Municipal Museum in Monchengladbach. This participation of Mangelos in the *Maj 75* magazine is one of the reasons to state, as Ivana Bago and Antonija Majača did, that those self-organising artistic initiatives in Croatia did 'organically and chronologically follow upon one another not only through mutual affinity and recognition, but also by means of a direct connection through the individuals that make up the cores of many different groups: from *Gorgona* (1959–1966), to one-day exhibition activities in the doorway of 2A Frankopanska Street in Zagreb, led by Braco and Nena Dimitrijević (1970–1972), the *Group of Six Artists* (1975–1979) and their magazine *May 75* (1978–1984), to the RZU Podroom (1978–1980) and the PM

14 He contributed also to the issue I, in 1982, with a text titled 'Truth'.

15 Ješa Denegri, *Prilozi za drugu liniju: kronika jednog kritičarskog zalaganja*, Horetzky, Zagreb, 2003.

Gallery (1981–)’¹⁶ That kind of direct connection between proponents of such emancipatory projects was lacking in other art centers in Yugoslavia at the times, especially in Belgrade, where the protagonists of the *New Artistic Practices* felt that they are in complete discontinuity with such projects in the past.

The Podroom Exhibition Space and the “Maj 75” Magazine

Davor Matičević stated that the generation which took part in New Artistic Practices ‘considered that galleries should become experimental and open workshops for the creative participation of artists and spectators and believed in the possibility of designing and enriching parts of the town.’¹⁷ The Podroom (Basement) exhibition space (1978–1980) was initiated by Sanja Iveković and Dalibor Martinis. They have transformed their art studio in Mesnička street 12 into an exhibition space, in collaboration with the Group of Six Artists. The first exhibition has opened in May 24, 1978 with the group exhibition titled *For Art in the Mind*. The title was proposed by Josip Stošić, and the participants were: Boris Demur, Vladimir Dodig Trokut, Ivan Dorogi, Ladislav Galeta, Tomislav Gotovac, Vladimir Gudac, Sanja Iveković, Željko Jerman, Željko Kipke, Antun Maračić, Vlado Martek, Dalibor Martinis, Marijan Molnar, Goran Petercol, Rajko Radovanović, Mladen Stilinović and Sven Stilinović, Josip Stošić, Goran Trbuljak, and Fedor Vučemilović. The invited artists could exhibit whatever they wanted, and there was no thematic frame to it, in difference to the exhibition titled *Lines*, curated by Branka Stipančić in December 1979, which was conceived explicitly as a didactic

16 Ivana Bago and Antonia Majača, ‘Dissociative Association, Dionysian Socialism, Non-Action and Delayed Audience: Between Action and Exodus in the Art of the 1960s and 1970s in Yugoslavia’, in: Ivana Bago, Antonia Majača and Vesna Vuković (eds), *Removed from the Crowd: Unexpected Encounters I*, BLOK and DeLVe, Zagreb, 2011, p. 278.

17 Davor Matičević, ‘The Zagreb Circle’, in: Marijan Susovski (ed), *The New Art Practice in Yugoslavia 1966–1978*, Gallery of Contemporary Art, Zagreb, 1978, p. 23.

exhibition, including works which had only a single element: a straight line drawn on a flat plane. As Branka Stipančić wrote in the catalogue preface, 'by selecting artworks that resemble one another, what is revealed is the absurdity of the attempt to read the 'new artistic practice' by means of the existing formal, aesthetic, value-based criteria of traditional art criticism and theory'. The didacticism of the exhibition was focused on showing that new art requires new interpretative methods, since simply sticking to the old ones 'here we would find ten (and more, because these are merely examples) of the same visual contributions, i.e., a multitude of plagiarisms, pointing to a troubling tendency among young artists, who would seem to have found their expression in drawing and exhibiting lines.'¹⁸ Participating artists were: Željko Jerman, Željko Kipke, Antun Maračić, Marijan Molnar, Goran Petercol, Darko Šimičić, and Raša Todosijević. *Maj 75* magazine was closely linked to the artists exhibiting in Podroom, and with activities that took place there, but was mainly signed in the editorial sense, by the members of the Group of Six Artists. It was defined as a magazine-catalogue, a 'supplement to the oral informing, which was a work that was going on continually from May 1975, from their first joint exhibition-action'.¹⁹ It continued to be published even after the end of activities in Podroom, following a letter by Sanja Iveković and Dalibor Martinis to all artists involved with the Podroom, on February 26, 1980, stating that since there was no consensus on the value of some of the programs that took place there, or were about to take place, they will simply reclaim it as a living and working space. Most of the artists from that group will simply shift their activities to the gallery that will open on January 25, 1981, on Starčić square 6, under the name Galerija proširenih medija. The reasons for the dissolution of the Podroom as exhibition space were reflected in a

18 Branka Stipančić, *Lines*, exhibition catalogue, Podroom, Zagreb, 1979.

19 See, for instance, *MAJ 75 D*, samizdat, Zagreb, 1980, p. 3.

LIKOVNA UMJETNOST

AUTOR/ICA

Prezime, ime _____

Adresa _____

Žiro račun _____

(u daljnjem tekstu: Autor/ica)

ORGANIZACIJA UDRUŽENOG RADA: _____

Adresa: _____

Žiro račun: _____

(u daljnjem tekstu: Galerija)

Autor/ica i Galerija zaključili su dana _____ 1^o _____

u _____ ovaj

U G O V O R

o uvjetima javne prezentacije umjetničkog rada umjetnika u organizacijama udruženog rada u oblasti kulture odnosno u organizacijama udruženog rada s vlastitim kulturnim programom

1. REALIZACIJA

1.01. Autor/ica će iznajmiti sljedeća umjetnička djela odnosno prirediti će sljedeću umjetničku manifestaciju za izlaganje/realizaciju u organizaciji Galerije:

1.02. Autor/ica će izlagati navedena umjetnička djela odnosno realizirati će navedenu umjetničku manifestaciju u Galeriji (ili nekom drugom dogovorenom prostoru u organizaciji Galerije)
od dana _____ 19____ do _____ 19____

- 1.03. Navedena umjetnička djela/manifestacija bit će izložena/realizirana u djelu prostora Galerije _____ zauzimajući otprilike _____ m² i neće biti u međuprostoru niti jednog drugog izložka.
- 1.04. Navedena umjetnička djela ili koncept navedene umjetničke manifestacije Autor/ica će isporučiti Galeriji dana _____ u odgovarajućem stanju za izlaganje/realizaciju, osim ako drugačije nije dogovoreno.
- 1.05. Troškove transporta navedenih djela do prostora Galerije snosi _____ a troškove transporta od Galerije do Autora/ice snosi _____.
- 1.06. Jednom kada su djela isporučena Galeriji sve daljnje troškove snosi Galerija.
- 1.07. Galerija se obvezuje izložiti sva navedena djela odnosno realizirati navedenu umjetničku manifestaciju a do svake izmjene može doći jedino uz pristanak Autora/ice.

2. NAKNADA

- 2.01. Galerija se obvezuje isplatiti Autoru/ici sljedeći iznos kao naknadu za:
 - a) iznajmljena djela _____ Din
 - b) za koncept/realizaciju umj. manifestacije _____ Din
 - c) ostalo: Din
(navesti što)
- 2.02. Naknada iz prethodnog člana ovog ugovora iznosi _____ % od bruto iznosa kojim raspolože Galerija za navedenu izložbu/manifestaciju.
- 2.03. Sva dugovanja Autoru/ici Galerije će podmiriti u zakonskom roku nakon primitka računa od Autora/ice.
- 2.04. U slučaju da Galerija otkáže ugovorenu izložbu/manifestaciju dužna je Autoru/ici isplatiti odštetu u visini od 50% ugovorene naknade.

3. POSTAV

- 3.01. Galerija se obvezuje da će osigurati pomoćna sredstva, stručnu i tehničku pomoć neophodnu za adekvatno izlaganje/realizaciju izložbe/manifestacije.
 - 3.02. Autor/ica se obvezuje da će surađivati pri postavi izložbe, odnosno sudjelovati pri realizaciji manifestacije ukoliko nije drugačije dogovoreno:
-

4. DOKUMENTACIJA

4.01c. Izložba/manifestacija će biti dokumentirana na sljedeći način:

- a) fotografskim postupkom
- b) snimanjem na filmsku vrpcu
- c) snimanjem na video vrpcu
- d) drugačije: _____

4.02. Sve troškove dokumentacijskog postupka snosi:

- a) Galerija
- b) Autor/ica

4.03. Pravo korištenja i umnožavanja dokumentacijskog materijala (osim u arhivske svrhe) Galerija može steći samo na temelju posebnog dogovora s Autor-om/icom, koji je isključivi nosioc copyrighta.

5. KATALOG/UMJETNIČKA PUBLIKACIJA/TISKANA INFORMACIJA

5.01. Galerija se obvezuje osigurati izvedbu :
a) kataloga b) publikacije c) tiskane informacije
koji će pratiti izložbu/manifestaciju a prema sljedećoj specifikaciji:

- a) tiraža
- b) dimenzije
- c) broj stranica
- d) autor predgovora
- e) broj reprodukcija (boja - crno/bijelo).....
- f) ukupna cijena
- g) tehnika

5.02. Katalog/publikacija će biti pripreman uz suradnju i pristanak Autor-a/ice.

5.03. Troškove izvedbe kataloga/publikacije snosi Galerija osim ako nije drugačije dogovoreno:

6. PROMOCIJA

6.01. Galerija se obvezuje da će obznaniti izložbu/manifestaciju u svojim publikacijama ili u masovnim medijima na uobičajen način uz pristanak Autor-a/ice.

- 6.02. Galerija se obvezuje prirediti otvorenje izložbe/manifestacije koju će posebno oglašiti pozivnicama, a na pristanak Autora/ice.
7. U slučaju da nije u stanju pripremiti svoja djela za izložbu, odnosno realizirati koncert manifestacije, Autor/ica se obvezuje obavijestiti Galeriju _____ dana prije dana otvorenja. Time obveze Autora/ice i Galerije iz ovog ugovora prestaju važiti.
8. U slučaju da Autor/ica ne ispuní svoje obveze iz člana 1.01., 1.04., i 7. ovog ugovora, Autor/ica se obvezuje nadoknaditi sve stvarne troškove i štetu nastalu iz obveze Galerije prema trećim pravnim i fizičkim osobama.
9. Posebno se utmačuje:
-
-
-
-
10. Ovaj ugovor postaje punovažan kada ga potpišu Autor/ica i Galerija.
11. U slučaju spora nadležan je sud u Zagrebu.
12. Ovaj ugovor sačinjen je u primjerkâ, od kojih je jedan za Autora/icu i za Galeriju.

Autor/ica:

za Galeriju:

talk that was published in a magazine titled *Prvi broj* (First Issue), in 1980:

‘Sanja [Iveković]: For then it didn’t seem enough to us that this space exists where we can exhibit our works, create our catalogues, etc... And besides, it was also because the character of our work had changed, along with the sense of what constituted the role of artist today; in a way, we ceased to be merely “artists,” and are starting to be something more than that...

[Mladen] Stilinović: Less.

Sanja: More or less. In my opinion, it is more, and when I say more I mean that it is not only important for us how do we make our works, but if we have an awareness of the fact that we are working in a specific context, and that artists are some constituents of a culture, and that we, therefore have a right to critically address it, and also to create some cultural policy...’²⁰

Prvi broj was articulated as a ‘catalogue of the Radna zajednica umetnika Podroom (Working Community of Artists Podroom)’, and it was clearly stated in it that Podroom is not a gallery, but ‘a form of artistic activity’, and that it was the case because a great number of the works of the members of that community ‘cannot be realized in a gallery context, because they are it’s negation’²¹ It presented a very conflictual attitude towards the system of public institutions in art, and was made to rise awareness of artists of the institutional framework of art production and distribution, and of the character of artistic labor, in contrast with other types of work in the field of art. The text by Mladen Stilinović, on page five, has pointed towards a number of manipulative acts by the staff of different galleries and by the members of the press, stating that what he and his fellow artists just wanted was to control the

20 Untitled discussion, in: *Prvi broj* (First Issue), samizdat, Zagreb, 1980, p. 1.

21 Unsigned text titled ‘Prvi Broj’ in: *Prvi broj* (First Issue), samizdat, Zagreb, 1980, p. 2.

means of production, as well as of distribution of the artworks they were making. The text by Sanja Iveković and Dalibor Martinis has offered a solution to that, pointed towards the necessity to introduce contracts on the conditions of public presentation of an artwork, and have produced a sample of such contract, asking artists to use it in their negotiations with museums and galleries. The contracts were meant to formalize the relations between official exhibition spaces and the content providers. But that was not the whole story. As Antonia Majača and Ivana Bago have concluded, they were aware that “the dematerialisation of the art object and the (imagined) impossibility of reducing the product of artistic labour to a commodity that might produce a surplus of value/capital generate an additional need to valorise artistic labour as an idea, above all institutionally and socially”. On the other hand, related to the local socio-political context, ‘of the socialist project, led by the idea of the common good and the abolition of private property, it is precisely ideas (art) that must fight for their material status and prove their (social) value’²². What the members of the Podroom community have realized and reflected upon was that, in the final instance, artworks and ‘their respective producers do not exist independently of a complex institutional framework which authorises, enables, empowers and legitimises them.’²³ That makes the process of distribution part of the co-dependence of different participants in the art scene, which is not contrary to the fact that within the process of production, artists are placed ‘in the center of a network of cooperating people, all of whose work is essential to the final outcome’²⁴. Pierre Bourdieu’s ‘structural’ field

22 Ivana Bago and Antonia Majača, ‘Prvi broj (The First issue) / Acting Without Publicising / Delayed Audience’, in: Bojana Cvejić and Goran Sergej Pristaš, *Parallel Slalom – A Lexicon of Non-aligned Poetics*, Walking Theory – TkH and CDU – Centre for Drama Art, Beograd and Zagreb, 2013, p. 266.

23 Randal Johnson, ‘Editor’s Introduction’, in: Pierre Bourdieu, *The Field of Cultural Production*, Polity Press, Cambridge, 1993, p. 10.

24 Howard S Becker, *Art Worlds*, University of California Press, Berkeley, Los Angeles and London, 1982, p. 25.

of cultural production meets here Howard S. Becker's 'interactionist' art worlds.

Ethical Values and Infrastructural Activities

Pierre Bourdieu has stated that 'for something to be considered a 'work of art', it needs to have a place in the art world'²⁵. On the other hand, if an art world is a production system comprised of producers, distributors, and consumers 'whose cooperative activity, organized via their joint knowledge of conventional means of doing things', makes that system to produce 'the kind of art works that art world is noted for'²⁶ there is a constant danger of the art world simply reproducing itself, erasing, or at least rendering invisible all non-conventional practices. Curator Hou Hanru has for that reason stressed the importance of alternative art spaces, and has pointed out that 'resistance needs new forms of actions and organizations and art events, which means more initiatives or collectives that are consisting of artists and also other cultural producers, researchers within a transdisciplinary, trans-cultural way.'²⁷ Gabriele Detterer has conducted numerous case studies of artist run spaces based in Canada, the USA, Hungary, Switzerland and Italy, and has subsequently argued that, in spite of them following mutually very different agendas and having very different organisational structures, they mainly do share a common culture, which embraces 'ethical values, convictions and attitudes, goals and strategies that influence the selfunderstanding and self-image of all associations and their members.'²⁸ That kind of shared culture, among even geographically and historically distant

25 Michael Grenfell and Cheryl Hardy, *Art Rules: Pierre Bourdieu and the Visual Arts*, Berg, Oxford, 2007, p. 43.

26 Becker, *Ibid*, p. 10.

27 Hou Hanru, 'Initiatives, Alternatives: Notes in a Temporary and Raw State', in: Hou Hanru (ed) *How Latitudes Become Forms*, Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, 2003, p. 36–39.

