

A person is seen from behind, standing on a grassy hillside covered in small white flowers. They are looking out over a vast landscape of rolling hills and mountains under a clear blue sky with a few wispy clouds. The overall scene is peaceful and scenic.

CONTINENTAL BREAKFAST. THE PASS 2009

Fourth CEI Venice Forum
for Contemporary Art Curators



CONTINENTAL

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BREAKFAST THE PASS

Fourth CEI Venice Forum for Contemporary Art Curators

edited by Giuliana Carbi



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FIRST SESSION



DEA VIDOVIĆ

Double-edged sword. Re-thinking the threats to creativity and innovation.

Creativity and innovation depend on several elements – the context, topic, author etc. From this point, we have to re-question our approach to creativity and innovation in the framework of responsible art and culture – how do we use creativity with the aim of contributing to social prosperity.

If we try to reconsider creativity and innovation in the realm of responsible culture and the arts, then we open up the questions of challenges and possible threats which are imposed on artworks in an effort to reach some set of goals.

By the term ‘responsible culture’ and art I see any type of critical contemplation of everyday life, society, politics, economy etc. that asks questions, detects problems, and at the same time eliminates those very problems from the existing niches.

Therefore, I see creativity and innovation as strong weapons which we have to use very deliberately, precisely and carefully in order to articulate the message of cultural and art projects publicly and create works that will be effective and efficient.

I will show the threats which can occur here with an example of one complex ongoing Croatian project. I do not intend to give you all the answers, in the same way as artists don’t, but only try to detect potential danger in this situation.

Take a look at the following example which hopefully opens a series of questions.

The artist Barbara Blasin began the project 'Endangered Particle' with a series of photographs of burnt-down landscapes on five tourist locations on the Adriatic Coast. After the exhibition of photographs of burnt landscape, the artist decided to make a prototype of tourist accessories (cooling fans, flip-flops, deck chairs etc.). On these tourist accessories she applied images of burnt landscape. These prototypes were presented within the framework of UrbanFestival which took place in Zagreb in May, 2008. Now, she is looking for a partner from the commercial sector which would enable production of these items for commercial purposes. Part of the income made from the distribution and sales of these products would be designated for the re-forestation of one or more areas that were burnt in the fires.

Conceived in this way, the project tackles some of the key issues when it comes to such complex artistic-ecological projects. On one side we have a creation of local products which refer to their own reality and which aim to achieve clear and measurable benefits. However, the question is how to manage the process so that it doesn't contradict the main idea of the project.

If this artist uses the images of burnt landscape and applies them to tourist accessories, can a potential customer be aware of the project's basic principle which is not to see these items as "beautiful" but pointing to the need of re-forestation of the areas that were burnt in the fires? It seems, however, that the act of selling the tourist accessories would not be a sufficient communication channel to transfer the message. It would be necessary to create an additional and precisely thought-out advertising and communicative campaign which can anticipate a customer regarding the idea and goal of the project.

Another question that arises is what the limits of this project are when it enters into the commercial sector. Namely, the problem is how to create products that will be environmentally acceptable and at the same time commercially profitable. Here the important thing is technology and the possibilities that it offers, or better, doesn't offer, in regards to the creation of ecological tourist accessories. From this arises another question – does a potential partner from the commercial sector lead to a socially responsible and sustainable business? More specifically, will they take into account social and environmental change and just livelihood in the rapidly growing natural, organic and sustainable product marketplace in order to be a part of a project like this? Is it necessary to accept the solution which imposes compromise in order to achieve the final goal? Or is it necessary to take the risk, to reject all interested parties who are not ready to run socially responsible businesses, and finally not realize the whole idea of the project?

If we consider all important matters from this example and try to put them into a more generalized context, then we can see the questions which we open up here.

Does art provoke citizens to think? Are the partners from other sectors able to enter into such cooperation? Are they ready to run a business which is socially responsible? Where are the boundaries? Should these boundaries be exceeded? And finally, how to communicate that something that is aesthetically beautiful and attractive takes at the same time the role of identifying the problems and fights for progress, improvement and solution?

What threats, then, can we find here?

It seems that a potentially strong idea and ambition are not enough to create creative and responsible cognition.

Thus, for example, initial ideas and problems can be entirely simplified. In the end, many projects do not realize their initial goals, and some of them go as far as to accept a compromise that transforms a project into its entire contradiction (we would have such a situation in the previously mentioned project if the artist agreed to manufacture flip-flops made of ecologically unacceptable material).

These dangers can become an expected reality for all projects which tackle various problems, create an impressive, emotional and potent narrative, but which do not have the intention of going till the end, for fear of being grudging by a system, hierarchy, government, dominant ideology, consumers etc.

Or what happens when they can't realize the whole idea because of the lack of money, indifference of various stakeholders etc.? In such a case, the synergic interferences of various disciplines are missed, all disposed communication channels are excluded, etc.

How to avoid these threats? Where are the boundaries?

SUZANA MILEVSKA

The Relevance of Gendered Interpretation of Art in Contemporary Transitional Societies.

Just a day before coming here I had a dream. Yes, I still have dreams about art besides many dilemmas I have about the art system. In the dream I was already at this Venice Forum: I was here, in the audience, listening to a panel consisting of the ex-curators of the Venice Biennale

from all previous years. By looking at the structure of the panel I could conclude that the dream was taking place in the far future because about half of the many panel participants were women. Had the panel taken place today there would have been only two, Rosa Martines and Maria de Coral, and both of them co-curated only one Biennale together (the fifty-first) of the fifty-three Biennials.

Perhaps this dream, according to which only if the next fifty Bienniales (during the next hundred years) would have women as curators we could reach certain gender balance, sounds unrelated to my talk. However, I want to ask you to bear with me and hopefully the link will become visible during the development of the arguments.

My presentation actually addresses the importance of gendered interpretation of contemporary art works produced in transitional societies. Moreover, I will look at the differences and contradictions between the processes of gender difference construction in the media and in art production and into their reciprocal influences. Actually, my main aim is to question the assumed difference between art and public images in reflecting power regimes of representation particularly regarding gender.

Obviously, once the art or media images start circulating in public space they have similar effects and cannot be exempted from the visual culture argumentations. Of course, the difference between art and media lies in the different aims and the language that is used to achieve these aims. The rhetoric of the art work is usually supposed to be more complex and reaches many levels of interpretation. The problem with the art image present in the public eye is that the circumstances of its consummation change – it is the instantaneous perception with no time for additional explanations and information: captions, artist's statements,

catalogue texts, or press clippings, that make problematic the circulation of the gender insensitive images.

Particularly, I want to stress the importance of this issue in the context of billboard photographs, public sculptures and photographs in printed and electronic media that became part of our everyday visual field, both through public art projects and other initiatives such as activist campaigns. Therefore, in this short presentation I am not concerned with art that is exhibited in specialized exhibition spaces such as museums, cultural centers, galleries and other professional spaces starting from the assumption that art in such spaces is experienced by aware, educated and differently motivated audiences that intentionally attend the exhibitions. In contrast, people who see public art are unprepared, often visually illiterate and read the images according to their scarce knowledge already shaped by many stereotypes and prejudices.

This is not the same as to say that we should expel art from the public space or that all art in public space should be selected according to its clear and easy to read message in gender terms. What I am trying to argue here is that we need to be aware about the damage that certain art projects could do or the positive effects they may have only because of the power projected by any publicly circulated images. Of course, men curators sometimes show sensitivity towards these issues too. However, if we go back to the first passages of this text, it sounds really strange that the opportunities given to women curators to equally participate in shaping and correcting the art trends today, and where this could be really done on a more visible scale than in Venice, are still scarce and limited.

There are many examples that could be put forward from the context where I live. Macedonia is a very new

country that from its establishment in 1991, still struggles all possible transitional viruses that are stalking out there: lack of recognition of its legitimacy (the name issue with Greece), the slow and illegal privatization, unemployment, corruption, trafficking of drugs and humans, endangered human rights of Albanian, Roma and other minorities, etc. In such conditions, who would be concerned with the imbalance in gender issues in art? – it is all too irrelevant of an issue: whenever I write about gender issues and call for consideration of the gender imbalance in arts it sounds like too much of a premature and nuanced task to ask for.

This was the main reason that provoked me to decide that in this forum it is urgent to raise the voice against the ignoring of gender issues and not only by men artists and curators but also by women curators in the mainstream events. Important to add here is that even when there are equal numbers of women artists invited this is not enough: isn't it the image and its obvious or hidden messages that also count?

Hereby I also want to stress that I agree with the assumption of this forum that art had changed, since the visual information, truth and images today are inevitably manipulated by the new means of technology, but such manipulation is mainly the result of the prevalent ideology – that as mind shaping technology appeared much earlier it had a much longer life than any digital technology. The internalization of stereotypical images happen to even the most self-aware and critical artists because they are not immune to the media aggressiveness, as are any of us. However, one has to be aware that media are not the only source of gender imbalance in arts that are to blame for the actual structures in the art system today.