28 Gabrielle Detterer, 'The Spirit and Culture of Artist-Run Spaces', in: Gabriele Detterer and Maurizio Nannucci (ed), *Artist-Run Spaces: Nonprofit Collective Organizations in the 1960s and 1970s*, JRP, Zurich, 2012, p. 21.

collectives, can help to avoid reducing the self-defining activities of their participants to 'haphazard individual claims to particular artistic statuses', and bring them closer to 'mutually interdependent claims produced through the coordinated and interdependent organization of artistic activity'.²⁹ In order to nurture that kind of culture it is required to develop specific types of interactions among the actors on the art scene, which are non-exclusive and non-hierarchical. That would, for sure, rely on 'debunking of the romantic myth of the socially isolated artist, struggling alone to produce his or her work in a cold, barren garret', which is, unfortunately 'part due to the artists themselves, who describe their alienation from mainstream society in biographies and autobiographies, which argue that one becomes a great artist by using one's inner resources to rise above social and institutional constraints'.³⁰ The other myth to get rid of is the one of the omnipotent curator, who is able to freely redistribute cultural capital through his project, and make remedies for all the historical injustices done to specific artists and art movements. That myth is a residue from 'the era of the curator'³¹, the 1990s, when it was strongly believed that the free lance, and so called independent curators can be really fully independent in their influence on the art world. Since the 'New Fairism' took over all major aspects of 'New Institutionalism', what one can encounter today among many of the singular free lance curators is not only working as advisers to rich art collectors, but also getting involved with art fairs in order to transform them into 'part market, part meeting point, part laboratory, part pedagogical workshop and part curatorial platform'³². Once we get rid of those myths, what remains as just

29 Samuel Gilmore, 'Art Worlds – Developing the Interactionist Approach to Social Organization', in: Howard S. Becker and Michal M. McCall, *Symbolic Interaction and Cultural Studies*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago and London, 1990, p. 15.

30 Samuel Gilmore, *ibid.*, p. 153.

31 Michael Brenson, 'The Curator's Moment', *Art Journal* 57, no. 4, 1998, p. 16.

32 Paco Barragán, *The Art Fair Age*, Charta, Milan, 2008, p. 48.

hard work on producing infrastructure which has a capacity to legitimize new forms of art and cultural activism and can be freely used by all those who try to avoid instant recuperation of their work by the main stream.

Shift from the Curatorial to the Infrastructural

Defining 'the curatorial' as a technical term, Jean-Paul Martinon and Irit Rogoff have contrasted it with 'curating', and wrote that if "curating" is a gamut of professional practices that had to do with setting up exhibitions and other modes of display, then 'the curatorial' operates at a very different level', in the sense that 'it explores all that takes place on the stage set-up, both intentionally and unintentionally, by the curator and views it as an event of knowledge.'³³ For Maria Lind, in contrast to curating, the curatorial has 'a more viral presence consisting of signification processes and relationships between objects, people, places, ideas, and so forth, that strives to create friction and push new ideas'.³⁴ The more this difference was insisted upon, the more it paved the way to the concept of the 'paracuratorial',³⁵ which was publicly discussed upon for the first time in a 2011 talk between Maria Lind and Jens Hoffmann. On that occasion Jens Hoffman has defined the paracuratorial as a set of activities encompassing 'lectures, screenings, exhibitions without art, working with artists on projects without ever producing anything that could be exhibited'.³⁶ Paul O'Neill has extended on that analyzing the prefix 'para',

33 Jean-Paul Martinon and Irit Rogoff, 'Preface', in: Jean-Paul Martinon (ed), *The Curatorial: A Philosophy of Curating*, Bloomsbury Academic, London, 2013, p. 9.

34 Maria Lind, 'Performing the Curatorial: An Introduction', in: Maria Lind (ed), *Performing the Curatorial: Within and Beyond Art*, Sternberg Press, New York, 2012, p. 20.

35 The term 'paracuratorial' was coined by Jens Hoffmannin and elaborated upon in the fourth issue of *The Exhibitionist* magazine, in 2011, to be commented upon also in the subsequent issue.

36 Jens Hoffmann and Maria Lind, 'To Show or Not to Show', *Mousse Magazine*, no. 31, 2011.

as pointing to “something ‘other than’, ‘beside’, ‘outside’, or ‘auxiliary’”, and ‘operating at a distance from the main act’, which produces ‘a binary between primary and secondary curatorial labor.’³⁷ Terry Smith has gone one step further, claiming that up to today ‘the curatorial has expanded beyond the paracuratorial to become what might be called ‘the infrastructural’³⁸. Commenting on Terry Smiths statement that infrastructural activism became a major way of curating contemporaneity, Okwui Enwezor said that it is not a novelty, since ‘there were times in the West, during the 1970s especially, when artist-run spaces and alternative galleries played this kind of role’. Artists have then been ‘trying to bring different constituencies within societies together, to meet each other, to speak to each other, to find a point where a shared experience of co-existence can be explored’³⁹. Podroom was such as meeting space, run by artists, and both *Maj 75* and *Prvi broj* have provided frameworks for intervening into the main stream procedures for presenting artworks, allowing for temporary communities to be constituted.

37 Paul O’Neill, ‘The Curatorial Constellation and the Paracuratorial Paradox’, u: *The Exhibitionist* 6/2012, p. 55.

38 Terry Smith, *Thinking Contemporary Curating*, Independent Curators International, New York, 2012, p. 253.

39 Okwui Enwezor, ‘World Platforms, Exhibiting Adjacency and the Surplus Value of Art’, interview published in: Terry Smith, *Talking Contemporary Curating*, Independent Curators International, New York, 2015, p. 102.

Interview with Dejan Sretenović, art theorist and curator, Belgrade, 2017.

What is important is that Autopsia was created in the late 1970s and appeared as one of the factors on the then alternative music scene. The so-called “cassette” production, which was being developed widely across Yugoslavia. These were the beginnings of industrial music or the music of experiments based on the manipulation of magnetic tapes, early examples of sampling are found in Autopsia. The essence of the Autopsia was defined by Rade Milenković and Dušan Đorđević Mileusnić during the 1980s, and the first phase of their activities. There are some parallels, that are often drawn with Laibach, primarily in the sense that both come from the province – ones were from Trbovlje, and the others from Ruma.

1980-2000

Dejan Sretenović, Autopsia

Dejan Sretenović, art historian, theorist and curator of the Center for Visual Culture at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Belgrade, previously director and program editor of the Center for Contemporary Art Belgrade (1994-2000)

Autopsia is a depersonalized art projection that deals with music, art and film production. Autopsia brings together authors of different professions in the realization of their projects. The artistic practice began in London in the late 1970s, and was continued in the 1980s in the art centers of the former Yugoslavia. Since 1990, Autopsia has been operating from Prague. At the beginning of its operation, Autopsia released a dozen MCs, and in the period after 1989, about twenty CDs. The compositions of the Autopsia can also be found on numerous compilations published by various publishers around the world. The music production is accompanied by extensive visual production that includes original graphic objects, design of flyers, booklets, CDs, books and movies, as well as the website autopsia.net and its branches "Autopsia TV" and "Illuminating Technologies".

Interview with Dejan Sretenović (Autopsia Online, Belgrade www.autopsia.net/)



Branka Stipančić, The Group of Six Artists

Božidar Mandić, founder of the Po

1971

1972

1973

1974

1975

1976

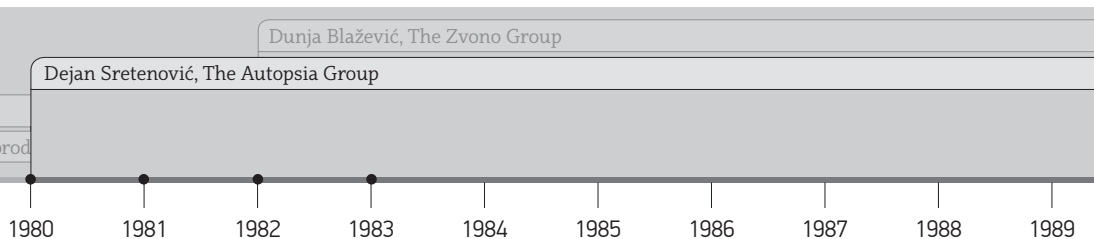
1977

1978

1979

It should also be said that Ruma is not just an insignificant spot on the artistic map of Yugoslavia – the group Verbumprogram, which was played a really important role in the field of visual art, and also Aux Maniere, a band, are phenomena that are yet to be explored. From the beginning, Laibach performed as a typical band, which eventually evolved to a pop industry stream or something similar, and they accepted the rules of the game imposed by the music industry. Autopsia was completely out of the picture. They didn't care. There are no photos of Autopsia. And so, in that climate of punk, Milenković, went to London, watched the Sex Pistols live and introduced himself to the subcultural scene. At the same time, the industrial scene was also very developed – Throbbing Gristle, Coil, Cabaret Voltaire, and for that period of industrial rock it was very important that no band was exclusively musically oriented but also expressed themselves in visual production. There were videos, visual works, graphic works, text production of various statements; it was a model adopted by Autopsia as well. ██████████

One should not forget that the repetition method refers only to repetition. So, in every publication, we see that the same themes appear on different graphic sheets, only the messages are changed. It is the same with music. Autopsy was constantly self-recycling. And what was the remix culture, it came to the fore in the 1990s, so they released a few CDs with a remix of their old recordings. Simply, the idea is connected with the idea of destroying the ideologeme of authorship and is the notion of originality. Viewed from that perspective, as a phenomenon based exclusively on appropriation, you really won't find any created element that was originally produced, I'm talking about this period in the 1980s when they operated in Yugoslavia. They are exclusively quotations and their contextualization. Since the 1990s, primarily in music, the concept was overcome, but in the 1980s, I think 90% of their music and visual production was based on takeovers. ██████████



Andrej Mirčev

The Split and Dialectic of the Collective: the Case of Kugla Glumište

If we look at the publication edited in 1982 by the theatrologist Dragan Klaić, *Alternative Theater: Experiences of Independent Theater Groups*, whose goal was to map the most important actors and subjects of the non-institutional and alternative theater scene in Yugoslavia, we can notice that *collective creation* is mentioned only in the case of **Kugla glumište** under the section 'directing'. Following this singularity, I will analyze the consequences of this definition in the text, focusing on the poetic and political implications of Kugla's performance. Taking into account the circumstances that split the group into several factions a year earlier, and that the original core would develop its own authorial positions in the coming decades after the split, the intention is to situate the idea of the collective in a dialectical trajectory, which illuminates (and even anticipates) social processes at the end of the millennium. Especially in the segment related to the disintegration of Yugoslavia, which can also be understood as an experiment of collective creation or as a model of a radical re-configuration of the community.

Bearing in mind the production relations and ideological framework that began to dissolve rapidly after Tito's death in 1980, I will try to interpret the specific artistic process embedded in Kugla's 'performative dispositive'. Because I do not see performance exclu-

Kugla glumište is the name of a group of artists who worked in the medium of theater, happenings, and performances in Zagreb from 1975 to 1981, when it broke down into two groups. Following in the footsteps of radical performance experiments stemming from conflicting social circumstances after the 1968 student riots, Kugla's alternative and extra-institutional work combines improvisation with the fragmentary logic of collage and montage, creating performances as a form of artistic intervention in public space. Formed aesthetically under the musical influence of punk and new wave, Kugla glumište is an interesting example of performance practice in the Yugoslav context that operates beyond institutions, almost as an underground phenomenon, and, as such, anticipates the emergence of an independent, activist scene in the '90s. The most significant plays realized in that period are *Night of the Werewolf* (1975), *Love and Memory* (1976), *Welcoming Spring* (1977), *Soft Ships* (1977), *The Forgotten Locomotive* (1978), *Summer Afternoon or What Happened to Vlasta Hršak* (1980), *Action 16,00* (1981), etc.

sively as an aesthetic and theatrical phenomenon, but consider it as a place of intersection, that is, a network of institutional, political, and ideological relations of forces, I argue that this is a dispositive. Namely, if it is assumed (as Giorgio Agamben does) that: '(...) every dispositive implies a process of subjectivation'¹, or that in the current stage of capitalism the dispositive acts through desubjectivation, the treatment of performance in the sense that dispositives should provide a perspective in which the split of the collective and social and ideological implications of that event is analyzed as a consequence of a heterogeneous process of (de)subjectivation of its members. In this sense, the fate of the key actors of Kugla is significant for interpreting this complex network of relations, because different figures of the subject enter the scene before the disintegration of the community (both Kugla and Yugoslavia). In the mentioned (para)theatrical constellation, the following positions can be noticed: the figure/subject of an artist who goes into voluntary exile (Zlatko Buri-Kićo, Dunja Koproščec); the artist who remains in the disintegrated community of the newly established nation state and moves his work to an alternative scene (Damir Bartol-Indoš, Željko Zorica-Šiš); and a subject that approaches the new national regime, affirming the institutional and dramatic forms of theater (Zlatko Sviben). It is, therefore, an attempt to write a double argumentative vector that treats and deciphers the concept of the subject as an individual, and as a collective manifestation, that is, as a key condition for the thoughtfulness of politics.

With this articulation, I have in mind the philosophical interpretation of Alain Badiou, who thinks of the event of the subject and its appearance through notions of destruction, disruption, and deficiency. If in one case he states that: '(...) as a concentration of the dialectic of the real, the subject-process essentially touches

1 See: Giorgio Agamben, 'What is a dispositive?': <https://pecanik.net/sto-je-dispozitiv/>.

the rift (...)', then in another case he will formulate a statement, that, from today's perspective, acts as an anticipation of the disintegration of the state as a subject (Yugoslavia): 'The state is disintegrating, the class is seizing the masses, the party is dissolving in the torrent that carries it, politics coincides with history.'² I treat the disintegration of the collective and the process of (de)subjectivization, in other words, as a micro-event that precedes the breakdown of socialist structures on the ruins of which bourgeois states will emerge formed around national and nationalist matrices. However, neither in the case of a singular nor a collective subject, is this simply given, it must be discovered and reconstructed: 'The subject is neither the cause nor the foundation. It is within its polarization (...) Always invisible in the excess of its visibility'³

Although, at first glance, one might get the impression that the notion of the collective in the context of theatrical art actually asserts a **tautology**, simply because a classical dramatic performance is the result of a multi-subject creation (director, playwright, actors, set designer, etc.), it is a notion that is not sufficiently articulated in the theatrical literature for the time being. The French teatrologist Patrice Pavis notes in the *Dictionary of the Theatre*: 'Creators first tried to fight for this form of creation (collective directing) in the 1960s and 1970s. It is tied to a social climate that encourages the creativity of the individual within the group, in order to overcome the tyranny of playwrights and directors who were inclined to appropriate all powers and make all decisions, both aesthetically and ideologically. (...) It appears in response to the division of labor, specialization and technologization of theater (...) Politically, this rise goes hand in hand with the demand for art created by the masses for the masses, the demand for direct

'Theater is, when it comes to its stage realization, a collective art in the true sense of the word (...)'¹

1 Pavis Patrice, *Pojmovnik teatra [Dictionary of the Theatre]*, Antibarbarus, Zagreb, 2004, p. 190.

2 Allen Badiou, *Theory of the Subject*, Gkp & kuda.org., Novi Sad, 2015, p. 211-277.

3 Ibid. Badiou, p. 318.

democracy, and the self-governing mode of theatrical production.⁴

As a key figure⁵ in theatrical dispositive, the director (historically speaking) represents a continuity of division of work dating back to the 19th century and the period of realism, when his function was to control the stage system which became increasingly complex due to the development of technology and media. In this perspective, the idea of a military-organized hierarchy headed by the director is a counterpoint to the model of collective creation, where the creative impulse is not concentrated in one person, but is dispersively and horizontally distributed to different participants in the creative process. This antagonism, which has its political equivalent in centralized government or in models of decentralized governance based on democracy from below or direct democracy, shows that (theatrical) art can serve as an epistemic and analytical framework for interpreting social processes. The line along which Kugla was divided is not only a line of different aesthetic sensibility, but also a kind of ideological division. It is this antagonism, as well as the different 'vectors of subjectivization' of the two key members of the group – Indoš and Kićo – that developed within the heterogeneous political spectrum from the 1980s to the 2000s, that testify to the chaotic group dynamics corresponding to the legitimation chaos that took place after Tito's death.