Therefore, this presentation should be understood as a very simple but urgent reminder that behind all manipulation of images and their sexist use in public space the responsibility lies in all of us: curators, artists, art managers, advisory bodies, jury members, biennial presidents, professors, journalists, museum and galleries, all in all, the art system in general that allows the social injustices, stereotypical representations and other imbalances to perpetuate in arts as well as in life, including gender inequality in representation. Transitional societies are perhaps more perceptible to the influences of social and political imbalance mainly because the control mechanisms are not yet developed and fully accepted (such as the positive discrimination in education and culture) but it seems that in the professional world in the whole world nobody profoundly cares for these issues anyway, for which the best proof is the example of the Venice Biennale of my dream from the beginning of this text, that hopefully one day will come true.

KATI SIMON

And where should we Hungarians stand? Facing the past – chaos in the social thought.

The exhibition 'Vérité exposée – about memory', my most recent project that was shown at the Ernst Museum Budapest endeavoured to explore different aspects of the issues of individual and collective memory and oblivion, issues that have come to the forefront of sociological discourse in Hungary in the last few years. The historic

anniversaries of the events in 1956, 1958, 1968, 1989 drove us to remember and confront some decisive moments of 20th century Hungarian history. A succession of films, literary works, publications, debate forums, public art works and exhibitions evoked these historic events in the scope of the anniversaries. The question remains whether we have succeeded in facing the past that lives on in the present. Have we come closer to a collective historical consciousness of the past through different approaches to the experienced history/events? In writings on social memory, published in the scope of the anniversary of 1956, some theoreticians point out among others, that there is a chaos in Hungarian post-transition social thought regarding the historical past.¹ We lack a collective consciousness of the past, and there is everything but accord in interpreting, evaluating and judging the past, even though this would be essential if the Hungarian society were to find its identity in the present and determine its own future.² Today's Hungary suffers from historical aphasia. We don't understand old phrases any more, we can't piece the past together, and to speak about it we are absolutely incapable.

The self-conception of a society is inseparably connected to memory. But what influences individual memory, without which the workings of collective memory cannot be explored? How does memory depend on context? What influence may such variable factors as the passing of time, the circumstances of events and remembering them have on our memory? How fragmented is memory? These were the questions explored at the exhibition 'Vérité exposée – about memory' by the works of Sven Augustijnen, David Claerbout, Ana Torfs and Els Vanden Meersch. They connected along such themes as the fragmentedness

of memory, difference and repetition, re-creation of situations and events, or the strategy of re-enactment in relation to history and memory. The exhibited works laid emphasis on the issues of individual and historical memory and oblivion, as well as the exploration of processes of perception, changing points of view, and time as an entity that fundamentally influences memory.

The exhibition's title was referring to Ana Torfs' work 'Vérité exposée' (Truth Exposed, 2006), a series of 24 prints. In this work, every print shows a distorted projection of a square-shaped light, each time from a different angle, with the word "Vérité" (Truth), written by hand in their middle. The same word is featured in the photograph 'Toast' (2003), in which a man is seen in three-quarters profile sitting on a chair, his back to the camera. He is holding a glass of champagne in his left hand, raising it away from his body in mid air, where it stands out sharply against a rectangle of light cast diagonally on the rear wall by the slide carousel in the left foreground. The word "Vérité" is written on the white surface whose shape and size immediately bring to mind those of a screen.

The central work of the exhibition was Ana Torfs' installation work 'Anatomy' (2006) that is based on extensive research into a trial held in 1919 in Berlin: the 'Case of the Murder of Dr. Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg', a document that has never been fully published. Torfs pinpointed selected statements from this trial to compose the literary script for the piece entitled 'A Tragedy in Two Acts'.

The installation consists of large black and white slide projections and images on two television monitors. Torfs chooses 25 young German actors to 'play' specific testimonies from the record of the proceedings, and filmed their performances, in contemporary clothes, on video.

These recordings tell us how Luxemburg and Liebknecht were killed, told from the perspectives of 25 witnesses and defendants. The case files have been cut up by Torfs into short scenes so that a 'story' emerges in which details from the same event are told from different angles, highlighting the relative nature of the narrative. The actors recite the testimonies in German, but this was mixed with an English version spoken 'in real time' by an interpreter working at the International Court of Justice in The Hague.

The mute black and white slide projections provide an abstract visual counterpoint to the video recordings. These photographs were taken in the Anatomical Theatre in Berlin. The images photographed in this historic setting, with actors of 4 different generations, evoke a very suggestive atmosphere, somewhere between a stage, a Greek amphitheatre and a court of law, and underline the suggestive nature of the whole installation.

In each of the neighbouring rooms to this work were placed one of the works by David Claerbout. 'Sections of a Happy Moment' (2007) is a series of black and white images. A family is playing among the grey blocks of a housing estate. Their eyes follow the course of a ball flying high. These are not snapshots of a family album, but photos of the same moment taken from dozens of angles. Depicting of the moment, the work bends time, confronting single-perspective perception with the truth created by the multiplied image. Beyond this it also evokes the question of faking history through faking images as it will be more and more suspicious by passing of time that all images are manipulated: as a result of editing, the trees are disproportionately small and sparse in relation to the past, as if everything was built recently and yet looks thirty years old right away.

His other work at the exhibition, 'Bordeaux Piece' (2004), is a series of 69 twelve-minute film sequences, each of which displays the same movie scene about love and betrayal: a classical film scene revealing melodramatic relations between two men (father and son) and a young woman. At the end of the scene, when the camera pans through the landscape, it appears as if the scene were looped, dialogue and action starting over. This, however, is not the case: the actors actually play the scene over and over again. Only when watching the repeated scenes for an extended time will the viewer perceive the daily cycle from dawn till dusk, which is the real-time backdrop of the scene. The film is more than 13 hours in its entire length. During this time the sounds of nature and the light vary, time and again redefining the background of the repeating, re-enacted story. The scenes, shot in the course of a single day, allow us to experience and re-experience the unfolding of emotional dramas and notice the minimal differences in the slowly and continuously changing environment.

The exhibited works by Els Vanden Meersch and Sven Augustijen address directly the issue of oblivion. The photo series of Els Vanden Meersch are not constituted by traditional documentary photos: they are photographic sequences that associatively and constructively evoke the memories of the viewer. 'A monument of post-political oblivion' (2007), an installation consisting of a photo series and a slide show presented on three monitors, is centred around the architecture of the infamous Nazi holiday camp Prora, built in 1936-1939 on the Baltic island of Rügen. After the war the entire Prora complex was transformed into a Soviet army barracks, which it remained until the fall of the Soviet Union in the early

nineties. In its current ruinous state, the complex stands out as a colossal monument of post-political oblivion, a dismal yet imposing “requiem to socialism”, evoking both the nationalist and internationalist variety.³

Sven Augustijnen’s two films ‘Johan’ (2001) and ‘François’ (2003) are documentary portraits of two patients with aphasia. Aphasia is an illness that affects the language centres of the brain and that can be generated by, amongst other things, a cerebral tumour or haemorrhage. Patients suffering from aphasia are often subject to chronic memory loss, and due to the ensuing semantic or interpretative disturbances they cannot recognise as such or correctly categorise certain specific objects. Johan and François have trouble finding the right words for simple expressions. In order to train their memory they undergo various treatments in a hospital, among them speech therapy. During one of these sessions Augustijnen is present with his camera. Johan has to strain himself to answer the simplest questions, and François keeps chattering incessantly to fill the gaps in his memory. The editing accentuates the unfocused and stammering line of thought of the aphasia patient.

Sven Augustijnen speaks about personal memory in his two videos, however the fragmented dialogue, going around in circles, is not primarily about personal destinies, but about the entwinement of personal and collective memory.

The exhibition was supported and realised in cooperation with the Flemish Government.

¹ Péter György, ‘Az emlékezet szétesése – az olvashatatlan város’ (Decomposition of memory – unreadable city),

2000, 2006. October.

András Murai, 'A kortárs emlékezet alakzatai' (Forms of Contemporary Memory), Médiakutató, 2008. Autumn.

² The introduction relies on András Murai, 'A kortárs emlékezet alakzatai' (Forms of Contemporary Memory), Médiakutató. 2008. Autumn.

³ Dieter Roelstraete, 'Specters and Marks. Notes on a Photography of Absence', in: Els Vanden Meersch, 'Implants', MER. Paper Kunsthalle, Ghent.

BENIAMINO FOSCHINI

Is Art still an Aesthetical Choice? - A Step.

The starting point of this speech is a quite ambiguous question – because one may immediately connect art to aesthetics – especially as it implies a sort of antithesis to 'aesthetics' in the judgement of the value of art, actually existing in the contemporary debates on arts. Thus, bringing on the issue of 'ethics', I think it would be useful to try to define the role of the curator. In his essay on 'Altermodern' for the last Tate Triennial, Nicolas Bourriaud introduced the notion of "cluster"¹, related to artists and artistic meanings and practices. Quoting the term from the architectural theories of the Fifties, Bourriaud conceives the work of art and the role of the artist in a self-made cell structure, in which notions of time and space are liquified into the processes of action and value judgement. It would be interesting to see how the idea of cluster may be meaningful in defining the curatorial figure as well: not as a specialist – as a heritage of a more postmodern

condition – but as a critic, an intellectual, a historian, an artist, being able to mix different philosophical and stance perspectives and practical approaches. Far from affirming a super-role of the curator, the figure is here intended as a cultural producer, where all his/her experiences and obsessions can be applied to the field of art.

Tangential to the question I posed above, History represents a fundamental basis for starting a discourse about critical issues, and properly about artistic ones. History is not only a field of study – to which I belong – but a collection of memories whose analytical interpretation is essential to the building of a new perception of the present. In this way, I would like to start a brief talk about the recent research I did for my MA², in which the relationship between aesthetics and ethics, rooted in the debates that took place in Germany in the middle of the century, represents an occasion to put forward some suggestions for contemporary critical studies.

In 1947 in Soviet Occupied Germany³ an art magazine is published, simply titled 'bildende kunst'. Partly funded by the local communist party SED, the monthly publication is edited in Berlin by two artists, each representing a different perspective in contemporary art: Karl Hofer for Modern Art, Oskar Nerlinger for Socialist Realism. The magazine does not only offer an ambitious and original platform for discussions on the role of art in contemporary Germany, from two different perspectives on the same publication; it is also able to show how the language is shifting into clear propaganda, while establishing strong and common ethics, that is, *ça va sans dire*, communist ethics. Let us take a specific moment in October 1948, just one year before the closure of 'bildende kunst'. The Cold War is working out, after the events in 1947: Truman's Doctrine and the

consequent Marshall Plan for all the “free” countries – excluding those under the influence of the Soviet Union – and Zdanov’s speech on the ‘Two Camps’ (imperialist and anti-democratic vs. anti-imperialist and democratic, respectively headed by the United States and the Soviet Union). In June 1948 the Berlin Blockade effectively starts: all the accesses to West Berlin – i.e. the US, British and French sectors of the city – are closed, not allowing any person, apart from the Red Army officers based in Potsdam and the members of the intelligencja, and any goods to enter the zone. The blockade lasts for almost one year and the delivery of primary goods is granted by the US army through the famous Luftbrücke. The inner struggle in the SED, between the socialdemocrat Otto Grotewohl and Walter Ulbricht ends with the political victory of the latter, opening the way the first economic biennial plan and the road to socialism.

In this period two articles appear in ‘bildende kunst’, written by the both editors, in issue 10, October 1948, significantly titled ‘Kunst und Politik’ and ‘Politik und Kunst’, respectively by Hofer and Nerlinger.⁴

Typical of the german post-Kantian culture, Hofer poses the problem as a dicotomy between form and content. Socialist Realism has developed from the Twenties and Thirties from an attitude of social responsibility into a doctrine regarding the content itself. In their struggle against ‘formalist’ art, the Marxist art critics are focusing on the historical and materialistic role of the artist in society, instead of looking at their art and at the laws of art the artists are – and were, in the past – developing. At the same time, the claim of the Marxist artists for an engagement towards the social and political struggle in general and towards the construction of a new and better

Germany in particular has actually nothing to do with the questions that art poses. According to Hofer, observing the political and social present time – thus the ethical position of the artist – may be an incentive for creating a work of art, but it is not the center of the problem. The second issue of the article is the audience. The concern of the Marxists is the dehumanization of Modern Art: the avant-garde, product of the capitalistic society, alienated the people from the understanding of the artwork. Hofer thinks it is a fake problem, as great art has always been produced and consumed by an élite and has never been the expression of the will of a class (personally I think that the issue is more complicated). The last attack on the Marxists resides in arguing that focusing on the content means that they are supporting the general bad taste of the people, that is effectively not an effect of a capitalist or Nazi cultural imposition. Hofer's position obviously resides in a paternalistic view of culture as aesthetical education. Nerlinger, a sincere and passionate Marxist, does not believe in the universal value of art. Instead the focus is the artist, as he/she is living inside a history line and is thus part of society and of the economic structure. Nevertheless, be it an avant-garde or not, art has always been supported by those having money and power. In the perspective of the construction of Socialism, the people should become the customer of art. Having in mind this new task, the artist has to shift his/her own focus on the 'what', rather than the 'how', as the latter brought art to a formalism without hope. The artist should not fall into the abstract vision of an "Art for the People" or "towards the People": he/she has to comprehend his/her own role as part of society and be able to show the contradictions of the economical structure. Thus, Nerlinger moves the problem

from the subject of art, not in order to pose it on the level of the essence of art, that would be self-referential. His final reflection resides on the moral and ethical quality of the artist him/herself. At the end, a question: why is it not possible to look at figures like Daumier, Courbet, Van Gogh, Kollwitz as example of 'persons' who were engaged with their own time and with the society they were living in?

This passage is only a fragment of a more complex debate in post-war East Germany, but it suits for allowing the emergence of a topic I consider very actual.

The problem in tackling ethical issues as fundamental for judging the value of works of art resides in the inner relationship between the artist – and his/her own ethical position inside society – and the work itself. It seems to me that the line drawn between the two points is too straight and logical and in contrast with a supposed aesthetical freedom. According to Georg Lukács, in his struggle with Ernst Bloch on Expressionism, "authentic freedom, i.e. freedom from the reactionary prejudices of the imperialist era (not merely in the field of art), cannot possibly be attained through mere spontaneity or by persons unable to break through the confines of their own immediate experience."⁵ From an ethical point of view, no one could say that the hungarian philosopher was at fault. But the implication of an artistic process based on rationality – due to the claim of Marxism of being trustee of Reason – means that the space for intuition disappears from any aesthetical notion. It is true, according to Nanni Moretti in 'Palombella Rossa' (1989), that "chi scrive male, pensa male e vive male"⁶. But it is not a sufficient condition for making art, or, let us say, relevant art.

At the same time, when talking about a would-be dicotomy

aesthetics/ethics, the common mistake is to apply the dicotomy form/content. In this way, it is important to recall the fundaments of modernism as found in the philosophy of Immanuel Kant (see the 'Critique of Judgement', 1790), who was the first one to express clearly and sistematically that the realm of aesthetics does not refer to the quality of the form of the artwork. On the opposite, the realm of aesthetics is the immaterial and illogical space and time between the observer and the work itself, through a free movement of love. Barthes would have called this moment – referring to photographes - as an happening.⁷ Going back to Kant is not a nostalgic approach. Indeed, the question about the "uninterested" feeling, due to the aesthetical one, was already posed by Nietzsche, who caught the possible contradiction between the feeling of the spectator – that could be affirmed as "uninterested" - and the one of the creator, the artist – that is always interested, or, more interesting.⁸

Why these events and opinions may be relevant in contemporary culture? When we think about political issues in art – as in partecipative, public, performance art and so on – some ethical keywords seem to reflect a not-so-far past. When dealing with social issues, art practices refer to a tradition that has its own roots in the Socialist Realist theories and attitudes.

My critical proposal is that 'the' choice has still to be based on an illogical aesthetical feeling commonly referred to as "taste". But that choice has ethical effects.

¹ See Nicoas Bourriaud (ed.), 'Altermodern', London: Tate Gallery Publishing, 2009.

² A specific article on the subject is planned to be published

in 'L'Uomo nero. Materiali per una storia delle arti della modernità', academic magazine edited by Antonello Negri, Università Statale di Milano.

³ The two Republics were founded in 1949.

⁴ See 'bildende kunst', 10, II, October, 1948.

⁵ Georg Lukács, 'Realism in Balance', in Theodor Adorno et al., 'Aesthetics and Politics', London: Verso, 2007 [1977], p. 37.

⁶ "Those who write badly, also think badly and live badly".

⁷ See Roland Barthes, 'La chambre claire. Note sur la photographie', Paris: Gallimard, 1980.

⁸ Friedrich Nietzsche, in Giorgio Agamben, 'L'uomo senza contenuto', Macerata: Quodlibet, 1994, pp. 9-10.

BALÁZS BEÖTHY

Not Pretended. The position of the speaker.

I have always been intrigued by situations when life and art embrace. Perhaps my attraction to non-imitative procedures was arisen by Fluxus, or it is possible that I was moved by the expansive neo-avantgarde belief in the alterability of life¹. In any case, I perceive these as moments of existential testimony of the artist. Cases when the ethical and the aesthetical overlap.

This concurrence, the exposure of the artist, has its consequences. It generates a transparency along with the legal procedures that might ensue. The position of the speaker (one of the current cornerstones of critical art practice) is clearly outlined, forming an aura of credibility

around the work even if one were to debate the content or orientation of the artist's stance.

In the following I would like to draw these outlines through briefly introducing some works that have rooted in the Budapest scene. I shall do this from my perspective, from the point of view of a middle-class, middle-aged, Central European white male artist (I might as well bring up some of my works, since similar questions are on my mind with regard to them, but the position of the speaker may be more clear-cut if I reflect on the works of others this time).

Miklós Erhardt's video 'Havanna' can be considered a work diary, based on an astoundingly sincere confession on the tension he, as an outsider, an artist just passing through, has undergone during his current enterprise, an artistic intervention at a housing project that has turned into a slum. He has undertaken, therefore goes through with the project, while being tormented by doubt.

So in the soundtrack he takes into account the questions that arise in the process; the hardships, dangers, fiascos, obstacles he faces in the course of the work. The subdued images (in which he carefully tries to avoid objectifying his subjects the dwellers) almost seem to serve as a pretext for the confession to be formulated. The admission divulged in a tone resounding from deep inside becomes the central element of the work. Its pleasantness and disarming force springs from the intimacy and liberation generated by telling the truth. So does the adequately subtle commentary turn into the critical catechism of site-specific art.