Considering the specific configuration of collectives such as Kugla, as well as the fact that the principle of collectivity was abandoned in the group and several factions were formed, it is possible to formulate a preliminary thesis that the split, i.e. the betrayal of the collective coincides with the disintegration of self-governing structures. The impossibility of being

4 Pavis Patrice, *Dictionary of the Theatre*, Antibarbarus, Zagreb, 2004, p. 190.

5 On the genealogy and history of directors' theater, see: Boris Senker, *Directors' Theatre*, Cekade, Zagreb, 1975.

in a community (and being a community in difference) in both cases (both artistic and political) testifies to the insurmountable hierarchical and bureaucratic dispositive of power, in which power is distributed from one instance/function of the director, i.e. president/party. The statement we find in Klaić's publication: 'collective creation' is a dissection of the aesthetic with modes of the political, which shows that in relation to the theatrical mainstream and the establishment, Kugla achieved its specificity thanks to the fact that, as a group, it did not act according to the director's paradigm, but created performances as a direct result of joint work.

Seeing Yugoslavia as a performance state and focusing on the contradictions of self-government whose collapse was crucial for its disintegration, theatrologist Branislav Jakovljević locates the elimination of political subjectivity in the 'removal of workers from the position of the primary political subject' (which occurred with the change of the 1974 Constitution), that is: 'The ideology of united labor enthroned the alienation in the very constitution of Yugoslavia.'⁶ Since the beginning of Kugla's activity almost coincides with the adoption of the new Constitution, that is (on the historical-artistic level) with the appearance of conceptual art within the framework of the so-called New Artistic Practices, we should keep in mind that this is a context that has been determined by efforts to dematerialize the art object and to step out of the domain of the aesthetic. 'If self-government is to have official art', Jakovljević writes, 'then it must be performance-oriented conceptual art, strikingly similar to the kind of artistic practice that was dubbed 'socially engaged art' thirty years later.'⁷

6 Branislav Jakovljević, *The Art of Decision: Performance and Self-Management in Yugoslavia 1945–91*, Orion-Art, Belgrade, 2019. p. 232–234.

7 Jakovljević, *ibid.* p. 220.

For the theaterologist Marin Blažević, one of the key determinants of alternative and independent theater in Croatia in the 1970s were precisely the collective/collaborative models of work: 'Each new theater company understands and practices 'collectivity', 'togetherness' and 'socializing' in a specific way, arranges relationships and tasks within the group differently and misses the experience and elements of the work process in different ways through the dramaturgical structure and performance flows of the play as its transitional, changing, and sometimes by-product.'¹

1 Cf. : Marin Blažević, *Izboreni poraz*, Disput, Zagreb, 2015, p. 174.

On the notion of 'Open Work' by which Umberto Eco describes works of modern art whose meanings are not complete, but open-ended (often even contradictory).¹

1 See: Umberto Eco, *Otvoreno djelo [Open Work]*, Veselin Masleša, Sarajevo, 1965.

In terms of production, the affirmation of **collective** creative practice coincides with self-organization 'as opposed to the institutional mechanisms that govern dramatic theater'.⁸ The statements of Zlatko Burić and Branko Milković from an interview in 1977 clearly testify about the idea of collectivism as a key conceptual-production mechanism of Kugla: 'The basic principle of the organization is that there is no leader, instead, we strive to achieve a way of working that will take everyone's opinion into account, where everyone will find something for themselves and give what they want to give the most. At our rehearsals, we do not only talk about the performances, but also about individual problems of the members themselves. The purpose of these conversations, and of our work as a whole, is to achieve these intimacies and friendships among the people who work in the group. (...) People, for example, do not share the same worldviews, some have a more liberated imagination than others, and it is impossible to agree on what the show should look like. These are the hardships of 'collective work', which usually results in a kind of collage structure in which everyone has added something, and all together it is still deprived of unity.'⁹

The renunciation of the hierarchical principle of work brings on the realization of a performance whose semantic structure is **open**, i.e. whose meaning is completed in the interpretive work of the viewer. The act of collective creation, in addition to generating the performance of a contingent semantic horizon, develops as a polyscopic event in which privileged narrative and interpretative coordinates are absent. If one of the central conventions of dramatic theater was the logocentric dependence on the text as an element that is the starting point of any staging, the avant-garde experiments of Futurists and Dadaists in the first years of the twentieth century abolished the

8 Marin Blažević, *Izboreni poraz*, Zagreb: Disput, 2015, p. 173.

9 Zlatko Burić / Branko Milković in: Vlado Krušić, 'Kugla in midspace', interview with members of Kugla glumište, Polet, no. 12/14. 1, 1977.

primacy of the text. Instead of a dramatic character (which is built through psychological immersion in a dramatic template), performers, images and situations that are not exclusively part of the fictional world, but an integral part of the sociopolitical reality, enter the stage.

For the dramaturgical and directorial process, dissolving the solid boundary between fiction and reality signifies the expansion of a possible field of performance, which is no longer limited to the representation of dramatic literature, but can be built on different media impulses and non-theatrical expressions. If we recall here the argumentation presented by Hans Thies-Lehamann in his book on post-drama theater, which states that contemporary theater practice of the 1970s is characterized by the disintegration of strong boundaries between theater and other media and art formats, then the interpreting of Kugla as a paradigmatic example of post-dramatic action is justified.

Considering Burić's and Milković's statement from the point of view of a broader reflection on the artistic medium, we see that one of the implications of collective work is the collage structure of the performance. Taking the term from the register of visual arts, Burić and Milković establish a transmedia framework for understanding Kugla, which indicates that one of the consequences of abandoning it – for the classical (dramatic) theater and their hierarchical division of labor – is the opening to other media, techniques and narrative tactics. As a process that aims to re/configure visual codes through the creation of unusual (often illogical) connections, the collage technique favors fragments over totality.

The fragmented performance matrix in Kugla's case is equivalent to a scattered urban experience. With performances that function as a collage-performance based on the fragmented reality of late modernism, Kugla glumište intervenes in one segment that could be defined as: the 'contradictory collective' of socialism.

When it comes to the political and agitational use of collage (photomontage), I will mention the German artist John Heartfield, for whom John Berger claims is a rare example of: 'an artist outside the Soviet Union who harnessed his imagination to the service of mass political struggle during the revolutionary years.'¹

1 See: John Berger, *Umjetnost i vlasništvo danas [Art and Property Now]*, Blok, Zagreb, 2018, p. 33.

The doctrine and practice of 'self-governing socialism' as a distinctive feature of Yugoslav society and economy after the break with Stalin is based on the idea of joint ownership of the means of production, which implies a collective ownership structure versus individual. However, after the initial economic upswing, this model experienced its crisis as early as the mid-1960s.¹

1 To see in more detail how the artists of the so-called Black Wave reacted to it, refer to the publication: Boris Buden, Želimir Žilnik, *kuda.org, Uvod u prošlost [Introduction to the Past]*, *kuda.org, Novi Sad*, 2013.

As theatreologist Višnja Rogošić will note, she stated 'reaffirmation of the community in the performing arts appears as a search for its alternative form that would enable the paradoxical simultaneity of individual artistic freedom and safety within the borders of a collective.'¹

1 Cf. Višnja Rogošić, 'Medieval Performance Heritage in a Space-Specified Theater: Community and Journey through the City in Plays by Kugla glumište and Shadow Throwers', in: Cvijeta Pavlović, Vinka Glunčić-Bužančić and Andrea Meyer-Fraatz (eds) *Simultaneity of different periods: text and historical rhythms*, collection of papers XII. from a scientific conference, p. 433.

This contradiction, speaking in the anthropological and urbanistic sense, refers to the basic intention of Kugla's activity, which was defined by the member of the collective, Anica Vlašić-Anić, as the breaking of the 'loneliness of squared settlements'. The fragmentary logic of collage can be related to the attempt to regenerate the experience of **collectivity** by artistic means, which – although understood as one of the central ideological premises of socialism – has never been fully realized in socioeconomic practice.

By relocating the performances from the theater to the open and contingent space of the urban landscape, Kugla continues the tradition of ambient theater, which culminated in the 1960s and 1970s with its roots tracing back to the medieval passion processions. By going to mostly proletarian parts of Zagreb's neighborhoods (such as Travno or Novi Zagreb), an artistic game was realized that abolished the border between art and reality, that is, it became an event through which theater was realized as a social situation. In two plays performed in 1977 (*Spring Eve* and *Soft Ships*), the acts are performed as a performative procession that moves from the central parts of the city (Republic Square, Central Station) to the periphery and generates temporary forms of **communion**.

Soft Boats was performed in seven scene images generated in the Kugla parade from the workers' house to the meadow in front of the Faculty of Philosophy. The leading actor (Kićo) moves on an oversized blue lizard (a 12-meter puppet on wheels) accompanied by a cacophonous Kugla-orchestra dressed in black tailcoats and white shirts, and along the way various situations and encounters with other performers and passers-by develop. The soundstage is built in an improvisational mode that culminates in a scene of a white piano (from which thick smoke billows) located on a meadow. All the while, the audience moves along with the orchestra, the lizard and Kićo, so that,

at times, it seems as if the performance embodies the vision of a soft parade that the Doors sang about in the song 'The soft parade'. Dissolving vistas and playing with surreal constellations that mix aesthetic codes (costumes, fiction, music, giant lizard) with the reality of architecture, streets, and casual passers-by, brings to the forefront a performance organized as an 'experienced space'.¹⁰

The aforementioned play with an unstable perception of space and a dramaturgical structure that prevents clear identification, results in the decentering of the subject which loses its firm (narrative) foothold. Instead of a lone voyeur pinned to a chair and staring at the illusion of a fourth wall in a **cube** theater, a collective act of watching enters the scene. As I have already indicated, the class specificity of the space in which *Soft Ships* (and many other performances) take place is determined by the fact that it is a proletarian topology. The thesis that could be formulated in this context would be, therefore, that Kugla's performance generates a 'moving mutation of space'¹¹, which, according to Badiou, is one of the characteristics through which the political project of socialism puts class in its place, thus creating conditions for clarifying the contradictions between capitalism and communism.

If we add to this scheme the fact, that in one segment, *Soft Ships* is a surreal and performative reconstruction of a hallucinatory vision whose source is in the popular culture of the West, then the realization of performance in proletarian space is the moment in which the juxtaposition of these two ideological registers occurs. In other words, Kugla's performance ludically and semantically mutates space, and in that mutation, shows the dissolved structure of the proletarian subject, which is increasingly interpolated by capitalist desire.

10 Jakovljević, *ibid.*, p. 201.

11 Badiou, *ibid.*, p. 24.

Suzana Marjanić writes about the geometric distance from the cube, which is inscribed in the performance dispositive of Kugla: 'Instead of traditional theater, Kugla imagined theater as an urban ritual, a social situation, disrupted theater as a cube, in which the place for spectators is known in advance, and established theater as Kugla, as a non-dramatic theater, a total theater, intertwined with life.'¹

1 Suzana Marjanić, 'Urban Rituals Kugla-glumište or aestheticization of the everyday street life', *Zarez Magazine*, 2006.

Having previously established the basic tactical elements of Kugla's performance mechanism, which relates to the concept of collective creativity – as a combination of Neo-Dadaist poetics of collage and urban intervention – it is time to deal more precisely with the disintegration of the group into 'soft' and 'hard' factions. For teatrologist Suzana Marjanić, the performance *Action 16.00* (1981) was the critical event in which 'real weapons were used'; 'about a 'fierce' approach to the experience of authentic political events, about a more literal penetration of Kugla glumište into political reality. Usually, this performance marks the end of the ecstatic realism of Kugla glumište and the split into the so-called hard and soft fractions 1981 (...)'¹²

The transversal of the split is determined by the modes of staging the political, that is, the way in which the political signifiers are performed and activated. The basis of the division into two factions is a different approach and intensity of political activism, which leads to the conclusion that the disintegration of the collective is the result of ideological differentiation and heterogeneous subjectivation. The key figure of the hard faction, Damir Bartol-Indoš, states 'how the hard faction of Kugla was led by a purely political issue because even then, like many others in Kugla glumište, he was obsessed with the West German left-wing urban guerrilla Baader Meinhof.'¹³

In a 1999 interview, Indoš summed up the disagreement with the following words: 'The hard concept portrayed the current political situation in Europe caused by intense actions by the RAF (Rote Armee Fraktion) and the Red Brigades, and the abduction of Aldo Moro, leader of the Democratic Party in 1978, and it was based on grotesque bodily psychedelia. The soft concept sought the story of the 'Golden Evil Rabbit and the experiences of Flash Gordon'. The political

12 Suzana Marjanić, *Chronotope of Croatian performance*, Školska knjiga, Zagreb, p. 739.

13 Marjanić, *ibid.*

activism of Kugla glumište, their penetration into political reality, occurred in a fairy-tale way, a way of subconsciousness or dreaming.¹⁴

Unlike Indoš, Zlatko Burić Kićo, however, rejects the division into hard and soft factions, insisting that the split is the result of a difference between two linguistic concepts: 'So, I do not agree with his division into hard and soft faction, because it turns out that his faction is more radical, which is by no means true. True, these were two concepts, and in doing so, Indoš defended his concept, concentration on one language, just as I defended my concept – a game with different languages. Moreover, Kugla glumište was not about an aesthetic idea, but about the idea that came from the social structure of the group that we could not have a leader, that we were equal and therefore we recognized all languages (...)'¹⁵

If we were to treat these two statements dialectically, as a thesis and an antithesis, the question arises whether there is a third position or statement that could figure as a synthesis? Although she claims that at the time of the split, her involvement in Kugla was reduced to a minimum, Anica Vlašić-Anić offers a kind of synthesis: 'Kugla was faced with an almost final question of existentialism – to be or not to be on several levels: with the ending of the student status of most members of Kugla, they were supposed to actually professionalize (institutionalize) themselves as an acting group, which not only seemed but also proved to be impossible. The stratification into soft and hard fractions, which we can understand as two variants of the temporary postponement of these impossibilities, I personally experienced as deeply painful, as the irreversible disappearance of Kugla's, a never-again-achieved, multiperspectival complexity.'¹⁶

14 Marjanić, *ibid.*, p. 765.

15 Marjanić, *ibid.*, p. 823.

16 Marjanić, *ibid.*, p. 807.

Taking into account the aforementioned discursive constellation, I will try to analyze the implications of the split of Kugla glumište, relating these insights to the socio-political movements in Yugoslavia. Assuming that the split is the result of a difference in the 'fierce experience of authentic political events' or 'a more literal breakthrough into political reality,' as Indoš¹⁷ argues, it seems reasonable to wonder whether insisting on overcoming the boundaries between life, art and fiction ultimately led to a kind of a break-in of reality, which abolished the possibility of the existence of a collective?

In other words, embarking on a risky experiment of creating theater as a radical social situation, in which the entire normative and value apparatus of society, as well as the usual vertical division of labor with the director at the top of the management apparatus, was put to the test, a paradox occurred. The (self)destructive mode prevailed, for which the containment of a functional institutional framework was lacking. Recalling these consequences, Burić says: 'What happened with Kugla glumište was such an energetic effort, a tension, but I would like it to remain equally recorded that there are young people who died in their late twenties, that a significant part of them ended up in a madhouse. By the way, after those six years, I was in the state of a solid knockout and it took me three years and 2000 km to come to my senses.'¹⁸

Here, it can be stated that the intrusion of the real could not have been stopped precisely because the group was not anchored in a production and symbolic framework that would alleviate the existential crisis that occurred with the change of the student status of its members. Situating the event of the split of the collective in the contradiction of (artistic) autonomy as well, it seems legitimate to conclude that the 'more literal penetration into political reality',

17 Marjanić, *ibid.*, p. 766

18 Marjanić, *ibid.*, p. 820.

which Indoš speaks of, is actually the moment when aesthetics succumbed to the principle of reality and prevented further group functioning. At the same time, what stands out here is the rigidity of institutional mechanisms and the underdeveloped infrastructure that would allow Kugla a smooth transition to new production formats while retaining aesthetic patterns.

Following the observed paradox, let us try to delve even deeper into the problem of ambivalent relations on the line of art, activism, and collectivism, this time concentrating on the specific historical and cultural context of the year 1981, when the split occurred. With the death of Josip Broz in 1980, a disintegration process began that would culminate in the civil wars of the 1990s. And while on the political-economic and ideological levels the country was facing a crisis, alternative forms of independent (sub)culture began to experience their full **affirmation**. Browsing through periodicals of the time, such as Polet, Studentski List, or Mladina, one gets the impression that supranational cultural models will curb the outbreak of repressed nationalist narratives that have increasingly conquered the public space.

Here, I primarily have the penetration of new wave and post-punk in mind, as an identificational and subjectivational model of rebellion against the system. If after the break with Stalin, in the cultural sense, Tito opened Yugoslav art production to the influences of the West, in the '80s this amalgam of self-government, alternative, and popular-consumerist culture experienced its full realization. However, in many aspects and specific cases, this amalgam did not also mean the process of social emancipation, but, on the contrary, it paved the way for neoliberal processes of desubjectification, commodification and historical revisionism.

In the context of Zagreb's specific cultural situation, the year 1981 is symptomatic of a performance excess, which can be seen as a counterpoint to the collective

The artistic collective that perhaps most successfully capitalized on the contradictory process of transition and disintegration of socialist structures, while having its beginnings in the independent scene is a group of artists gathered around IRWIN and Laibach.

practice of theater groups from the barracks of the Student Center in Savska 25. It refers to the action by Tomislav Gotovac from *Zagreb, I love you*, which marks one of the key events in the history of Yugoslav performance. While Gotovac scandalizes the public with his naked body and ultimately gets arrested in just 7 minutes, Kugla's hippie¹⁹ carnival is less confrontational and agonistic in its performance at first glance. However, after the split, Indoš's²⁰ hard faction will become closer to the performance of artists, such as Tomislav Gotovac and Vlasta Delimar in their focus on explicit body energy.

Although aware that a more precise comparison of the two cases might show that they cannot be linked in any way, simply because one case deals with literature and the other with theater, or that such an analysis would have to take into account different historical circumstances, I still wonder: is it not possible to treat the split of Kugla as a variation of the conflict on the literary left, which lasted intermittently from 1928 to 1952?

Locating the essence of the conflict in different interpretations of the relationship between art and revolution, literary critic Stanko Lasić writes: 'Was it not a conflict in which it was a matter of defending freedom of art and freedom of thought against practical utilitarianism, against political pragmatism? Was it not a conflict in which an attempt was made to defend the right of art to preserve its autonomy (underlined by A.M.)? Was it not a conflict between art and revolution?'²¹ I repeat, being aware of the flatness of interpretation that would identify the similarity

19 One of the important intertextual determinants of Kugla's poetics is the experience of the American counterculture of the '60s and '70s.

20 For a comparative analysis of the works of Damir Bartol-Indoš and Dragan Živadinov, see the book by Agatha Junik: *Indoš and Živadinov, Theatrical Biographies: Sacred and Ludic as Modes of the Political in Theater*, Academy of Dramatic Arts, Zagreb, 2019.

21 Stanko Lasić, *Conflict on the Literary Left*, Institute for the Science of Literature, Zagreb, 1970, p. 19.

between the conflict on the literary left and the Kugla split, what both cases share – a kind of common ideological positioning – is the fact that the main protagonists come, speak and act in the left political spectrum.

While Indoš is closer to the type of terrorist performance in the wake of the Red Brigades and the RAF, Kićo, except in psychedelic culture, finds a model for the performance in situationist practice, which he came in contact with in 1975 during his stay in Denmark (where he went to in the '80s into some kind of voluntary exile). 'Themes like aesthetic interventions and subversions in dead urban spaces, mixing surrealism and politics', says Burić, 'crushing and merry destruction of small images of everyday life still seem to me like real political theater.'²² Drawing a parallel with the conflict on the literary left, whose structure is determined by the controversy²³ over the synthesis of art and revolution, it is evident that the split into the hard and soft faction of Kugla glumište in a sense repeats the difference in the experience of the relationship between art and political engagement. Yet, while in the context of the conflict on the literary left, the conflict is also intensified over the issue of the 'partisanship' of art, in the case of Kugla glumište this problem plays no part.

The split of Kugla, fortunately, was not final and thus opened the possibility of dissolving the synthesis (formulated here as the impossibility of the collective) into a **new thesis**. Recalling one of the projects (*Green, Green*, 2007) on which he and Indoš collaborated, after the split in 1981, Burić presents an interesting interpretation of the critique that can be claimed to be a critique of socialism from the left position: '(...) Tito and Titoism were more of a metaphor for us to deal with Titoism by dealing with the consciousness or consciousness of people who criticized the then government from the left, and it

For Lasić, the question of the partisanship of art represents one of the three modes (aestheticism, partisanship and true engagement) of resolving the antinomies of artistic consciousness!¹

1 Cf.: Lasić, *ibid.*, p. 283.

In line with the above-mentioned interpretive acrobatics, which did not hesitate to draw a parallel between the conflict on the left and the split within the Kugla collective, the situation in which Indoš and Burić renew their cooperation can be reflected in the following quote: 'It is a new ideal formula that saves both art and

²² Marjanić, *ibid.*, p. 822.

²³ Cf.: Lasić, *ibid.*, p. 26.

revolution because it puts art in the service of the liberation of man, and the liberation of man in the service of art: revolution is the realization of art, and art the realization of revolution.¹

1 Cf. : Lasić, *ibid*, p. 281.

In addition to Kića and Indoš, Dunja Koproščec is certainly one of the most important protagonists of the Kugla collective. Her restless spirit led her from Osijek to Zagreb and later to Morocco (where she converted to Islam) and finally to Spain, where she died in late 2008. And while there are numerous statements and documents about the difference of the male members of Kugla, the artistic creation and the role of Dunja in the genesis of Kugla remains to be examined and determined.

is the left from the Faculty of Philosophy. It was, in fact, a group that criticized the society of that time in a rather vague spectrum; namely, pro-Stalinist ideas could be found there, all the way to naive hippie-type anarchism, and the 'praxis' position²⁴ was effective in all this.'

If we analyze the above-mentioned statement about the existence of positions, which articulated the left critique of socialism, we see that this discursive framework could even more precisely establish the context for understanding the split and dialectic of Kugla glumište. In a similar way, for example, in which Želimir Žilnik reflects the problem of the homeless in Novi Sad in 1971 in the film *Black Film*, Kugla Glumište articulates the paradoxical effect of socialist modernism that resulted in the loneliness of square settlements. Unlike the right-wing, nationalist and clerical positions that 'accuse' socialism of the impossibility of fully performing the national identity, the left critique insists on reflecting the gap between the dogma and practice of socialism, demanding its more consistent implementation.

In a situation in which, as we have seen, the members of the group are faced with the absence of an institutional, symbolic, and self-sustaining organizational framework, which can guarantee their artistic production, the bureaucratic handicap of socialist structures comes to the forefront. Another paradox to be noted here is the fact that at the time, Kugla was lining up significant successes, even in the context of mainstream theater. Among other things, the group won the Bitez Festival award in that period, and in 1980, **Dunja Koproščec** was awarded the Orlando Award for the most successful artistic achievement of the Dubrovnik Summer Festival. Nevertheless, the collective fails to secure either status or space that would allow further development, and this inevitably had to reflect on group dynamics and the future destiny of its members.

24 Marjanić, *ibid*, p. 823.

Reflecting on the structure of Yugoslav theater, theatrologist Darko Suvin wrote in 1964: 'Theater is a collective and public instrument of awareness and it will only be educational and entertaining if it does not forget its basic artistic task. (...) The community has the right to demand from such a theater that its activity be artistic, which ideologically means – in the spirit of socialist humanism.²⁵ Suvin attributes the crisis, which he already anticipates at the time and in which he sees the merging of bureaucratic and bourgeois standards, to the penetration of commercial values as a basic criterion. Contemporary theater faces three possibilities, nationalization, monopolistic commercialization, or socialization: 'In class terms,' writes Suvin, 'it is a choice between serving the ideology and politics of the ruling bureaucracy, the bourgeoisie, or the contemporary working people (socialism) (...) Only the socialization of theater enables its artistic, essentially cognitive function; it is the only thing that is, today, advanced, truly revolutionary and avant-garde, and at the same time the heir of historical and aesthetic values, the bearer of the possibility of enjoyment – Such socialization requires appropriate organizational forms.'²⁶

If we treat Suvin's theses on 'socialization' as a concept which, on the one hand, refers to aesthetic and, on the other hand, to sociopolitical structures, the final framework is outlined within which it is conclusively possible to situate the above-mentioned theses. In the context of this text, Suvin's position seems relevant because it expresses a specific (left) view of the complex interdependence of the social and the artistic. And in a way that I would describe to be close to a position that can be marked as 'a left-wing critique of socialism'. To that end, the question we can ask ourselves is: isn't the split of Kugla a consequence of the 'impossibility of socialization', as a symptom of the internal contradiction of the socialist system (in-

Regarding the implementation of self-governing structures in the theater, Suvin has no illusions: 'It is known that social self-management in the theater has not significantly affected its structure and purpose, and therefore, as a rule, is not a central factor in our theatrical life. As a rule, it did not introduce collectives in theatrical institutions into the direct conduct of the policy of development of its theater, distribution of personal income, theatrical cultivation of the population of certain groups of communes, etc.'¹

1 Cf. Suvin, *ibid.* p. 134.

25 Darko Suvin, *Two Types of Dramaturgy. Essays on theatrical vision*, Razlog biblioteka, Zagreb, 1964, p. 130.

26 Suvin, *ibid.*, p. 132.

dividualism vs. collectivity), which entered a fatal crisis, marked by economic, class, and national turmoil, in the early 1980s? Is it not justified to claim that the split into the hard and soft faction is not only a consequence of different attitudes towards the political and social function of art, but also an anticipation of a disintegration processes, which will ultimately collapse and delay the practice of socialization?

Following Brecht's dialectical conception of theater as a medium that actively participates in the class struggle, providing a position and voice to subjects excluded from bourgeois hegemony, Suvin counterpoints the so-called popular, i.e. plebeian theater, against the individualistic theater. If the structure of classical civic drama is determined by the requirement 'that the audience is not disturbed by the possibility of deeper change', i.e. it arises on the premise of 'impossibility of dynamic critical practice', which results in the preservation of social and ideological status quo, the alternative to that would be an 'ethically critical Theater', which illuminates the antinomy of the system²⁷. The socialization of the performance practice can be figured as another name for collective authorship, but also for creating the conditions to create a common experience of the audience and the performer in a new division of the sensory.

As I have already indicated, the split in Kugla (fortunately) did not mean the end of the main protagonists' actions. Although the reconstruction of everything that happened in the time after 1981, i.e. the life and work of other members, would greatly exceed the scope of this text, I will only mention here that in the last few years there has been fruitful cooperation²⁸ between the soft and hard faction. Regardless of the fact that they still exist on the edge of visibility, that is, in the zone of alternative and non-institutional theatrical

27 Suvin, *ibid.*, p. 140–144.

28 These are the projects: *Book of the Dead* (2009), *Cabaret of the Dark Star* (2015), *The Love Case of Fahrja P.* (2018).

activity, Indoš and Burić found an innovative way to unite their, sometimes opposing, poetic and ideological principles in a collective creation that pushes the boundaries of experimental theatrical practice. Despite the split and negation, the dialectical movement of the collective, therefore, is not complete. New theses, new negations, and new performances are expected, which restore hope that socialization is not just a refuted phrase of socialism, but an idea of subversive and progressive charge that urgently needs to be rediscovered and on which new modes of community can be built.

Interview with Borut Vogelnik and Miran Mohar – IRWIN Group, Ljubljana, October 2018.

Borut Vogelnik: Imagine, this was happening through the feedback we constantly received from the most relevant positions in the art system, and not just in the art system. Laibach received feedback directly from the highest-ranking political structures. You can imagine the situation – there are these kids, twenty-something, who were constantly commented on and talked about by professional representatives of both the art system and the politics. So we didn't have to say anything because it was them who established us. They shaped us. Through their feedback, they defined our work, for the public and for us. I claim that IRWIN was the first art formation in the former Yugoslavia to do so – we didn't have to move out to communicate internationally.

1963-2020

IRWIN: Miran Mohar i Borut Vogelnik

IRWIN is a collective of five painters: Dušan Mandič, Miran Mohar, Andrej Savski, Roman Urajc, and Borut Vogelnik, founded in 1963 in Ljubljana. Until 1965, the collective also included Mario Kovačič and Bojan Štokelj. Its principal approach is described as emphasized eclecticism, based on the method of retro principle. At the beginning of the following year (1963) they named the group Rrose Irwin Selavy, and wrote a programme setting out the principles governing their work: the affirmation of national visual arts based on emphatic eclecticism and on the simultaneous use of diverse, often contradictory styles. They summed up their artistic philosophy in the term retro principle. In contrast to the then-predominant postmodernism, they drew on the tradition of conceptual art. Shortly after the Back to the USA exhibition, held early in 1964, IRWIN started working on several projects that focussed on various Slovenian art groups or movements that it recognised as crucial reference points for defining its own activity. In addition to artistic relevance, there were two other selection criteria: the contemporaneity and close connectedness between IRWIN and the other groups that co-founded NSK the same year, and the importance of Slovenian Impressionists and of the OHO.

Let's say, the anonymity with IRWIN was not not to use the name, in some ideological sense.

Interview with members of the IRWIN group - Miran Mohar and Borut Vogelnik, Ljubljana



Branka Stipančič, The Group of Six Artists

Božidar Mandič, founder of the Po

1971

1972

1973

1974

1975

1976

1977

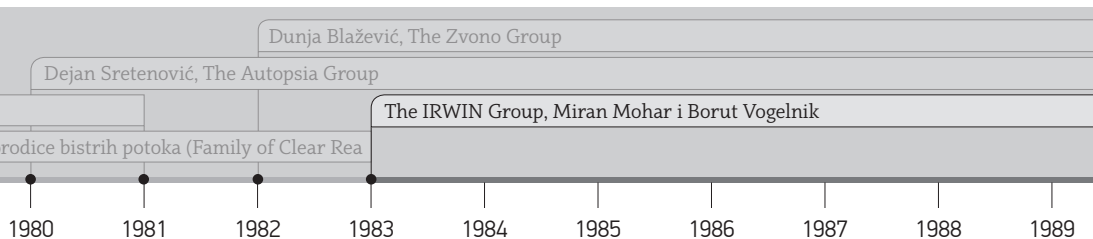
1978

1979

Secondly, we knew we needed to be independent for that. We were completely sceptical regarding the position of art financiers in the former Yugoslavia. It has been valid to this day, the independence of the producer. The independence which is entirely dependent on one financier. It is this independence. And you know how politics is made throughout history – if you have control over your finances. It is *de facto* the policy, the financial policy of the Ministry of Culture. It's one and the same thing. You don't need to control the whole field with such a policy. And we really functioned independently of that. From the beginning. ██████████

Miran Mohar: For me, IRWIN was a kind of school, I joined IRWIN as if I had just entered the academy of fine arts. Because, say, Dušan Mandić was already a bit older, he knew a lot about art, he had his own network, he knew technology well and I learned from him. I learned a lot of things from my colleagues, about technology in terms of theory and so on. Each meeting was a kind of a lesson. ██████████

People always believed that there has been a NSK (*Neue Slowenische Kunst*) production. There is no NSK. NSK is the only NSK product. That's right, and then the myth was initiated that "Cross under Triglav" was a joint work of the NSK, when in fact it was not. To be honest, it was not a joint work. It simply involved groups in the project. Laibach made the music, IRWIN painted the backgrounds, but they didn't do the set design except through my engagement. ██████████



Leila Topić

‘Check this out, man!’ – Potentially Important Activities of the Group ViGo and Improvisational Music

‘An artist’s task used to be to create good art, today, it is to avoid the creation of any sort of art.’