'Footnote to Bare Life – Twenty Six Cardboard Boxes That Contain (Arguably) All My Stuff To Date' became the complementary piece of the above work. It was on

view last summer in a display window in the subway at Secession, Vienna (while the video was exhibited inside). Observing the artwork the fundamental question is whether we believe the artist or not: did he really pack up, transport abroad, and place – and so for the exhibition's four months go without – all his stuff? After watching this video, I believe him.

János Sugár stencilled the text 'Wash your dirty money with my art' in front of two rich private art institutions in Budapest. Initially he had presented the stencil at a state-owned exhibition hall, but he felt the urge to also test the power of these words on the street, in 'real life', leaving the 'protected' environment. One of the private institutions silently removed the stain, but the other one filed a lawsuit for criminal damage, and assessed the damage at a disproportionately high value².

The police began investigation against an unidentified offender, and surprisingly soon they reached the state-owned exhibition hall and then the 'author'. He then still had the option of denial; he could have said that he had seen the text in question on the street and, fancying it, included it as a quote in his work at Budapest Kunsthalle – the authors of graffitis, stencils and stickers being identifiable only for the initiate, and even then mostly by their 'alias', precisely in order to avoid such cases of being held responsible.

He, on the contrary, confessed, admitting everything, and only debating the value of the damage. He even published his confession as a serigraphy. In this text he repositions the sprayed stencil, calling it public art instead of street art. This is, then, the reason for giving his name and taking responsibility for it. It is worthwhile to note here that according to the definition of the German Supreme Court,

art is what someone takes responsibility for. In this sense, from a legal aspect, Sugár's operation can be considered an act of art.

As of this writing, the outcome of the procedure is unknown. In the meantime, however, copies of the stencil were purchased by the Ludwig Museum-Museum of Contemporary Art Budapest and a prominent private collection. The art scene seemingly shows solidarity with the author, treating the text as an artwork. Moreover, the purchases have yielded almost enough money to pay the fine based on a realistic damage assessment, although I would like it better if the artist himself removed (retouched) the 40x60cm text from the wall in the scope of community work. Then all would be left is to invalidate the legal consequences of the criminal record³.

Miklós Mécs and nine others have recently been awarded a private prize⁴, the Junior Prima. The prize of 7000 € – awarded to artists under 30 – is the 'little sibling' of the Prima Primissima prize of debated professional legitimacy⁵ but exceptionally high financial benefit. A representative brochure has also been published, containing a portrait and a motto from each winner⁶.

Mécs submitted one of his earlier works for the portrait, in which the word 'Beuys' is drawn under his nose ('moustache' in Hungarian is 'bajusz', pronounced very similarly to the name of the German artist. In addition, the 'trim' of the text looks hitleresque). As his motto, he submitted a found sentence: "I have never lied" (Viktor Orbán, Jörg Haider, Miklós Mécs), referring to the two politicians from whom he had previously heard the phrase.

In the brochure, however, the word 'Beuys' was digitally removed from the portrait, and the place of the motto

left empty. When it was published, they claimed that they had received the material too late, when the publication was already being printed. Whatever the case, he was the only Junior Prima from the ten who had no motto in the booklet.

In spite of this, Mécs accepted the prize. However, on the evening of the award ceremony, he distributed half of the sum among the visitors in another exhibition, in the scope of a peculiar procedure: he cut the 50 € banknotes in two pieces (making sure that the bigger part can be exchanged for a new one at the bank), and on each of the bigger ones he drew a phase of the sprint race of 'Achilles and the Tortoise'. Each visitor received a phase (or 50 €, depends on how we view it), and the artist photographed each proprietor holding onto their banknotes. He then compiled an animation from the photos on which the phases of the race form a moving image.

On the prize itself, a glass horse⁷, he wrote the excluded motto, and put it up for auction on Vatera⁸. Then I had the feeling that he should have deserved to receive nine hundred thousand HUF for it, but he only got thirty thousand. Financially the balance is just beyond break-even point, but I think the moral profit will make recompense. Who would be able to give up this kind of money so easily?

Mécs's portrait and motto might be called provocative. The extent of his provocation is, however, in line with the ambiguous recognition of the prize as well as the gallantry with which he waived half of the sum. Actually, he did not waive – he used it for the material costs of his new work. There are such costly productions. And with the same move he engaged all those who brought the phases of the race home (I have stowed mine, although I know of

people who have exchanged it).

In fact, perhaps he engaged not only them, but also some of those who have heard this story. At least my impression about the works that have been engendered in the mentioned cases (video, installation, stencil, animation, prepared object) is that they are inseparable from the acts that have created them (confession, undertaking of responsibility, admission, renouncement, engagement). And this is what makes it democratic: the object is always owned by someone, but the act is everyone's.

(translated by Dániel Sipos)

¹ Miklós Erdély: 'The features of the Post-neo-avant-garde attitude': "1) One must acknowledge one's own competence with regards to one's life and fate, and keep to it above all else. 2) This competence extends to whatever concerns one's life, whether directly or indirectly. 3) In this manner one's competence extends to everything. 4) One must have the courage to perceive whatever is bad, faulty, torturous, dangerous or meaningless, whether it be the most accepted, seemingly unchangeable case or thing. 5) One must have the boldness to propose even the most unfounded, least realizable alternative. 6) One must be able to imagine that these variants can be attained. 7) One must give as much consideration to possibilities that have only a slight chance but promise great advantages as to possibilities that in all likelihood can be attained but promise few advantages. 8) Whatever one can accomplish with the limited tools at one's disposal one must do without delay. 9) One must refrain from any form of organization or institutionalization." (1981)

Quoted from: Annamaria Szoke: 'Miklós Erdély: Moral Algebra – Solidarity Action (1972) A case-study', VIVID [RADICAL] MEMORY, Radical conceptual art revisited: a social and political perspective from the East and the South. Stuttgart Workshop, 2007. http://www.vividradicalmemory.org/html/workshop/stu_essays/szoke.pdf, translated by Zsuzsanna Szegedy-Maszák, courtesy of Miklós Erdély Foundation, Budapest.

² "I have a feeling they don't like art. They need it or consider it important for some reason, but they don't like it, they don't use it properly. Big patrons or collectors form a close, or, if you like, friendly relation to culture. This is their real profit. In my view, VAM Design is not what it alleges to be. They practically debunked themselves by simply not recognising a gesture of contemporary art. Instead, they turned to legal means. I never tried to hide that I did it, and it was clear that it might have legal consequences. But the way they asserted themselves, the sum of the claim they made, it appeared as if this gesture had triggered an unrealistic rage on their part."

János Sugár in: Gergely Nagy: 'Mosd a pénzed a művészetemmel!', hvg.hu, 2008. 11. 28. http://hvg.hu/print/20081128_sugar_mecs_junior_prima_wam_kogart.aspx (2009. 05. 17.)

³ Sugár was taken into criminal record in the beginning of the procedure.

⁴ <http://www.primaprimissima.hu>

⁵ József Mélyi: 'Lebutított emlékezet' Mozgó Világ, 2008. January

<http://epa.oszk.hu/01300/01326/00095/13melyi.htm> (2009. 05. 17.)

⁶ http://www.primaprimissima.hu/f/pp_junior_kepzo.pdf (2009. 05. 17.)

⁷ The sculpture is a rendering of Kincsem, the famous race mare, by Imre Schrammel, Kossuth Prize winning ceramic artist.

⁸ The Hungarian little brother of ebay.

GIOVANNI MORBIN

SUPERFICIE TOTALE

The world of art is the realm of image and without images art doesn't exist. How can such a slow and imperceptible phenomenon as the evolution of the species therefore "exist"?

The question ahead of my speech is particularly useful to help develop a research that escapes in some aspects a traditionally set outlook.

I'll try to explain the reason why through the explanation of five of my works selected for this occasion. 'Guanti' 1984/85 (Gloves), 'Progetto per una costruzione di una strada' 1985/86 (Project for the construction of a road), 'Bodybuilding' 1997, 'Scultura sociale' 2003 (Social Sculpture), 'Spacewalk' 2005.

I've decided to sign my work under the name of 'Superficie Totale' (Total Surface, Universal Surface) and not with name and surname to underline a container where the whole of our actions are put into. First of all I wanted to suggest the idea of the author as a part of an orchestra, a larger body, much larger than a human body beyond the limits of the skin.

Image 1: 'Guanti' / Gloves, 1984/85, metal wire.

The hand is the part of the body man communicates with, brings food to his mouth, attacks another, defends himself and so forth. It is traditionally the ideal tool for converting raw material into an art form.

I bound my hands with an iron wire, forming metal gloves weighing about seven kilograms each. I immobilized my hands in order to inhibit them from producing the images they have been taught to create. I tried to weaken them to the point when they had no more residual energy for action.

I've worn these gloves for about a year, when walking, shopping, going to work. I've worn them to weaken my hands.



Image 2: 'Progetto per la costruzione di una strada' / Project for the construction of a road, 1985/86. Biro pen on paper.

Donning the iron gloves once again, I marked off a path by walking back and forth across the same stretch of land, loyal to the idea that when you say in Italian "fatto con i piedi" (done by feet), we mean "badly made". I was thinking of the concept of unpleasant and ungraceful, so I started to use my feet... once the mark was produced on the ground I had to keep on repeating the walking again and again to maintain the path.

Giving up walking caused the growth of fresh grass again on the path... we could no longer see the mark but it's still there as a scar.

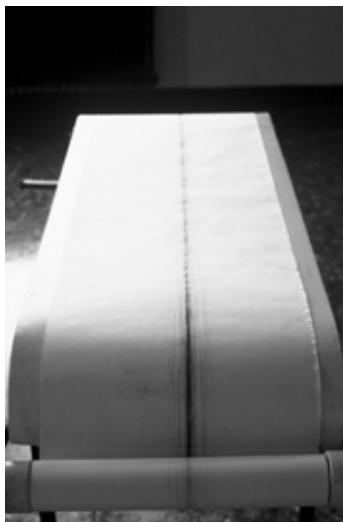


Image 3: 'Ibridazione 2 – Bodybuilding' / Hybridisation 2 – Bodybuilding, Ljubljana 1997.

Image 4: 'Ibridazione 5 – Spacewalk' / Hybridisation 5 – Spacewalk. 18/2 marzo / March 2005.

I adopted forms of behaviour where one of my hands has been walled in for eight hours or enveloped for one week in a plaster globe.

Eight hours, one week are systems of measure by which man moves into time. In Hybridisations no theatrical behaviour is intended. The remaining world keeps on living as usual. Someone notices my alteration and asks for explanations, others keep on walking and go home brooding a doubt. Most people don't even notice it.



Image 5: 'Scultura Sociale e applicazioni' / Social Sculture and appliances, 2003/2006.

In the western world, the existence of things is often measured by the ability to see and touch them. I attempted to challenge this by creating forms that had a reason to exist in the decomposition of their very parts. 'Scultura sociale' exists even in the impossibility of being present in the complete sense of its form: it exists under the form of hundreds of parts that in a domestic setting turn into doorknobs, supports, handles. It's an unstable sculpture like the basis that characterizes it and gives rise to it: a sphere, a dot, the smallest part of matter and image.



In this new condition 'Scultura sociale' becomes invisible after taking its rightful place in the furnishings, thus becoming asleep.

But for me art is a duty: to question things, reality, the world and not to fall asleep in the habit of something, so I reserve myself and my sculpture the right to overthrow the collector's routine life. Adding modules to the appliance I force him to live with a table that is one metre higher than a normal one or a knob that protrudes into a room in a way that it becomes a tool that suggests a use different from what it was made for.

DENIS ISAIA

The Second Moon.

My name is Denis Isaia and I'm going to talk about 'La seconda luna' (the second moon), the Prize awarded to passions. The second moon is a project I lunched in 2008 in collaboration with the municipality of Laives, a village close to Bolzano. In 2007, the Municipality asked me to add something new to a prize for painters they had been running for about 19 years. Since the beginning it became clear to me that to keep on working on a similar project didn't make much sense because, first as curator, I'm not so interested in painting, and because as an art professional, I knew we could not have any chances in being competitive. In the same period I was co-curating with Raqs Media Collective the Tabula Rasa project for Manifesta 7. It was on this occasion that I invented the concept of non-artists, people whose practices are close

to art. The Municipality seemed interested in my kind of research: we started working on the project, and began from the title. We called it 'La seconda luna' (the second moon), reference was made to an ideal place, something close to poetry, to madness, or in a simpler way, to a place for freedom where every practice is potentially accepted in a positive way, and positively valued. System, art, school, or what else did not have to matter, just an open door for people's whims. My main interest has been in understanding the limits of creativity, probably with the aim of seeing if art is bigger than what the art system has thought and recognized as such. For me, it is a sort of underground research that is also trying to reelaborate the idea that underground movements are tied solely to youth culture. The three awards were given as follows: 15,000 euros first prize, 7,000 euros second prize, and 3,000 euros third prize... a good amount of money for a non-discipline which is not supported by the market.

We worked hard to promote the project because we had no idea where the winners were. It could have been a worker, an electrician, or who else. At the end of March 2009, we had received more than 1000 applications that suited different disciplines. After a long selection process at the end of April we chose 7 projects, 3 winners, 2 special mentions, and 2 special prizes for technical and scientific passions.

I would like to introduce you briefly to the winners.

The third winner is Vittorio Napoli. Starting from 2001, every summer, during his holidays, he has walked along the coast of Italy, exactly where the sea meets the sand. Should there be cliffs, he throws his backpack into the water and swims to the next beach. At the moment he is in Sicily. I found him extremely poetic. A great epic

performance on borders and feelings. The second winner is Andrea Caputo. He owns an incredible collection of photographs of graffiti. He started at the age of thirteen and is publishing a complex book on the cities' history through the history of graffiti. The first prize was awarded to an 83 years old man, his name is Alois Clementi. In 1960, he started building scale war boats that tragically sank in the waters. After several years of work, he opened a museum in the basement of his home which he has been running for over 30 years. With a team of friends he has built 11 boats, three of them more than 10 meters long. They can cruise with three people on board. It has been a lifelong game that has given him a lot of satisfaction although people around him often didn't understand what kind of mission his was. The special mentions go to Serena Porrati who has studied the environment of weeds in Milan and in Los Angeles; and to Antonino Sepe a paradoxical inventor of light sculptures. The first special prize for a scientific passion was awarded to Andrea Giacomelli and Francesco Giubbilini for their project "buiometria partecipativa" an active mapping of darkness in Italy; and to Manfred Jaider for the NHC (notebook hardware control) project, a free software to save power on laptops.

We are already working on the next edition that will open to a European level, and on the show I will be curating together with the artist Carola Bonfili that will open on September 3.

KAMIL KOPANIA

Forms of Artistic Innovation – What Does Practice Say? (on the basis of Białystok experiences).

In countries such as Poland, where reality had been forged by the several decades of communism which inhibited the free circulation of thought and destroyed individualism, contemporary art is appreciated relatively rarely. For Poles, it is not a common and tamed element of reality, hence it evokes extreme emotions. If dealing with contemporary art at all, the typical Polish reaction is rather hysterical – either full of hate or of exaggerated reverence and involvement. The fundamental accusation formulated by those with a negative attitude towards contemporary art is against its innovative character, usually thought to be insincere. Such thinking is based on a simple formula: Giorgione or Rembrandt created innovative works as they had perfected the skill of painting and when transgressing the traditional rules, they were able to propose their own vision of the world and their own unique ideas, palatable for the sensitive and thoughtful viewer. A contemporary artist is supposedly on the other end of the spectrum – has no solid technical skill (many say that, “to paint a painting one has to have talent, and anybody can make a performance”)¹, does not give a second thought to tradition, and his or her ideas surely cannot be seen as interesting as it is not ideas that the artist is concerned with but self-promotion by means of intellectually shallow innovativeness, hence often by means of scandal.

It is not difficult to discredit such view of contemporary art. We could ask, for example, whether Poles understand the works of the art of the past. Does an average viewer

really grasp the essence of a medieval retabulum? After all, to fully comprehend their meaning, one must have a good knowledge of the Bible, feel at ease with the issues of biblical exegesis, have a pretty good notion of the form of medieval piety, not to mention theology. Contrary to common opinion, medieval art is not a comic book for the illiterate. Neither is it true that apparently it is the contemporary art that does not require technical skill. Few Poles consider the fact that in the centuries past there were thousands of artists who produced works of mediocre artistic and intellectual value. As they are not often displayed in museums, they easily fall into oblivion. The arguments of opponents of contemporary art are simply often ill-founded. This is not to say, however, that we should ignore them. Is the art which we exhibit, support, and promote truly innovative? I will try to answer the question on the basis of the experience of the Arsenal Gallery in Bialystok². The institution has been functioning for a good forty four years but it wasn't until 1989, the year of the social and political breakthrough, that the gallery has really begun its many activities³. With the opening of state borders and the economic changes and, in particular, after a few years of intense work, the gallery has become an important center, not only presenting new developments in Polish art, but also inspiring them; a center which has also been able to successfully launch an interesting and fruitful international cooperation⁴. It is also important that Arsenal Gallery is in the possession of one of the most important Polish collections of post-1989 art, namely 'Kolekcja II'⁵.

The period immediately before the breakthrough of 1989 was a difficult time for Polish culture. It was not good for Arsenal either, which – typically for official institutions of

such type – was undergoing a state of regress. The art presented in Białystok then was simply weak, secondary, often on the verge of kitsch. Arsenal's new program, proposed immediately after the fall of communism, seemed radically avant-garde, almost overly cotemporary⁶.

Hence Białystok became a laboratory of a sort in experimenting with getting the post-socialist society used to most contemporary art.