Manifest, Allan Kaprow, 1966.

‘Collective work knows not its beginning, it only has an end. Collective work cannot be foreseen as a form, only as an emergence.

The final appearance of Collective Work is of no importance at all.’

Collective work (fragment), Đuro Seder, 1963.

‘He improvises, he creates, it comes from within. It’s his soul, it’s that soul music... he will improvise; he will bring it from within himself. And this is what you and I want. You and I want to create an organization that will give us so much power that we can sit down and do as we please.’

From Malcolm X’s speech at the founding rally of the Organization of Afro-American unity, June 28, 1964.

When we talk about the **group ViGo**, I believe that we are talking primarily about the socializing, which is not just a noun in the story of ViGo, but rather an attribute that explains in more detail the main principle of operation and the driving force of the Group. However, the first question we ought to answer is why the

The name of the group is an acronym derived from the first syllables of the surnames of Žarko Vijatović and Tomislav Gotovac.

Nena Baljković (*Braco Dimitrijević, Goran Trbuljak, Group of Six Authors in New Artistic Practice 1966–1978*, exhibition catalog, Marijan Susovski (ed), GSU, 1978, Zagreb) and Jadranka Vinterhalter ('Group Phenomenon', in: *Group of Six Authors* (ed) Janka Vukmir SCCA, 1998, Zagreb) were the first to scientifically process the individual and group extra-institutional activities of selected authors. This was followed by researches by the curatorial collective WHW (exhibition *Collective Creativity*, Kunsthalle Fridericianum, Kassel, 2005) and Ivana Bago and Antonija Majača ('Look the truth in the eyes and then quickly close your eyes to the truth', in: *Life of art*, IPU, No. 83, 2008, Zagreb).

joint activities of Vijatović and Gotovac, in the period between the end of the 1980s until Gotovac's death in 2010, were not previously documented, professionally processed and exhibited, taking into account **the intensive interest of domestic researchers** in extra-institutional group activities from the 1970s to this day. Namely, while preparing Vijatović's solo exhibition *On the Edge* for the Museum of Contemporary Art in Zagreb in 2016, we were going through his archive located on the ground floor of his Parisian home. In a series of photographs, I discovered numerous portraits of Gotovac and performance documentation, and when asked why we wouldn't exhibit them, Vijatović answered that this is a special story, that of the ViGo Group. 'These activities' – Vijatović explained – 'were based primarily on socializing, existing through one another, the shared experience of reading books and watching movies, designing and setting up exhibitions, and sometimes doing performances; Tom was the performer and I was the cameraman, individual authorship did not matter.' The ViGo group explored the possibilities of joint (non)action by talking and preparing exhibitions (Vijatović, as the curator of the former Exhibition Hall of the JNA House, invited Gotovac to talk about the exhibited works, preparing and setting up exhibitions), through undefined spaces of 'empty actions' (aimless wandering around the city, drinking beer), positioning themselves outside the center of the scene with Dadaist happenings (e.g. Gotovac's spontaneous performances in front of artworks at exhibitions they attended together). All the while, their artistic unity was devoid of competition or precise program definitions, therefore it mostly happened spontaneously and accidentally, based on common preferences for individual works of art and discussions about artists, but, above all, based on the idea of what art could be. Despite being aware of the cultural capital of the new artistic practice of the 1970s, which, in search of new possibilities for creating and presenting works, redefined the status of art and audiences with special emphasis on extra-institutional

activities without curatorial mediation, ViGo ignored it! Namely, the group was not interested in having a programmatic character, writing manifestos, or associating for greater visibility. The (non)activities of the group take place in the late 1980s, so both Gotovac and Vijatović, having freshly adopted the postmodernist ease of the slogan 'anything goes', ignored the democratization of art or institutional criticism, as the group Pensioner Tihomir Simčić did (active between 1970 and 1972), or conquering the public space or revolutionizing the artistic activity, as the Group of six authors did (active between 1975 and 1979), or self-organization or the question of the status of an artist, as the Podroom Working Community of artists did (active between 1978 and 1980).

So, what were they interested in? 'Freedom. Freedom in the sense of creating a common space for action' – says Vijatović. 'We were interested in everything that was marginal, that is, phenomena that were uninteresting to most curators and artists. Consciously giving up the center of events, deliberately giving up events of any kind and staying on the margins was our creative space. It was exactly that margin that offered freedom. Let us recall that in the late 1980s, Gotovac did not have a single solo exhibition in an institutionally important space, such as the Student Center Gallery or the Gallery of Contemporary Art. His largest solo exhibition in Zagreb at the end of the last century was the one I signed, the exhibition *Collages* in the Exhibition Hall of the JNA Hall' – said Vijatović¹. Looking back at this analytically, which was made possible by the passage of time and the death of a friend, Vijatović noted that an organized public performance of the Group in 1991 was prevented by a quarrel with Gotovac, the war, and consequently the final departure to Paris. 'And, after all', adds Vijatović, 'the seemingly marginal activities of the *Gorgonas*, such as going out into nature or performing for Branko Balić's lens, will

Both Vijatović and Gotovac were indirectly connected with the activities of the Gorgona group. Gotovac corresponded with Josip Vaništa during the 1960s, and Vijatović, thanks to curatorial and scientific research, became a close friend of Vanista and Julij Knifer, and recalled how Knifer explained to him that each Gorgon performance for Branko Bali's lens had its own script and name.

1 All quotes by Žarko Vijatović listed in the text are the result of conversations held between 2016 and 2018 in order to prepare the exhibition and publish the exhibition catalog.

ViGo, LOVE-HATE, 1990

A photo-performance staged during the preparations for the performance *Liberté, Egalité Fraternité You're fucked*





Danka Šošić and Tomislav Gotovac's wife, Zora Cazi, were also involved in the Group's activities. They sometimes documented their activities and acted as technical backup and support. Looking at the photos of the *Love-Hate* action, Danka reminisces with a smile about the neighbors from Laščina, where their home was located at the time, who must have been shocked by the scenes of a naked man performing 'something' on the balcony.

After the break-up due to their quarrel and the war, Vijatović and Gotovac spontaneously met at Gotovac's exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art in Paris in 2004. Vijatović says that they kissed, cried, and continued to collaborate.

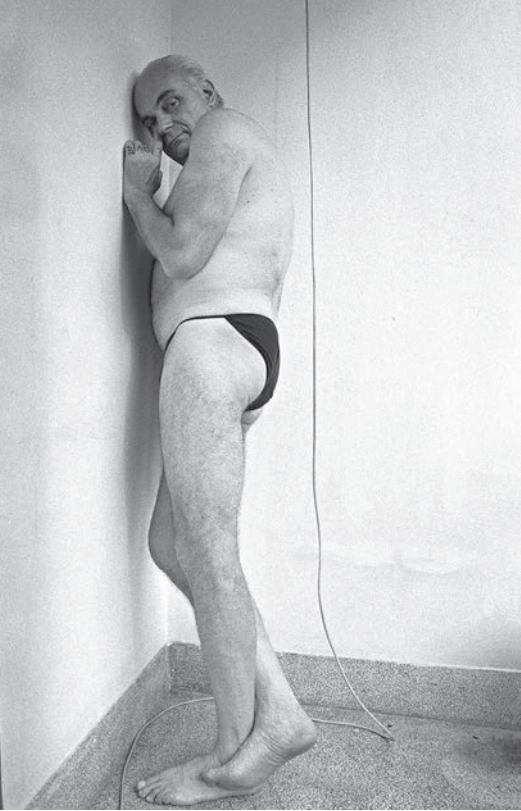
not be recognized as important until a decade and a half later. In the end, only a few friends like Goran Trbuljak and Fedja Vukić knew about ViGo. We didn't care.' Indeed, self-sufficient reciprocity reigned in their shared creatively ordered universe. This is evident from, for example, looking at the photographic action *Love – Hate*, which occurred quite spontaneously in 1990, when Gotovac was visiting Vijatović and his wife **Danka Šošić** at their home at that time, so that she could prepare him for the upcoming performance of *Liberte Egalite Fraternite Jebote*, performed in front of Zagreb's HDLU (Croatian Association of Artists). 'I noticed the inscriptions on Tom's hands and the pebbles on which he wrote 'LOVE' and 'HATE' and immediately started filming. Tom reacted spontaneously by changing poses! There is often talk about Tom's role as a director, but it is also interesting to analyze his activities in front of the lens. He was both a director and an actor at the same time, always remaining Tom.' The series of these photographs, dedicated to the film *The Night of the Hunter* by Charles Laughton with Robert Mitchum in the lead role, reveals the closeness of the protagonist and the cameraman. Vijatović's change of perspective in the game with Gotovac's casual naked body in numerous poses reveals intimacy, but also a certain awareness of the importance of the process, awareness of the moment in which communion is experienced intensively and, paradoxically, simultaneously creates and does not create art. In addition, the ViGo Group resolved the theoretical dispute about whether Vijatović's photographs were documentation or an integral part of the performance very early on. Namely, the protagonists were aware that they were equally responsible for the creation of the artwork, regardless of whether it was created (and whether it was artwork at all) for some future audience or only for their own playfulness, chance, or whim. Listening to Vijatović's stories about (non)activities, the relationship between Vijatović and Gotovac is best described in antagonistic moments of **love and hate**, individual and joint work, spontaneity and intellect,

instinct and forethought. Vijatović is adorned with an analytical mind, an ironic, erudite and, above all, a self-denying personality, while Gotovac was an extroverted experimenter, convinced that the experience of the lived, and the analysis of the observed art guarantees that everything he produces or imagines is art. On the other hand, Vijatović constantly doubts, challenges, questions, and interrogates. To Gotovac's ecstatic cries of an artistic arbiter, 'Man, look at this! It is art!' – Vijatović reacted with **the suspicion** of the Apostle Thomas, who pushes his finger between the ribs of Gotovac's enthroned art. However, precisely because of their fruitful disagreements and contradictions, but complementary ideas, they produced a series of projects such as those created in the late eighties in the window of the Znanje bookstore in the former Socialist Revolution Street, the former Exhibition Hall of the JNA Hall, or a series of photographic performances when Vijatović's photographs helped greatly to build a vision, that is, to strengthen the impression of a performance act in the interpretation of a piece from **Gotovac's performance opus**. It was Vijatović's photographs that transformed Gotovac's performances within the Group's activities from the sphere of life to the sphere of art (performances were mostly created unplanned, accidentally, without a script, given structure, or audience – it was a lived experience that brought both a certain catharsis and insight into the state of mind of one another). Namely, Gotovac was undoubtedly aware of the necessity of documenting, so he easily adapted the performance to Vijatović's lens. This is confirmed by Gotovac's parallel collaboration with numerous photographers. Vijatović's photography was a medium that strengthened and allowed their dialectical and playful dialogue between an unquestionable performer and a shrewd photographer-analyst to be presentable. That is exactly why there has never been a dispute over authorship. Observing the series of photographs of **Krajiška 29**, when Vijatović photographed Gotovac in various poses of disparate meanings and atmosphere, from the

It would probably be more precise to state Vijatović's Duchamp-like doubt in art, but also his faith in the artist, given his deep knowledge of Marcel Duchamp's opus.

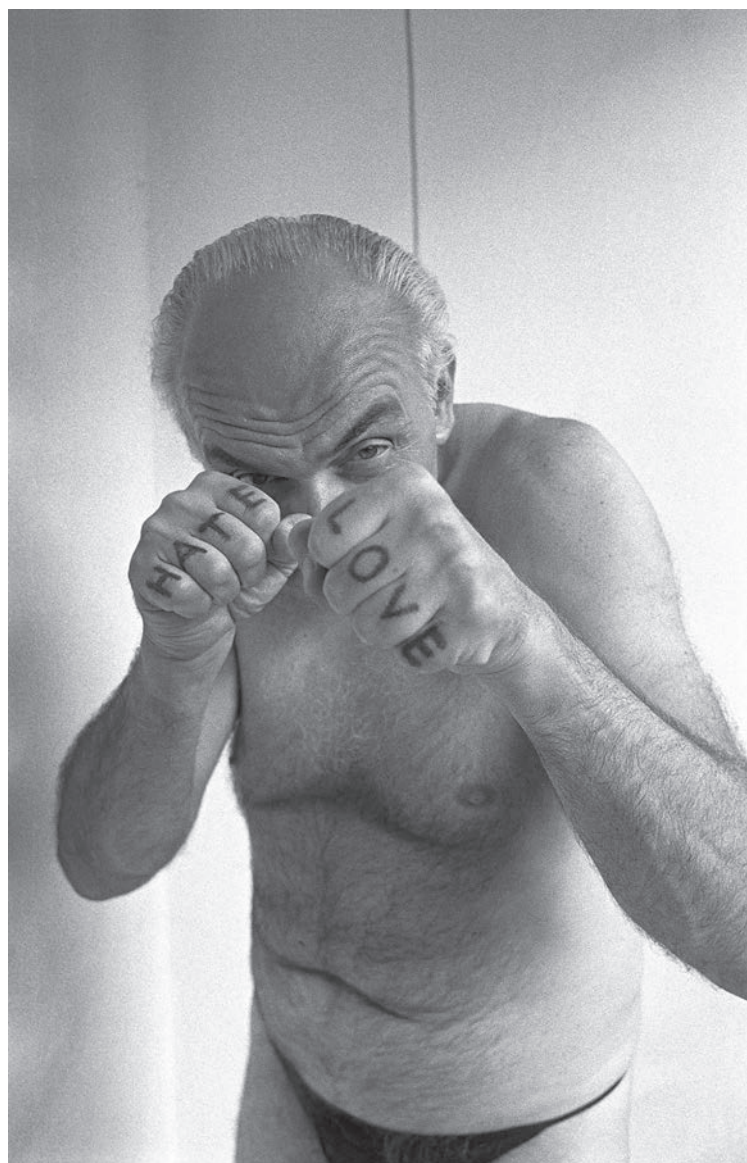
Like, for example, a large-format drawing showing Gotovac swinging a baseball bat naked. It is a cult piece done in charcoal by Vijatović, according to his own photograph taken on the roof of Krajiška 29 in 1990, and it has been shown in all of Gotovac's more extensive exhibitions.

The series, with intervals, was formed from 1989 to 2008



ViGo, LOVE-HATE, 1990

A photo-performance staged during the preparations for the performance *Liberté, Egalité Fraternité You're fucked*



**To whom this may
concern**

It is my honor and special pleasure to testify about the existence of the group ViGo, whose members were artists Vijatović Žarko and Gotovac Tomislav.

Truth be told, at the moment I can't remember the exact year the group was founded, but I remember quite vividly the moment when Tomislav Gotovac invited me to become its equal member. Since the group was already formed at that time, with its name and artistic program, I had some doubts about joining the group myself. Of course, there is no use in regretting the past now, and even though this is not the main subject of this statement, it is necessary to look back at some of the reasons why I've reacted slowly and did not immediately say my historical 'yes' to the group ViGo.