The beginnings of video works, installations, and performances in Białystok were difficult. Until the mid 1990's the reception of new art in the city was modest, and the press almost equally disinterested. From the beginning, however, there were systematic efforts made to explain the new phenomena in art, with educational activities running in parallel – meetings, lectures, press conferences, and exhibitions. The growing importance and reputation of Arsenal was equally systematically stressed, as whilst in Białystok itself the gallery was perceived as something redundant and controversial, the other Polish cities of greater cultural traditions soon noticed the systematic efforts of promoting artists of the middle and youngest generations. It wasn't until approximately 1997 that the gallery's truly own and friendly audience came into being. From the very beginning, the profile of Arsenal Gallery was based on the assumption of presenting the inhabitants of the city and region with the most interesting developments in Polish art and, as far as possible, with foreign art. This was also the main aim of 'Kolekcja II', for many years shown both in the country and abroad, which is locally said to be a clear asset of this tourist region and its capital city with aspirations to become an important university and culture center. The systematic efforts of the gallery led to a situation in which the art presented

at the Arsenal has become an important point of reference in the local discussions on contemporariness. The exhibitions are no longer ignored by the local media; media not only review but often promote the endeavors of the gallery – something quite unthinkable in the early 1990's. The rising interest in the art presented at Arsenal is further proven by the ever increasing numbers of viewers frequenting the exhibitions, as well as the rising need for different types of workshops or lectures addressed to different communities and age groups.

Arsenal has made it possible for the culturally aware inhabitants of the city to see just how diverse contemporary art is and how valuable it can be. The exhibitions, projects, and events taking place at the gallery show that contemporary artists are innovative, and that they are capable of presenting their own cohesive and creative visions of reality, drawing on the existing attitudes and ideas. Their art is often a solid and uncompromising analysis of the here and now, and an important voice in the discussion about the past which conditions both the present and the future. It is also an expressive presentation of the cultural, emotional, and intellectual state of the society. As such, this art creates a space and atmosphere which is appropriate for further creative debates. The artists promoted by Arsenal are also authors of works which are very diverse in formal terms. The means of expression they use are virtually unlimited.

If Arsenal has been so successful, then what is the problem? Well, first of all is the fact that those who come to the gallery and are open to contemporary art sometimes have a problem with recognizing it. One of the exhibitions organized at Arsenal in 2007 was entitled 'Hmm...'⁷ The curators resorted to a simple but

very educational idea – they mixed the unsigned works of a number of contemporary artists – Polish and foreign – with incidental items, “objects found”⁸. Installations, video works, paintings, or photographs were placed side by side with a can of meat, a dog’s tombstone, a stuffed pheasant, pieces of cut nails in a showcase, or a poor quality digital film showing elderly people having fun in a water park. Visitors to the gallery were given a questionnaire at the entrance and asked to indicate those objects which required intellectual effort⁹. The results of the questionnaire were somewhat peculiar: it turns out that most viewers could not tell contemporary art apart from regular objects. What’s more – some of the objects were seen as more intellectually challenging than the works of artists. The exhibition revealed the deep conviction of much of the society that anything can be contemporary art and that there is no framework of art, that art becomes blurred in the abundance of formal innovations.

Indeed, what makes contemporary art different from the art of the past is the extraordinary innovativeness. When thinking of the art of Renaissance we usually think of sculpture or painting, not as much about drawings or print. However, when thinking about contemporary art, we are not really able to delineate any framework for it. As a matter of fact we are dealing with an abundance of genres, avalanche of innovation. Is this bad? Those who are used to the traditional vision of art and are not at ease with modernity will say that yes – that the lack of limits and excessive innovativeness simply kills art, as no clear criteria of its assessment are available. But contemporary art, with all its openness, freedom, and specific eclecticism is simply the most democratic of all arts. It offers the widest possible spectrum of possibilities or creative expression,

giving the viewers a feeling of coming close to artistic matter where innovation – an indispensable condition of any development – is of fundamental importance.

It is difficult to say whether the works of art created in present times will be referred to as masterpieces, as is the case of the works of the past. It is possible that no masterpieces are created now. We could even go further and say that contemporary art is becoming blurred, losing its cohesion, perhaps it is even coming to an end. What are we promoting here that is beyond any doubt? We cannot say that we are promoting great art, we cannot even say that what we promote is at least decent art, as this is for time and future generations to verify. What we can be certain of, however, is that we are promoting an important idea: constantly striving for the biggest and broadest social creativity, both among those who are artists, as well as those who want to be in touch with art as viewers. We support innovativeness which can become so big that it can blow up the framework in which we function. Let us just hope that it does not happen in vain.

(translated by Ewa Kanigowska-Gedroyc)

¹ Several Polish films serve as evidence of just how deeply rooted such opinion are. One of the most popular Polish comedies – ‘Nie lubie poniedziałku’ / I Don’t Like Mondays directed by Tadeusz Chmielewski (screenplay: Tadeusz Chmielewski; camera: Mieczysław Jahoda; music: Jerzy Matuszkiewicz; premiere: 27 August 1971) – we see a scene where farmer who arrived in Warsaw with a tractor part has to run away from a taxi driver and hides in a gallery holding a competition for contemporary artists,

entitled 'We 70'. Critics, ridiculous and spoiled, see the tractor part as the best piece on display.

² www.galeria-arsenal.pl

³ See: K. Kopania, 'Arsenał sztuki. Galeria Arsenał w Białymstoku i jej 'Kolekcja II'', Białystok 2006 [with a chronology of exhibitions, bibliography, and a list of Arsenal's publications; part of the book In English]. See also: J. Truszkowski, 'Arsenał sztuki w Białymstoku', 'Exit. Nowa Sztuka w Polsce', 2, 1998, pp. 1710-1713; M. Wasilewski, 'Galeria promieniująca energia', 'Czas Kultury', 5-6, 1994, pp. 55-59; idem, 'Nie tylko wystawy...', 'Exit. Nowa Sztuka w Polsce', 1, 2001, pp. 2394-2397.

⁴ See exhibition catalogues, e.g.: 'Here & Now', Białystok 2001; 'Hybrid Dwellings', Białystok 2001; 'Four Roses', Białystok 2004; 'Immersion', Center for Contemporary Art at NaUKMA, Kyiv 2004; 'Breakthrough. Perspectives on art from the ten new EU member states', Grote Kerk, Den Haag 2004; 'Communities. Young Art of Ukraine', Białystok 2007; 'Alexandre Perigot. Pipedream', Museu Coleção Berardo, Fundação de Arte Moderna e Contemporânea – Coleção Berardo, Lisboa 2008, pp. 156-159, 212; 'Good Night and Bad Luck. Art and Fear in Poland and Israel', Białystok 2009. See also: C. Francblin, 'Nouvelles perspectives polonaises', 'Art Press', 345, Mai 2008, pp. 85-86; O. D. Oditá, 'The Artists of Here & Now Talk About Painting and Poland', 'NY Arts', July/August 2001, pp. 10-11; M. Ohnemus, 'Get out! An Exhibition on the Subject of Going Away', 'Springerin', 1, 2002, pp. 57-58; M. Wasilewski, 'Hybrid Dwellings', 'Springerin', 2, 2001, pp. 66-67; idem, 'Four Roses', 'Springerin', No 4, 2004, pp. 64-65.

⁵ From 2005 with New works added as a result of the functioning Podlaskie Association for the Encouragement

of Art (Podlaskie Towarzystwo Zachęty Sztuk Pięknych - www.zachetapodlaska.org.pl. About 'Kolekcja II' see also: G. Amsellem, 'À quoi jouent les Polonais?', in: 'Jeux interdits', Institut Polonais, Paris, Paris 2006; É. 'Gábor, Az ido jelei', 'Ujmuvész', 2, 2008, pp. 6-10; K. Kopania, '(Self)observations of the B Territories', in: 'Energy Class': B, Ormeau Baths Gallery, Belfast, May 2009, pp. 2-8; K. Kopania, op. cit., pp. 48-61 [in English]; M. Szewczyk, 'The 'Signs of the Times' Program on the Example of the Podlaskie Society for the Encouragement of Fine Arts', in: D. Monkiewicz (ed.), 'Art Criticism and the Market', Warsaw 2008, pp. 96-98.

⁶ Changes in the program were connected with Monika Szewczyk taking over the position of the gallery's director.

⁷ 'Hmm... A Problem Exhibition', Arsenal Gallery, Białystok, 13 IV – 13 V 2007; curators: Anna Łazar, Karol Sienkiewicz; artists: Rahim Blak, Arturas Bumšteinas, Oskar Dawicki, Michał Dudek, Iwona Gołębiewska, Rafał Jakubowicz, Szymon Kobylarz, Konrad Kuzyszyn, Yifat Laist, Marcin Nowicki, Anna Orlikowska, Janek Simon, Tel_1_Vision, Twozywo, Jonas Zagorskas.

⁸ In the introduction to the catalogue we read: "The 'Hmm...' exhibition featured thirty objects, paintings, films, and installations. Some were the works of artists we know (personally), and others came from the collection of the Arsenal Gallery. Also included were 'found objects'. The majority of the artists responded to questions concerning their work and their expectations of viewers. Some of the responses have been put up on the gallery walls. The works did not bear the names of the authors or titles, but were merely numbered. We asked people visiting the exhibition to complete a questionnaire in order to get their

opinions about specific works"; A. Łazar, K. Sienkiewicz (ed.), 'Hmm... A Problem Exhibition', Białystok 2007, p. 3 (English translation: Beata Szczypinska).

⁹ The questionnaire was preceded with the following request: "Dear Sir/Madam, The objects, paintings and films on display have been stripped of their primary points of reference, namely the name of the artists and the title of the work. Putting aside the question of what is art and is not art, we would like to ask you which of the works address relevant problems and encourage intellectual engagement, and which do not. We would like you to share your reflections on paper. There is no single, proper answer – meaning is born between the artist and the audience"; ibidem, p. 4.

(translation by Beata Szczypinska)

ADRIEN TÖRÖK

Newest developments in presentations of video and media art in Hungary.

Hungary is very centralized culturally, economically and politically. Because of this reason I have to talk about its center, about Budapest, the capital.

To begin with, a little history:

There was no dedicated space for video or media art, nor for a collection – although Hungarian experimental film and video has a strong tradition by 'Béla Balázs Studio' (a production studio for documentary, experimental and video art), Gábor Bódy or Gusztáv Hámos – some of the most

renowned artists of the field. The Studio (www.bbsarchiv.hu) doesn't exist anymore, only as an archive hosted by Kunsthalle, which has serious financial problems.

For media art the 'C3 Foundation' (www.c3.hu) played a seminal role. C3 organizes big thematic media art exhibitions besides showing contemporary works, always with an emphasis on historical, media archeological aspects and with a series of big events: conferences, catalogues. The C3 Video Archive is unique in Hungary, initiated in 1997. The purpose remains to collect, preserve and archive Hungarian video art and to offer the interested audience an all-around access to content. Works produced from the beginning of the 1970's until today, and in addition, international material can also be accessed as part of the collection.

'GAMA' (www.gama-gateway.eu) as part of C+ is a project co-founded by the eContentplus programme of the European Commission to create a central portal for accessing archives of media art across Europe. The team has 8 archives, 8 universities, 1 public research institute and 2 commercial organizations, including archives like: Argos (BE), Ars Electronica (AT), C3 (HU), Filmform (SE), Heure Exquise! (FR), Les Instants Video (FR), Montevideo (NL), SCCS-Ljubljana (SI).

As I mentioned before media and video art wasn't supported, so all those thematic media art exhibitions were presented in a traditional way.

For the moment in Hungary there are three important spaces dedicated exclusively to media and video art:

'Pixel Gallery' (www.millenaris.hu/object.607b18a5-8d3d-412c-af75-f279869d5da3.ivy) takes part of a big educational and cultural complex called: Millenáris. It has a very special exhibition space, a spiral architecture

(called the pocket Guggenheim) with 20 synchronized flat screens. Adviser of the first shows was Tamás Waliczky, Peter Callas, Ulrike Rosenbach.

'Videospace' (www.videospace.c3.hu) is an artist run gallery exclusive to and specialized in video art. The gallery opened in 2007 and is directed by the media artist: Eike. It has a small space used in an excellent way.

'Crosstalk' Video Art Festival (www.crosstalk.hu) is the only festival for video and media art. It has two-fold activities:

- yearly video 'Festival' since 2008 in a very special venue
- monthly, regular series called 'Video presentations', with guests, national and international video-media artists, curators for the education of the local art scene and the support of video and media art.

DEJAN SLUGA

Photonic changes in the field of art photography in the region of Southeast Europe.

From its invention, photography has been foremost associated with the authenticity of its representation. However; after the introduction of new technologies, the basic character of photography has been increasingly questioned. At the same time new creative approaches have been developed, with wider potentials and possibilities for expression. Particularly the last decade has been a very fruitful era for the photographic medium that has been gaining ground among other established art practices since the early 90's. Amidst the contemporary art, photography has now established itself as the independent art medium

and as a tool for presentation of various (multimedia) projects.

In addition to popularity of photography in general, special interest in contemporary art photography is growing also in the broader region of Southeast Europe. The evidence for this can be seen in an increased number of exhibitions, as well as number of artists whose creative endeavours explore the medium. The prevalent presence of older photographers, dedicated to black-and-white and so-called "pure photography" has been in decline since the early 90's. Contemporary art photography, distinguished by its documentary dimension since WWII, underwent some changes during the 90's, which manifested themselves in the advent of more conceptualistic projects. During this period, modernism has been replaced by another paradigm and a shift to "new documentary photography" could be perceived. The artists overcame the paradigm of "decisive moment" by various aesthetic, formal and iconographic novelties. With some delay, also in SE Europe photography continues to become increasingly relevant as a completely independent artistic medium, and it is evermore used as a tool within the contemporary art field.

On the other side, the art market and the public infrastructure don't follow these tendencies. Whilst the art market for established traditional as well as contemporary art seems to develop slowly or even well in some countries of the mentioned region, the contemporary photography market continues to struggle against its weak tradition, the prejudices of conservative collectors and, in particular, its relatively poor engagement in international exchanges. Despite the increased interest in photography, there has been slow substantial progress in the institutional sphere. The existent public institutions and competent

authorities from the field of contemporary art are not sufficiently actively involved, ambitious or interested enough to present and promote quality contemporary photography achievements at home let alone participate in international projects. Thus far, the majority of the countries in the region haven't established specialised public institutions that would systematically underwrite the creation and presentation of contemporary photography, and accordingly become engaged internationally. The education area is also inadequately covered with just few specialized public institutions for photography. Private higher-education schools, where interested youth could study photography, are trying to improve this picture. The situation does not look any brighter in the field of publishing either. The established publishing houses very rarely decide on publishing photographic monographs due to the fact that they do not seem to be very profitable. The inadequacies and setbacks from the more developed regions thus encourage other, especially non-institutional forms of associations.

As an exemption from the rule we have to mention the situation in Slovenia where at least in the field of presentation things seem to look a bit brighter than in other countries in the region. In the last couple of years, the two already established non-profit photo venues (Mala galerija in Cankarjev Dom in Ljubljana and Stolp Gallery in Maribor) have been joined by two new galleries in Ljubljana (Fotografija Gallery and Photon Gallery) and the gallery with an occasional photographic program in Novo Mesto (ATP Gallery). However, for the most active role which it plays in presenting and promoting the artists and projects from the Central and especially Southeast Europe in the field of contemporary art photography, we

have to give a special mention to Photon Association. Beside the gallery with the mentioned program focus, Photon Association has also launched Photonic Moments/ Month of Photography festival – an annual becoming biennial event – as a platform for organizations, artists and curators. With the projects like Photonic Moments and with continual work and activities we finally hope to increase the possibilities for artists from these regions in the international contemporary art field.

FABRIZIO GIRALDI

Photocrisis and a new market for photojournalism.

Crisis is a transitory phenomenon, both favourable and unfavourable, leading to reflection and new ideas.

1. Web related crises

1.1. Quantity

In the early nineties the web was a novelty which was underestimated by newspapers and magazines, only a few people used e-mail and mobile-phones were still rare. Nowadays the complete freedom in circulating images has led to a lack of choice, as people are continuously bombarded by all type of images, in an environment of 'visual and informative pollution'. In fact, photography isn't only a question of shutter speed and lens aperture, but also consists in synthesis and composition. Synthesis is the ability to gather many pieces of information in a single image. Composition is what coordinates the interpretation of the image. The widespread use of today's photography

is an obvious consequence of the great availability of different machines that enable people to capture an image. The offer differs in prices and technology, ranging from mobile phones to compact and reflex digital cameras.

1.2. Speed

Thanks to the introduction of digital cards (not only on negative and positive film) the image is managed autonomously and quickly distributed on line through 'photo-sharing' (flickr.com), social network, blog, forum.

The process is immediate:

I shoot a picture,
visualize it on the display,
decide if it is good,
download it on the computer,
put it on the net.

1.3. Timing

The widespread availability of digital cameras and complete freedom in sharing images, e-mail, msn or twitpic has created the category of 'citizen photojournalist': anyone who is a witness of an event or scoop can quickly become a photographer. A good example is Janis Krums, who after the emergency landing in the Hudson river of US airways flight 1546 in January 2009, took a picture of the rescue on her mobile phone and put the image online before the media could do it.

1.4. Repetitiveness

In the culture of mass photo-sharing quality is overlooked whilst loads of shots are loaded on internet. This process favours quantity and the speed at which images and news are shared rather than allow people to develop their personal opinion on an event. A crucial part of quality reportage is editing, and therefore choosing the right images to summarize a piece of news.

2. Crises of photography on newspapers and magazines

2.1. The trend

The availability of free online images reduces the desire to reading newspapers and magazines. Michael Hirchorn, a US journalist, wrote on Atlantic, that the main newspapers such as the New York Times, Washington Post and Wall Street Journal will lead the transition from paper to web information, breaking into the digital future of the information market. The trend of the current reportage photography is to create a multimedia work: generally a slideshow supported by a series of on-location recordings and accompanied by a narrator's voice. Modern reportage favours videos and likes photography and its impact at the same time. The question remains on the sustainability of costs and sales methods of such products.

2.2. Luxury

Seth Godin, a marketing expert, says that if people are really interested in quality reportage they will be prepared to pay for it and will be happy to avoid a lot of useless news. Mark Porter, the former artistic director of Wired, underlines that magazines will remain desirable as long as the tactile experiences they offer (and digital media don't) will be of high standard. The quality of the printing, paper and images can in fact create 'paper jewels'.

3. Truthfulness

3.1. Credibility

The big question mark about after-image, also described as post production, is not just about digital photography. In the time of analogical photography, the after-image was done in the dark room following precise instructions. Examples of this are the group picture of state leaders done at the beginning of the 20th century. Nowadays people

know that not everything they see has really happened.