One of the reasons was that the group, as I said earlier, already had its name at that time. And a very nice name, in fact. As we know, it consists of the first two letters of the group's founder's last names. If we added the first two letters of my last name – T and R (the best word we could combine with them would be TrGoVi (SQUARES),

basement to the roof terrace of Gotovac's home, it is obvious that both Vijatović and Gotovac perceived the place in a Bachelardian way, as a metaphor for Gotovac's existence. The photographic series from Krajiška represents Gotovac's physical, mental and social space which, thanks to Vijatović's (re)cognition of Gotovac's character, becomes a space dedicated to photography – at the same time abstract and metaphorical but subjective and tangibly existential. Due to the lack of scripts but the abundance of spontaneity and direct mutual reactions to what is seen, read, or simply the creation of 'empty actions', micro-performances for no particular reason, the activities of the **ViGo Group** can be compared to the practice of improvised music. Musical improvisation is often perceived as a response to the normative performance or perception of Western art music in which the experience of the work comes to us through a solid hierarchy with a fixed pattern: from composer to performer and finally to the audience. Therefore, the very act of improvisation is a certain critique and rejection of the established hierarchy or division of labor that was constituted in the Western artistic musical tradition. Therefore, the activities of the ViGo Group, in addition to rejecting the usual division of labour, had the quality of both materiality and immateriality – just like music. The material aspects are the body in the space of the performer Gotovac and the photographer Vijatović, their non-hierarchical relations, and finally the photography as the end result of certain activities, while the immaterial aspect was the friendly relationship and closeness of the two from which it all stemmed. Just like musicians in improvised music sessions, Vijatović and Gotovac explored different types of reciprocity, and considered the actions 'successful' as long as they allowed them to explore, confirm, and deepen their relationship. Georgina Born, a British musician and anthropologist, emphasizes the uniqueness of musical improvisation in her text 'After Relational Aesthetics – Improvised Music, the Social and (Re) Theorizing

the Aesthetic², because it allows ‘openness, reciprocity, and collaboration that intensifies, compared to the interpretation of judged works, and it requires the participation of participants in real-time and the creation of negotiating socio-musical relations’

There is an interesting central idea of the French economic and social theorist Jacques Attali about music as a simultaneous social mirror and prophecy developed through the work *Noise: The Political Economy of Music*³, in which he explains that what all music has in common is that it gives structure to the noise, and noise structuring processes are also our political processes of community structuring. For him, music is a ‘collective memory of the social order’. In that regard, Attali does not speak of individual societies or deal with a specific way of political organization of nations, but thinks of an organization of the most general kind, such as the way in which, for example, feudalism differs from advanced capitalism. Furthermore, Attali believed that he could predict the currents of capitalism based on some events in musical life (the work was first published in 1977). Thus, in the last chapter of his book, titled *Composition*, Attali notes that communication between people is no longer possible in the time of destroyed codes. Everyone is doomed to silence – writes Attali – unless we create our own relationship with the world and in that creation we connect other people with the meanings we create in this way, which he calls composing. He also mentions playing (playing / jouer in translation from English and French can also mean playing a game, and the game is the key to improvisational relationships) for personal pleasure, which, in itself, can create the conditions for new communication. Exactly such ‘composing’ is a precise description of the ViGo activities, but also free musical improvisation. Attali argues that playing (an instrument) / playing (a game) seems natural in a

2 Georgina Born, Eric Lewis, Will Straw (ed), *Improvisation and Social Aesthetics*, Duke University Press, Durham and London, 2017.

3 Jacques Attali, *Noise – Political Economy of Music*, University of Minnesota Press Minneapolis, London, 2009.

as suggested by Gotovac), we would only spoil the name, which corresponded perfectly and symbolically to Gotovac's life-film philosophy. ViGo is also the last name of the film director Jean Vigo, who has been marked by anarchism since childhood, and he himself celebrates it in his films.

Considering the lucky circumstance, the discovery, the joy they felt while forming the name of the group from their initial letters, I immediately realized what an honor it was for me to be invited to the group. They were prepared, especially Gotovac, to give up the worldview, programmatic name of the group by the very gesture of accepting a new member into their ranks. It was too great of a responsibility for me. The order of their letters was so well-arranged, that I couldn't bear spoil it with two letters of my surname (TR).

Other reasons for delaying my consent to join the group were related to some bad experiences in previous group activities in which I've participated.

While I was deliberating between the honor I was given and the potentially unpleasant consequences that could befall me in the group work, some time has passed, which the founding members of the group Vijačević and Gotovac used for

a series of actions. Affirming in such a short period, not only themselves as artists, but also the group ViGo, it soon turned out that it was too late for my involvement, that is, if I wanted to, it would be impossible to insert my two letters -TR- anywhere adequately. Perhaps, now that I remember it, some variants of the name were mentioned, such as: ViGoTr, or TrViGo, but as I correctly assumed earlier, this would have harmed the group and spoiled the overall impression, which the other group members came to be aware of. Even though I have dedicated a lot of space to my potential history with the ViGo group, I hope that my statement will help shed light on the participation of the other members, Žarko Vijatović and Tomislav Gotovac, in the ViGo group. For all further explanations and possible further testimonies, I am ready to respond to anyone who is interested, art historians, publicists, journalists, artists, and others.

Goran Trbuljak, 2010

musical context but that the magnitude of the term is more far-reaching because it refers to the creation of free action, self-transcendence, and the pleasure of being, instead of possessing. He finds this freedom in free jazz which, mostly in the beginning, originated and developed through certain African-American music groups (in 1959 Bill Dixon and Archie Shepp founded the Jazz Composers' Guild, and in 1965, in Chicago, a broader platform was born – Association for the Advancement of Creative Musicians). It is a conjunction of music popular among the African-American population and a more abstract theoretical exploration of European music, which, as a result, removed the distinction between popular music and music that required academic education.

In improvised, free music, creative work is collective: what is played is not the work of a single creator, even if the composition of an individual author is taken as a starting point. Just as the writing out of the words 'LOVE' and 'HATE' is the starting point of one of the most interesting ViGo actions. Each musician develops his own instrumental part and the production takes the form of a collective action without a predetermined program imposed on the musicians. Groups remain together only for a short time and are terminated when their members decide to do so. This music creates new music production practices that are daily and subversive. Therefore, improvisation does not represent a new form of popular music, but rather a new musical practice among people. Music thus becomes relational. Just as the activities of the ViGo Group were directed exclusively towards their own satisfaction and fulfillment, the activities of improvised music were not undertaken for the sake of their exchange or use-value. Such activity includes the radical rejection of specialized roles (composer, performer, audience) that have dominated the entire previous history of music, which is somewhat complementary to the abolition of the roles of performer/cameraman between Gotovac and Vijatović. The similarity is also found in the fact that the activities

of improvisational musicians are mostly localized, so the activities are carried out by a small community for that community, just as Vijatović and Gotovac produced for themselves and a small community of close friends such as Goran Trbuljak or Feđa Vukić, or life partners and casual observers. Instead of a conclusion, the purpose of presenting the activities of the ViGo Group is not to discover and historicize the underground practice of equating the art and life of another Zagreb art group, nor just to create an exhibition and publication⁴. The aim of the analysis of the Group was to draw the outlines of precious relationships that outgrew the focus on individual activities and at the same time discarded the collective ones to create an artistic community without boundaries and tightly regulated rules. Thanks to stimulating conversations within the project *Vectors of Collective Imagination in Art*, the text about the ViGo Group, originally written as an exhibition essay, became an analysis of the similarity between the Group's activities and free musical improvisation. Finally, the text remains an invitation to study potentially important activities that highlight the values of socializing, leisure, freedom, and reciprocity in creating potential art and new micro-communities.

4 The exhibition and publication were presented in 2018, in the Split Art Gallery as a partnering publishing project of MSU Zagreb and the Split Art Gallery.



Božidar Mandić, founder of Porodica bistrh potoka

When we need it to buy maize oil or sugar, that money would be all mouldy. We do it very rarely.

bozidarmandic.org

Interview with Božidar Mandić, Porodica bistrh potoka (Family of clear streams), Rudnik mountain

1977-2020

Božidar Mandić, founder of the Porodica bistrh potoka (Family of clear streams)

In May 1977, Božidar founded the commune Porodica bistrh potoka in the hamlet of Brozovica, at the foot of the Rudnik mountain. The principles of the commune are: Philosophy of the Country, Open Home, Poor Economy and Art. This is where Mandić's life and artistic work begins. Implementing the concept of non-enlightenment enlightenment, the Family of Clear Streams lives a real utopia of realizing an island on which, as part of the struggle for the Planet and the Individual, it opposes globalism, technology, progress and profit...

Božidar Mandić, founder and creator

Marko Pogačnik, The OHO Group



1965

1966

1967

1968

1969

1970

1971

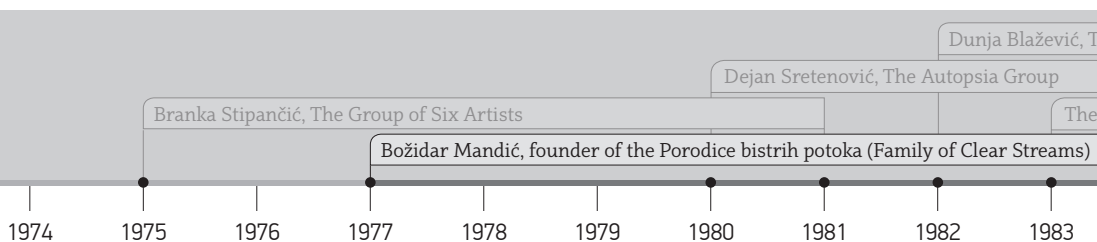
1972

1973

Interview with Božidar Mandić – commune Family of Clear Streams, Rudnik Mountain, Serbia, 2019.

We founded a free commune, interest and religion-free. For example, currently, there are some economic communes, there are artistic ones. We have developed a free one, in which we sought co-sensitivity that is to be created by the people who live here. We devised that one new experience, and that meant starting from scratch. It meant not knowing anything – not knowing what an animal is, nor what grass is, nor what a garden is, but simply, as if we were descended from outer space. The feeling was above all exploratory, experimental, with one intuitive feeling that a young man could do anything. It was the 1 May 1977 when we arrived, we have lasted for over four decades, in a new form of community aspect.

There are also a lot of conflicts in communes, so we had meetings every night; discussing who hurt whom. For example, when you have lived with someone for a while, it's enough to walk half a meter from that person and it already hurts, because there is a friction of the auras. Auras cannot withstand that one collective, intense relationship. However, I think that the commune is something that is beautiful, because the identity develops quickly in it. There are no lies in the commune. There can be a lie in society, it can be found within a family, an individual can lie, but there are no lies in the commune. That is why I still have a great reverence for the commune.



Ana Peraica

24 Hours Inside the “Red Peristyle”

My relationship to the *Red Peristyle* has been decidedly personal. I was born, I work and I live on the Peristyle. The *Red Peristyle* (Crveni Peristil) has even framed my life-path, leading me to the choice of the profession of art historian.

At the time when this small Roman square was painted red, my grandfather was running a photo atelier, in which I sit as I write these lines. I had met most of the participants to this event throughout my lifetime. Still as one of them left the city immediately after the event, never coming back, I was only able to reach him by an e-mail. On the fiftieth anniversary of the event he came unannounced to my family atelier. That day I went to pick up another member of the group, who had spent a great deal of his life in prison, in order to organise their meeting, and to bring them unannounced to an event that had already been organised in Galerija umjetnina (Fine Arts Gallery), where only one member of the team was scheduled to official program on anniversary of painting the square. Their meeting, after fifty years was powerful. There, we finally learned who painted what and that the Peristyle was never red but orange. But for the most part we simply listened to memories of their youth. The next day we all went together to the funeral of Predrag Lucić, a journalist and a member of the *Feral Tribune*

editorial board, political magazine staying in a strong succession of Split's revolt, as also *Red Peristyle* does. The team made a farewell card, leaving it on the grave. We spent a day together.

In this chapter I would like to note auto-etnographically some remarks on the myth and reality of the *Red Peristyle* event which framed the subculture of the city of Split.

* * *

There is usually a crucial moment one recognizes when making a career choice or deciding upon one's own career path. Such moments are often introduced in prefaces of one's books, a form of timid but important narratives. My narrative was not that hidden as I was born almost on the stage. On one side of the main square of the 1700 years old Roman Palace in Split is our home, on the other is the photographic atelier, founded by my grandfather, in which I sit as I write these lines. I was not thinking that this place has a peculiar significance until I had to leave the palace, discovering some people in most cases do not have their windows' views open directly onto key archaeological sites, they do not stretch the elastic around the Corinthian order pillars nor have they taken a ride an Egyptian sphynx. In many cases my childhood was a privilege, and that includes the family into which I was born, a family of photographers and freedom-fighters.

But besides monument and liberty, I have also inherited dark narratives of this place.

Peristyle was a place with a weird energy since forever. As kids, we used to mark people that were hunted by the ghost of the Diocletian. Almost everyone who tried to dig around went mad. 'The Emperor's curse will get you!' we used to say. Still, there were not that many researchers willing to come to the palace, or the Ghetto, as they called it. Since the late fifties streets were practically owned by smugglers selling cinema tickets, playing cards and later jeans. Our building's entrance served as the changing cabin for customers buying

these street goods for decades, making me encounter various types of male underwear. Sometimes I would unleash my dog so they would leave screaming and with their trousers down. At other times, when the police started hunting smugglers, I would help them to hide for Italian chewing gums.

The main coffee bar on the Peristyle square was crowded with aged hippies and drug dealers and addicts, who used to call Peristyle 'skver', as the square in English. Anglicising the word probably took them connected to the world events. At my primary school age, there were up to three drug dealers and dozens of addicts in heroin crisis wandering around and shaking as zombies. Some of them were nice people, if there was none to keep the elastic I jumped over, they would do. We as kids were much nastier than they ever were, we were spying on them and if we would find the place they hid their dope, we would take and throw it away, convinced we do a good thing for them. They were so pitiable, but they were often referred to frighten us. There was a strict invisible line in the mid of the square I could not cross. If I would, my grandfather was merciless, once he even put his leg to trip me over so that fell across it.

Framed by the Square

Children of hippies I knew were having the same ideas of liberty as I did, except that they saw it strictly related to the myth of the *Red Peristyle*. By the time I enrolled in high school the event was so mythologised that there were at least thirty names attached to it, each legitimating their own freedom or artistic practice. There was something unclear about that story to me; if everyone was there and everyone painted, who was prosecuted? One among the most irritating stories was the one by Vladimir Dodig 'Trokut', often trying to impress young girls like myself with his tales of mysticism, spells and dark forces. He was also caught by the spell of the emperor Diocletian himself.



Nenad Dapić (after 50 years in Split) and Ana Peraica before the installation of Petar Grimani in honour of the fifty years of the *Red Peristyle*
Photo: Alen Krstulović ©

Telling tales about the *Red Peristyle* was not the only activity in this process, there were also frequent references leading to production of other pieces. Variants made Peristyle green, black, chocolate and other version of the 'covered with' square. That narrative is repeated today by most of tourist guides, as if the goal of art is in repetition of the covering square with something, an ultimate boredom of colour-change with some mysticism attached.

Myths and Narratives

I didn't want to have anything with these mystics. Still, one day Jelena Mandić, a classmate of mine, sitting right behind me in the second row of tables near the entrance, patted me on the back asking – why is it that you never told us your father had something with the *Red Peristyle*. I replied that no – he didn't. My father indeed through it was a joke not art. But Jelena then handed me a copy of *Quorum Magazine*, and in the footnote (and she was that girl reading footnotes) I read the name of my grandfather, not father who was the generation of the hippies.

My grandfather was always full of surprises, had a witty and kind of fun. I went home furious and asked grandad about the event and he told me there are some photos in the atelier. Then I asked my father who overtook the atelier by that time about these pictures, and he told me – it was him who recorded the photographs, not my grandfather, and that he is going to give them to me when he finds them. But it took years until he found them in the small atelier.

The Photograph

Except of meeting people, one of the most important things connecting me to the *Red Peristyle*, was that photo recorded by my father. With it I record my father's story... The window of my father's bedroom was facing Peristyle directly, and in the night of the action he was awakened by the noise. As the morning light reflecting against red square, entering the room, everything in the room, even the ceiling turned red. My grandfather then asked my father to go downstairs and document the event, but having had no coffee he took a first film from the shelf, and it was a black and white film. Downstairs he met Zvonimir Buljević, then a official photographer of the Conservation office. He was disinterested in people, but rather went to document the potential damage, shooting on his diapositive film. Zvonimir Buljević, who was a great friend to my dad, would later always object about the fact that someone stole these pictures from his personal archive.

Still, these stolen pictures by Zvonimir Buljević become famous, so famous that when shown even his name would no longer be written on them, but the name of some phantom Red Peristyle. A phantom turning out to have never existed, but which had anniversaries and celebrations. Zvonimir Buljević, on the other hand, was quite a real person. He was a good writer, interesting photographer and a person of the city.

Today there are two sets of his diapositives, one held in the Sudac Collection, the other in the Museum of Contemporary Arts in Zagreb and nobody questions which one is the original. Besides, there are many prints being sold as 'originals' among the criminal gallerist scene. I've seen quite a few reworked images as well.

While Buljević's photos were stolen, ones of my dad had a strange way of disappearing and appearing again all of sudden. First it was my dad who lost it in the atelier for two decades and then when he found it, I



Nenad Đapić, Slaven Sumić and Dena Dokić meeting after 50 years, photo: Alen Krstulović ©

made a photocopy for my assignment in the Art of the Twentieth century, but then it somehow got lost again. When a team from the Croatian national TV station HRT started producing a programme on the *Red Peristyle* I couldn't find it. My dad did not want to talk about *Red Peristyle*, but he pushed me to talk as an art historian. I found the photograph after my father's death, in a special wallet with that earring that Kravica gave me and some other things reminding me of hippies. I decided to release it then with the fiftieth anniversary, which was soon about to come. And then I withdrew.

Hippies

My father was a good friend of Slaven Sumić, one of those who painted the square. He latter used to make puppets in the local puppet theatre. Slaven used to invent various new displays for our window shop. One day my grandfather recorded him as Saint Nicolas, with the idea to expose the picture in the window during celebration, but then they decided not – as the secret service was walking around. He never wanted to speak about painting the square, he was sealed in silence. He was, except Kravica, the only one of these people that I knew well.

Srdjan Blažević Kravica was a friend of my grandfather and me. My father also used to like him, he told me that he had a certain warm type of madness. There were many urban legends about Kravica. One of them was that he took acid and climbed to a palm tree in the harbour when Haille Sellasi was visiting, he started doing some weird things high on drugs and was arrested. The other time he was taken to the record studio in London where he saw, on acid, people so different than he had seen before that he got scared and went back home.

Kravica used to play a guitar on the street. His hair was covered grey very early, he had a beard and always wore a hat. He used to call out to me under the window, to join him on the Peristyle square singing,

and I liked singing 'Suzy Q', which I think I never heard after those days. He used to promise that one day he will take me to a real bar with live music. And one day he came to pick me up with his mother, a portrait painter, who took us both to a bar with alive rock music. We spoke for hours about freedom and art, and at the moment we were about to leave, she took her skirt up and showed, with no shame, her old leg with garter which she kept her paper money. She taught me so much at that moment. She thought me the freedom.

She died few years later, unfortunately plunging Kravica into a depression. He got beaten up somewhere and decided not to cure his broken leg, as he felt that it would not be natural to do so. Before leaving for the asylum he gave me two silver peace signs and transferred head lice with his hat. Years after a friend of his told me Kravica had committed suicide in sanatorium, but I was entirely sure that I had seen an man with a grey hair with a hat, walking around with guitar. I ran after him, but he got scared and ran away.

Nearly five years later, I met Dena Dokić. These were the nineties, the times of war and everyone was pretty aggressive and territorial. He wanted to sit at the table I was sitting at, claiming I took his place. He was a heroin addict and a convicted drug dealer, but an amazingly magnetic man, with blue eyes, dark hair in braids. I treated him as we, children from the Ghetto, used to treat drug addicts – told him to leave, but he started arguing with me, and then all of sudden he said to me – Peraica's daughter, you couldn't be missed, you have the same pissed off face as your dad. 'He used to roll around in his rollerskates when we were painting the square' – he told me. The same I would do, I thought.

This was the time the whole city of Split was full of heroin addicts, not only Peristyle. And we young girls were frequently falling in love with those stoned guys. For the reason yet unknown to me, Dena became some kind of a dark angel of mine, sending me messages





Morning of the Red Peristyle

by the window: Radovan Kogej, Dena Dokić, Pave Dulčić, Slaven Sumić and Ante Aljinović
photo: Dražen Peraica ©

about some people that would be joining my friends in the bar, occasionally even sending someone to pick me up and drive me home. We talked a little, he was somehow distantly present. One day, after my dad had died, I received a letter from the prison in Šibenik. Two pages about freedom that Dena had written after seeing a TV show with me travelling to Rijeka, where I thought classes in visual culture, with overnight ride by boat. I was exhausted and sad, he noticed rightly. You never know where you have friends, it ended.

Except Slaven, Kravica and Dena, also met Božidar Jelenić, often associated with the group of young people. He invited me to curate an annual international manifestation of contemporary art *Adria Art Annale* (AAA). Pave Dulčić I never met, he died before I was born, but somehow he was there for a great deal of my life. My classmate and best friend at the time, still a naïve and honest girl then she was, fell in love with his picture, published in the *Quorum magazine*. It took a long time until someone explained to her that one does not fall in love with dead, but living people. We used to play by re-enacting the images of Pave and Slaven from *Quorum*, especially one Pave is sitting in front of the Eiffel Tower with the chair turned backwards. One of these images we shot at the school of youth journalism in Fažana, where we were sent as young journalistic talents. Some of them latter worked for *Feral Tribune*.

Finally, meeting three out of three persons behind the *Red Peristyle* action, inspired me to want to track down the fourth one. I found Nenad Đapić online, few years ago, and I sent him an e-mail. He was the only one who continued his artistic career, as a filmmaker. He sent me some data which I needed for the text, but our relationship remained distant.

Writing on 'The square'

I wrote couple of texts on the *Red Peristyle*, based predominantly on stories I had heard about it, from both my parents and people I knew. One was published in the *East Art Map*, drawing a line of anonymity in the artworld from the action art in Split, also connecting *Feral Tribune* inside. These articles were not quoted, my colleagues wrote their own versions of the event. I suppose my writings were seen as down to earth and banal, more fascinated with the youth culture than any 'artness' of it. More into the sociality of the city itself.

That was also the problem of the event in honour of fiftieth anniversary of *Red Peristyle*, organized by Galerija umjetnina in Split. The first day theorists and artists that had had been connected to the event were invited, myself included. And I didn't feel particularly thrilled by the event. The second day from original participants there was only Slaven. Although acknowledging the role of *Red Peristyle* for the local community and art scene they didn't make much of an effort in bringing over the still living protagonists to the event. It was kind of clear that inviting a drug dealer would contaminate the gallery's idea of the artness of the *Red Peristyle*. Dena was not welcomed to the celebration. But at that moment as if a wormhole opened in the universe.

A night in advance to the second event a guy with a beard and a long hair marched in our atelier looking for me. It was Nenad Đapic who had come back to Split after fifty years. We met for the first time but he hugged me as if we'd known each other for ever. I had to make a selfie, I was sure none would believe me that he ever was there.

He came there for two reasons. One was in order to celebrate the occasion by himself and the other to buy some copies of few issues of the *Feral Tribune* magazine, which then made me even more convinced that I was right relating them in my *East Art Map* text.

On the way to Croatia he learned Predrag Lucić, one of the founders of the *Feral Tribune* magazine had died. Lucić had occasionally played type of music for fiddle, written in deasyllabic rhythm. Touched by his death, alone on the Peristyle, Đapić sung on the *Red Peristyle* the night before the fiftieth-year celebration. I asked Đapic if he would accompany me to the Galerija umjetnina event, and watch it form the audience.

Then I decided to go inviting Dena, whom I hadn't seen in years. Together with the artist Petar Grimani, who made a beautiful red light intervention on Peristyle, Dena had a flue, but when I told him Đapic was there and he got an amazing energy.

I organized a table in front of the stage, and Ilija Šoškic and Dragica Čakić were sitting there, keeping it for us. I came in with Nenad, and none recognized him, and Dena was late. But when he came, it was the hurricane of the Sixties coming in, in his cowboy boots, leather waistcoat and a motorcycle helmet. Everyone knew who he was.

I had to reintroduce the boys that had painted the square. And, I will never forget, the first thing they said to each other was a joke – ‘so who transferred syphilis to whom?’ and they started laughing. The audience didn't like their laugh.

Eventually they joined the discussion. They were laughing about the mystification of the event, told us that the colour was orange, not red, and they had it because it was cheap. And it all culminated with the statement that they think that everyone painted the square. Everyone mentioned, including the audience. Many were disappointed, but I was not. I wanted to be there.

We stayed for some time and decided to go together to the funeral of Predrag Lucić the next day. Dena made a red board with a farewell. As we walked into the funeral I had a feeling of walking with zombies that the city had been fearing from the very beginning. As the sermon was passing, Dena was sitting on

someone grave, commenting that he feels like he is on the school excursion. Slaven went into the crowd, taking someone else's flowers in order to secretly bring and place the board on the grave. The next day some people were talking that Red Peristyle gathered for the funeral. And then we went all in different direction.

I still live and work on the Peristyle. I see the Peristyle every day, every morning and through the day through my window, it is my 24 hour landscape. Often, I imagine how it looked in the old times – not really red, that was just a day, but I imagine it full of hippies, ideas of liberty and creativity. Split is still unable to address its own flower-power generation and a culture-on-drugs. With the age of New Medievalism, surely, it would be harder and harder to speak on many practices that generation has introduced and taking substances was only one of them. But maybe one day these notes would lead in that direction.

Katja Praznik, from the conversation Vectors of collective imagination in art, August 2020

The status of artistic labour in socialist Yugoslavia was unique because artistic labour was not invisible. Quite the contrary, there were explicit laws implement already in 1946 that guaranteed payment and then later on in the 1950 laws that secured welfare protection for art workers, especially those that were not employed. At the same time – which is the crux of the matter – artist had the autonomy. This means that art had a similar social role as it generally does in the Western (bourgeoise) societies. Art was a field of professional work, but the payment for artistic labour as guaranteed and socially protected. The coexistence of the ideas of art as labour and art as autonomous practice turned into a tension later on during the last decade of socialist Yugoslavia's existence.

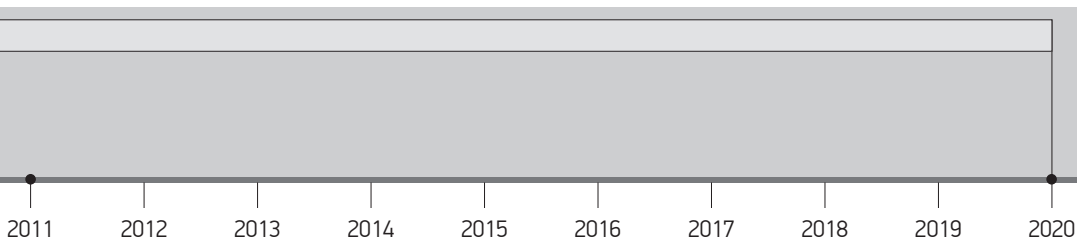
I analyse the transformation of artistic labour during Yugoslav socialism by dividing it in three central periods or stages. The first one “the making of art workers” from 1945 to 1952 is when Yugoslavia started to experiment with the idea of art as labour, and when the government started implementing legal regulations for guaranteed payment and social protection of artists. The longest and most interesting period was the second period between 1952 to 1974, which



Katja Praznik, Slovenia/USA; Sezgin Bojnik, Kosovo /Finland

2002 2003 2004 2005 2006 2007 2008 2009 2010

I describe as the stage of “expanding or testing the limits of art as labour”. The final last period from 1974 until the breakup of the federation in 1991, I term “the unmaking of art workers”. During this first two periods when socialist government implemented labour regulation for the arts, there were underlying tensions between Western notions about art and creativity as exclusive exceptional faculty, and ideals of all work and workers being creative. These were also connected to the general principles of democratization of art whereby everyone should have access to cultural production. In the mid-1960s, however, Yugoslavia introduced a significant economic reform that introduced market principles into its self-managed socialist economy. This was not necessary because they abandoned the self-management project but because they took market principles in a little bit naïve way perhaps, and so this marketization became something that created different kind of trends, consumerism in particular but also social resistance on all levels of society and demands for expansion of self-management principles. This demands war not met and the effects if marketization were than further exacerbated in 1973 by the global Oil Crisis and it impacted Yugoslavia since it was very much dependent on and connected to the Western economy. Under the pressures of IMF and WTB they started to implement more market principles in all areas of economy. And these things eventually creped into the arts. During the third and last period (1974–1991) the language of self-management became redeployed as a façade for (neo)liberal policies. Art workers were turned into self-sufficient, self-managed, and self-responsible socialist entrepreneurs – they became soldiers in an experimental frontline for the neoliberal transformation. ██████████



Work process and method of collective evaluation:

An integral part of the preparations for the production of this publication were webinars realised during July 2020, when we discussed and collectively evaluated written interpretations of "non-institutional" artistic organization, the working versions of which we previously received from the authors.

This process has resulted in new versions of the author's texts published here.

+

In parallel with these meetings, three public talks were held, and they were about *Vectors of collective imagination in art*, about the political economy of art collectives, socio-political engagement of art groups, and about imagining and practicing anti-systemic collective practices during a pandemic.

Deinstitucionalizacija same simboličke vrednosti Palate i stubova na kojima pacivo

Anina uloga je uloga aktivistice, posmatraca i svedokinja mnogih događaja, a najmnogija uloga je profesionalna uloga istoričarke umetnosti

Sama pisanje o kolektivima se ne može fiksirati ni iznutra ka kolektivu, ni spolja

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Crisi Perišić i Igora Grubića

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forma teksta kao provokacija otpadni od oficijalne kulture

prošireni enformel - teroristički akt

Novosadska Hladnjača

Zoom Meeting

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Speaker View

Participants (8)

Find a participant

1 [kud.org \(Host, me\)](#)

2 [maja](#)

3 [milica](#)

4 [Stevan Vučković](#)

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6 [Nikolina Marković](#)

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8 [Darja Medic](#)

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FRAG TI
STUDIJE
ORGANIZAMA

one politics. Why is one seen as ideological and the other no.

both actors want to change society - they each see a utopia

Dichotomy - aesthetic/political, for him is not separate. Ranciere - aesthetics and politics share the social revolution is the daughter of aesthetic revolution. Andrew Hewitt. Adorno - for art to change society it first needs to be art. In the text he aligns the soft with aesthetics, and hard with politics. It sounds like he is saying that the end of the collective is because of a digression between - aesthetics and politics. Safer? Sarlo Akrobata - even more. No subject without ideology, you can choose ideology, but there is no subject w

Anarchist: we dont need a subject, we will create the subject, the subject is not attached to a particular ideology.

when they stop being students, the group begins to disappate. Connection to SKC, economic structures, what happens when you stop being a student. Need to professionalise, a diff modus operandi. What does professionalisation entail? Opening up of possibilities to realise such a practice also has economic aspects. Alternative economies. Impossibility of stabilisation of teh collective. how can they progress from teh barracks of HNK to other spaces. They create canonical works, they get Orlando in Dubrovnik, Bife sees them as relevant and innovative, but stabilisation does not happen - they are not offered a space there is nothing that they get. Parallel with NSK - who manage all this. NSK want to create their own position, they want the mainstream.

KG do no want hie mainstream. The politics of non-compliance. But they suffer - living on the margins, existential, social margins. it is a difficult position to maintain. 3 positions: exile, remaining on non-institutional scene (Eurokaz, Bad Company - legacy of him) and Zlatko who becomes HNK Rijeka director of drama, catholic oriented theatre. How did these people share the same past?

Formation of Kacinski trupa - sonja sivić; lesc; nebojsa kokićević.

Summary

6.18.20 July - Ana leadign conversations - can be found on Kuda.org site

modalities and motivations, organisational structures of art organisations, potentialities of social/aesthetic. What is generated as an alternative form of social unit, what's proclaimed a

Stevan Vuković, Maj 75 A, Zagreb, 1978 - k

kuda.org/stevan-vukovic-maj-75-a-priv-broj/ameranov-infrastrukturalno-aktivno-0

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Photo 02 - MAJ 75 A, Zagreb, 1978-1

In order to decipher the position of *Maj 75* magazine in the lineage of experimental magazines pub important to mention the participation of Mangelos in the 1980 issue. He was a founder, a main collective work was the magazine which was also named *Gorgona* upon a poem written by M considered to be the direct predecessor of the *Group of Six Artists* in the concept of the *Other Line of Denegri*. The members of the *Gorgona* group were: Dimitrije Bašičević Mangelos, Mišenko Horvat, Kozarić, Matko Meštrović, Radoslav Putar, Duro Seder and Josip Vaničta. It has operated in Zagreb in 1966, but the first retrospective of their activities was made by Nena Baljković (later Dimitrijević), in Contemporary Art in Zagreb, and, subsequently, in the Gallery of the Student Cultural Center in Belga Mönchengladbach. This participation of Mangelos in the *Maj 75* magazine is one of the reasons to the *Maj 75* did, that those self-organising artistic initiatives in Croatia did "organically and chronologically only through mutual affinity and recognition, but also by means of a direct connection through the l of many different groups: from *Gorgona* (1959-1966), to one-day exhibition activities in the doornv Zagreb, led by Braco and Nena Dimitrijević (1970-1972), the *Group of Six Artists* (1975-1979) and 1984), to the *RZU Podroom* (1978-1980) and the *PM Gallery* (1981-1982). That kind of direct connecti emancipatory projects was lacking in other art centers in Yugoslavia at the times, especially in t... New *Artistic Practices* felt that they are in complete discontinuity with such projects in the past.

Photo 03 - Josip Vaničta, *Gorgona* no. 1, 1961

The *Podroom* Exhibition Space and the *Maj 75* Magazine

Duro Meštrović stated that the generation which took part in New *Artistic Practices* "considered the experimental and open workshops for the creative participation of artists and spectators and bely and enriching parts of the town". The *Podroom* (Basemenj) exhibition space (1978-1980) was initia Martinis. They have transformed their art studio in Mesnička street 12 into an exhibition space, in c Artists. The first exhibition has opened in May 24, 1978 with the group exhibition titled *For Art in t Josip Stodak*, and the participants were: Boris Demar, Vladimir Dodig Trokut, Ivan Dorogj, Ladislav Mar Gudić, Sanja Iveković, Željko Jerman, Željko Kipek, Antun Mara i Vlado Martek, Dalibor Martinis, Mar

Public

Vitana

ovde izvodi zaključak da se to praksi emancipatorne bez prethodnog diskvalifikacije. sta je emancipatorna i tm praksi?

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Public

patkionika

Da Branka Šipanić i Nena Baljković primaju u tekst za katalog učestue in another moment? prepoznaju nedostatke formalne analize u saradnji sa radovima "nove umetničke prakse" - međutim jstik analize se nije zadržalo promeno na institucionalnom nivou te sa i historizacija vjele dela

Zoom Meeting

Recording

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1 i (Host, me, participant ID: 363255) (i) (C)

1 kuda.org (C)

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1K Stevan Vuković (C)

1V vitencia (C)

1VR Valida R (C)

1D Darja Medic (C)

1L Lina Džuvrović (C)

1M mailing_antonio166 (C)

1M milica (C)

structures, they mainly do share a common culture, which embraces ethical values, convictions, influence the self-understanding and self-usage of all associations and their members. That is, geographically and historically distant collectives, can help to avoid reducing the self-defining "haphazard individual claims to particular artistic statuses"; and bring them closer to "mutually it" through the coordinated and interdependent organization of artistic activity. In order to nurture i develop specific types of interactions among the actors on the art scene, which are non-exclusive as sure, rely on "debunking of the romantic myth of the socially isolated artist, struggling alone to proc barren game", which is, unfortunately, "part due to the artists themselves, who describe their alienat biographies and autobiographies, which argue that one becomes a great artist by using one's inner r institutional constraints." The other myth to get rid of is the one of the omnipotent curator, who i cultural capital through his project, and make remedies for all the historical injustices done to spec myth is a residue from "the era of the curator", the 1990s, when it was strongly believed that the independent curators can be really fully independent in their influence on the art world. Since the 7 aspects of New Institutionalism, what one can encounter today among many of the singular free-l advisers to rich art collectors, but also getting involved with art fairs in order to transform them int part laboratory, part pedagogical workshop and part curatorial platform. Once we get rid of those work on producing infrastructure which has a capacity to legitimize new forms of art and cultural a all those who try to avoid instant recuperation of their work by the main stream.

Photo 07 - Mangelos - Truth - Maj 75, issue 1, 1982

Shift from the Curatorial to the Infrastructure

Defining 'the curatorial' as a technical term, Jean-Paul Martinon and Irit Rogoff have contrasted it w "curating" is a gamut of professional practices that had to do with setting up exhibitions and other r curatorial operates at a very different level", in the sense that "it explores all that takes place on the and unintentionally, by the curator and views it as an event of knowledge." For Maria Lind, in ord "a more vital presence consisting of signification processes and relationships between objects, peop strives to create friction and push new ideas." The more this difference was insisted upon, the mc of the "paracuratorial", which was publicly discussed upon for the first time in a 2011 talk betwe

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patkionika

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great number of the works of the members of that community "cannot be realized in a gallery context, because they are it's negation

Jos jedna važna arhivska kataloška radova veće grupe istaknih umetnika 70-ih - misli da je istakao aktuelno pitanje kako se iz radova arhiviraju, očuju i komuniciraju (da da ih sistem ne inkorporira u raspoređeno kolovo historizacije, očuvanje i komunikacije što se zove "novom umetničkom praksi"

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Sacha Kahir and Anthony Iles: Notes Towards a Political Economy of Autonomous Collectivism

Notes Towards a Political Economy of Autonomous Collectivism

Sacha Kahir and Anthony Iles

Introduction

This text comprises a somewhat speculative attempt to provide a framework within which to rec cultural groups in the post-war period in terms of the models of organisation they fostered. The identify the explosion of forms of 'Collectivism After Modernism' with more general tendencies, their habitual location within national frameworks and beyond the disciplinary structures which particular interest here is how a turn to the environment is inscribed within the turn to autonomy with very widespread social movements which ceased, after the energy crisis of the early-1970s, commodity production as a central referent 2, rather, they were oriented towards finding a logic outside of commodity production and thus there was a turn (in music and several art forms) tow attention to folk and ritual practices as well as renewed attention towards metabolic processes c generalisation will be more acutely specified later in order for us to understand precisely the per autonomy is enacted. On the one hand group mythopoeia (anonymity, multiple name games, set the bureaucratic state, party forms and the turn to communications and information technology) after the Energy Crisis, on the other a turn away from industrial culture, cybernetic control follow form towards the natural, object and aleatory, crucially towards acts which could not be isolated or intentions of any one particular individual.

We might name these rituals of autonomy but as foundational we take the state's presence, utri abolished, as a given and the analysis of these groups and social formations are therefore not u way to it, but in the last instance determined, even in disavowal. In this, there are two axioms we study politically and two methodological trajectories, one historical and one mythic. The first of the t

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SleaverVukob: @ Public Jul 27
Ritual is quite a loaded term, so the question is how do you define it, and what are your reference points?

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minor and one major
minor - is the center of our focus on collectives in YU
major - an integral part of the overall context in which collectives operate, and is very often reflected in the duration of the group

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then there are two potential lines of flight
we have so far been discussing also a line of flight into more radical leftist politics

Vitara @ Public Jul 27
the post-war period
which war?

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practice to be more connected and bounded with other participants in the project and to develop sensitivity and emotions they do the rituals as a part of every rehearsal. They are taking inspiration from Antropofagic Manifesto wrote 1928 by Oswald de Andrade.

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On the other hand, the historicization and institutionalisation of collective practice will continue to commodify and simplify, with lesser palatable narratives remaining unspeakable or difficult to

So in closing I return to Williams's call for us to attend not only to the manifest ideas and act but also to the positions and ideas which are implicit or even taken for granted in this case the issue of art and life becoming one, when life is deeply embedded in masculinist, heteronormative p

- 1 Williams, Raymond, Culture and Materialism, Verso 1980, 'The Bloomsbury Fracture', page 356
- 2 An Interview with David Nez, July 2014, Porec, Croatia
- 3 An interview with Marko and Marika Pogacnik, Sempas, Slovenia, August 2019
- 4 ibid
- 5 Marko Pogacnik, email interview, 14 January 2014.
- 6 The OHO Files: Interview with Marko Pogacnik by BETI ŽEROVIC (LJUBLJANA) - PUBLISHED 07/27/21
- 7 The OHO Files: Interview with Marko Pogacnik by BETI ŽEROVIC (LJUBLJANA) - PUBLISHED 07/27/21
- 8 Griselda Pollock, 'The Victorian Book I Never Wrote, or Why I Never Became a Specialist on British Centre

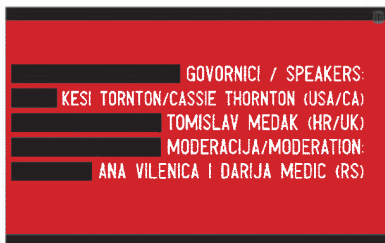
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this research project
do dobro navesti o kom se izlasku/radju rad pristim da se ponovno kaonje u tekstu

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izid
Bilo li super da imamo sigurno koj austraju primena, da ih prikazmo na tekst.

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woman and children book part two
drugospeno u tekstu

SleaverVukob: @ Public Jul 27
other participants are listed as 'booked'
Things are a bit more complex. Please consider the statement in Ksenija Gurevina's best 'When Firm and Author Make Love: Reconsidering OHO's Film Legacy.' In 'Bell Jar', the term 'booked' points not only to the transnational 1960s rhetoric of the sexual liberation of the body, but also highlights the uncertain status of the people we see on the screen as neither the actors' real selves (since the film is scripted), nor those of properly named or defined fictional characters." All included in the project



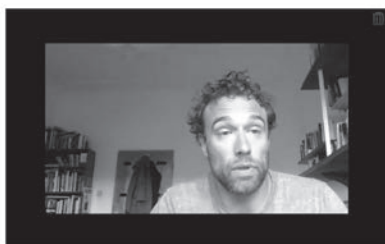
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Tomislav Medak, Zagreb; Kesi Thornton, Kanada

Kolektivnost izvan umetničkih kolektiva je prvi razgovor u okviru segmenta Vektori kolektivne imaginacije u umetnosti gdje smo sa gostima razgovorali o (novol)postupalvenim vezama između socijalnih pokreta i umetnosti, koje se artikulišu u borbi protiv finansijske i privatizacije svakodnevnog života. Kesi Thornton je govorila o svojoj umetničkoj praksi proizasloj iz saradnje sa Štrajkom protiv duga (Strike Debt, USA) i Windo Debowe Mosewin – feminističkom patrolom iz Thunder Baya, kao i o svom novom projektu Hologram koji pokušava da organizuje bolne (umetničke) u pomoćnu mrežu zdravstvene zaštite. Tomislav Medak u svom izlaganju je redefinisao pokret slobodne kulture kroz vizuru borbe protiv privatizacije znanja, uz osvrt na projekat Silabus o piratskoj brizi – prostoru za kolektivnu proizvodnju, razmenu i distribuciju znanja u organizovanju socijalne reprodukcije.

Jedini razgovor Kolektivom izvan umetničkih kolektiva u okviru programa Vektori kolektivne imaginacije u umetnosti

Tomislav Medak, Zagreb; Kesi Thornton, Kanada



1934-1973

Vida Knežević, Belgrade; Jacopo Galimberti, Italy

Collectivity outside Art Collectives is the first discussion within the Vectors of Collective Imagination in Art segment, where we talked with the guests to the (newly) established links between social movements and the arts, which are being articulated in the struggle against the financialisation and privatisation of everyday life. Cassie Thornton talked about her artistic practice derived from experience with the Strike Debt (USA) and from Windo Debowe Mosewin – a feminist indigenous patrol in Thunder Bay, as well as about her new project Hologram which tries to organise sick (artists) into a healthcare support network. In his presentation, Tomislav Medak redefined a different genealogy of the free culture movement, with references to the Pirate Care Syllabus project – a space for collective production, exchange and distribution of knowledge about (re)organising social reproduction.

Public Talk Art Groups and Socio-Political Engagement within the program Vectors of collective imagination in art

Vektori 1934 (Belgrade, Zagreb, group 1934) and group 1973

Marko Popović, 1934-1973

centar za nove medije_kuda.org

kolektiv posvećen umetnosti, aktivizmu i politici

2000-2020

Katja Praznik, Slovenija/SAD; Sezgin Bojnik, Kosovo/Finska

Politička ekonomija umetničkih kolektiva je treći u nizu razgovora u okviru segmenta Vektori kolektivne imaginacije u umetnosti čija je okolina uticaj dominantnih ekonomskih modela na dinamike rada u umetnosti, načini percepcije političke ekonomije u umetnosti i organizovanje umetnika kao radnika u kulturi. Katja Praznik otvorila je pitanja umetnosti kao rada i pitanja taktičkih prednosti takvog razmišljanja za umetničko organizovanje. Sezgin Bojnik bavio se ulogom umetničkih kolektiva u periodu "tranzicije" na prostoru bivše Jugoslavije. Njegov fokus je bio na sistemu umetnosti i specifičnim odnosima između umetnosti i ideologije.

katja.org / archive.org

Janji razgovor: Politička ekonomija umetničkih kolektiva u okviru programa 'Vektori kolektivne imaginacije u umetnosti'

1999 2000 2001 2002

1934-1973

Vida Knežević, Belgrade; Jacopo Galimberti, Italy

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Public talk: Art Groups and Socio-Political Engagement within the program Vectors of collective imagination in art

1930 1940 1950 1960 1970 1980 1990 2000 2010 2020

The video archive of the Art Organization project is available in an interface that offers a comparative presentation of the material over time. On the timeline we have the opportunity to follow the research of group work joint authorship through 3 segments: 1) video interviews of collectives and groups in the field of contemporary art, art theorists and historians, 2) recordings of public conversations made during July 2020 as part of the Vector of Collective Imagination and 3) Video of conversations focused on the Soros Centers for Contemporary Art (SCCA) that took place in the region during the 1990s, their roles and influences on the development of the scene.

You can use the interface by navigating the left and right arrows, as well as selecting elements from the timeline itself and zooming in on it. The video and text segment can be followed both from the given interface and from the links they lead to, for an enlarged view as well as to more information about the collectives themselves.

The research team is composed of members of kuda.org with associates from Belgrade and Pančevo, theoreticians and art historians Milica Pekić, Stevan Vuković, Ana Vilenica, Darija Međić and Ana Perica from Split.

Public talk: Art Groups and Socio-Political Engagement within the program Vectors of collective imagination in art

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