3.2. Digital truth

Digital pictures can be in jpg, tif and raw format; the raw is also called 'digital negative' and is the authentic shot an un-modifiable file characterized by metadata, gps information, date and time, lens and camera type, shutter speed, lens aperture and the photographer's copyright. In this perspective digital photography guarantees truth to the image and it is the responsibility of the media to ask for the raw format as a proof of authenticity.

4. Conclusion

Crisis is a transitory phenomenon, favourable and unfavourable, it is a reflection and a time for changes. Is it really an exiting time? Is the photographer's role still important today? In my opinion, more than ever, I also believe that is a difference between a good photographer and someone who enjoys taking pictures. Talented professionals have to give their best to distinguish themselves and survive on the market. It is also true that in the great amount of images that are available today it is somehow easier to detect the good quality ones.

MARIA VASSILEVA

Creativity and innovations (according to circumstances).

Improvisation based on Nedko Solakov's one-man show in the Sofia City Art Gallery, May-June 2009 (in the frames of the European Year of Creativity and Innovation).

On 22.05.2009 in the Bulgarian church "San Vincenzo e

Anastasio" in Rome a model of a steel egg, made thanks to a special laser technology, was officially presented in the presence of the Bulgarian president. In real life it is about 3 m in height. The object resembles the famous Faberge eggs, but for the creation of this one, an innovative new technology was used. Even more – the egg is kinetic – from time to time its two parts will separate from each other and one can hear a famous Bulgarian folk song and smell the aroma of the famous Bulgarian rose oil.

The idea of the authors is for this "creature" to be installed in front of the building of the European Parliament in Brussels and to replace David Cherny's installation 'Entropa'.

In 'Entropa' Bulgaria was presented as a Turkish toilet (or that was the way how some politicians read the image/message). The work produced a big scandal in the country, especially after some politicians requested the Bulgarian part to be covered with black fabric (which was done).

Speaking of European Parliament, I can't miss the latest news coming from there. Bulgarian Euro-commissioner Meglena Kuneva announced on May 18, 2009 at an official press-conference, the opening of the long awaited Museum of Contemporary Art in Sofia.

In the architect's proposal for the future Museum of Contemporary Art in Sofia (SAMSI) there is a huge easel in front of the building. It will be a 30 m. tall steel construction and again innovative practices will be involved. On the "canvas" images from the collection (which does not exist) will change in a gigantic slide show. For that purpose sophisticated and innovative new technologies will be used. It is not quite clear why this symbol of modernity will be used as a sign of the contemporary art museum.

At the same press-conference I took the opportunity to

ask the vice-minister of culture Mr. Ivan Tokadjiev why Bulgaria doesn't participate in the Venice Biennial again. The answer was that they are still working on it. The press-conference took place on May 18 this year... (the opening of the biennial was on June 6th)

Nedko Solakov was the one who predicted the sad situation concerning our national participations in Venice. In 1999 he (together with the curator Iara Boubnova) presented a simple post card, named 'Announcement', printed on 15,000 postcards and 200 T-shirts. One can read on it the following message: "Very important announcement. After 30 year of absence from the officially participating countries of the Venice Biennale, the Republic of Bulgaria is proud to announce that it is prepared to properly participate in the next Venice Biennale in the year 2001". That never happened.

With one exception – in 2007 thanks to the generosity of UNESCO we had our participation in the beautiful yard of Palazzo Zorzi. But unfortunately this is more an accident than a trend.

At the same time Nedko Solakov participated in the international exhibition with his work 'Discussion – Property' and even won The Honorable Mention diploma for it.

Later on '99 fears' and 'Top Secret' by Nedko Solakov can be seen in Documenta 12 as the first participation of a Bulgarian artist ever (not counting Christo).

Solakov has quite a successful international career and huge shows all over the world. Even one mid-career retrospective on 4000 sq. m. showed in Luxemburg, Malmo and Linz.

Many of his art works are owned by big museums and private collectors.

Unfortunately his last big show in Bulgaria was in 1988. That is why we decided with the other curator Iara Boubnova to organize a 30 years survey – no matter how many efforts that will cost.

It cost a lot – I even had my appendicitis cut off 4 days before the opening of the exhibition on May 7.

And also we had to be very creative and innovative making a retrospective show out of nothing.

As we didn't have almost any new installations by the artist and the budget was too low to loan some, we had to improvise – reconstructing the whole very active carrier (career?) with reproductions of different size and type, video documentations and some remains that we found in Nedko's studio. That way we built a mountain of art traces in the middle of the exhibition space. At first glance the visitor was shocked but the total installation had its own very strict logic and chronological path to follow.

One of the most famous pieces by Nedko Solakov 'A Life – Black & White' in which two persons are constantly painting the walls in black and white and following each other so the space is never black or white, became a visual and metaphorical frame of the show.

At the entrance we put huge prints of Nedko Solakov's biography and bibliography. He added big quotation marks made out of stuffed black velvet. When one enters the show he/she can accept them in connection with the artist himself. When one leaves the space he/she can read them as quotation marks of the whole reality outside.

BRANKO FRANCESCHI

Against the grain.

The varieties of issues have been covered during the years of the Continental Breakfast conferences assessing current phenomena marking the visual art discourse. Lately we all have been concerned by the influence of the art market on the contemporary art production and presentation, but since accepting it for the inevitability that it is, the growing concern shifted towards the development and presence of marketing and entertainment industries as the most powerful influences on the globally shared visual world. Not only that they suck out the creative talent by picking it right out from the art school benches, they prove capable of internalizing and utilizing any new formal ideas and concepts coming out of the visual art's field and making it many times larger in size, production possibilities, as well as accessibility to the general audience, something the arts alone can never achieve, thus becoming in the process irresistible to the up and coming creative minds. Of course, being concerned only with the creation of needs and desires, i.e. consumerism, the content of these fabulous simulacra, though sometimes may appear revolutionary in form and aesthetics, promotes, at its best, conservative social and political values, stereotypes and beautified images of petrified social structure. In most cases, it can get even worse, a lot worse.

For comparison, we may reflect that even worse is when the contemporary art world adopts the colossal emptiness of the form-no-content, or hidden agenda's mannerisms of the marketing strategists.

Are we condemned to the reality of the contemporary art

represented by the likes of spectacular, MTV promoted extravaganza of Olafur Eliasson's 2008 New York City's Waterfalls Project with \$ 6 million + budget – as an enraged taxi driver informed me? The promotion party included the real-time broadcast of the congregation of the hippest and smartest visual art's professionals, many of them on their own preoccupied with the agenda of social activism. One may dwell upon if the waterfalls were – though of an enormous size – in fact dwarfed by the locations themselves, photographed as many times as the venetian Lancia Delta advertisement campaign that has stupidly, but effectively, turned the entire canal under the notorious Ponte dei Sospiri into the vision of heavens in which the architecture of the bridge was the least convincing element? I wonder what would have had to say about this heavenly composition all individuals who passed over the bridge, throughout the history of Serenissima, toward the long in coming, but certain and unpleasant death? Certainly that thought didn't concern any of happy tourists using it as ideal backdrop for souvenir memory without the reference to either the history of location or the instance of the history of ambiental art that made it conceptually possible.

The lingering question is there any way the culture – an integrated pattern of human knowledge, belief, and behavior that depends upon the capacity for symbolic thought and social learning – can avoid being constantly swallowed by strategies for the ever growing appetites of the consumer society?

As the intention of this text is not desperation, but possible positive answers to our dilemma, as well as ways of outsmarting consumerism trap, I would like to draw your attention to a few projects by Andreja Kulunčič. Andreja

is Zagreb based multimedia artist, born in 1968, whose CV includes, among others, the 8th International Istanbul Biennial, Documenta 11, and the 2003 Whitney Biennial. Andreja made her name through complex multimedia, interactive and interdisciplinary projects involving teams of contributors and massive global audiences, focusing on the issues such as genetic engineering, distributive justice, teenage pregnancy, etc. To distinguish her from the rest of the artists pursuing similar interests, I would just say that her most amazing capacity is to detect, articulate, and address the burning, context specific issues usually hidden, invisible, and therefore nonexistent to a local community. Many of the art commissioners, as for example the organizers of the 2004 Liverpool Biennial, found themselves in troubled waters and close to the censoring of the art work when unexpectedly confronted with sheer reality and heated responses to her projects. The simple truth is that Andreja doesn't make projects for the sake of activism itself, or to fulfill the current need for a certain type of artwork – her projects always hit at the heart of the matter.

I will focus on three projects she executed in three different societies, sharing the same tactics of exploiting the dissemination means and visual language of marketing strategy to address problems and disperse information to the uncaring and unconcerned citizens with the aim of making them reflect on the realities of their social structure, hierarchy, and prejudices. Rather against the grain of your usual marketing goals, indeed.

The first one entitled 'NAMA: 1908 employees, 15 department stores' commissioned for the 152nd Anniversary of the Communist Manifesto exhibition by WHW curatorial cooperative in 2000, applied the strategy

of poster advertising intruding directly in the urban spaces at its most frequented points: the public transportation stops. NAMA, once the largest Croatian department store chain, was about to go bankrupt leaving all the employees, predominantly female workers, jobless, due to the crime ridden and poorly managed transition to the market economy. It was one of the most painful of many similar situations in the postwar Croatia. The actual marketing company was hired to beautify and photograph the soon-to-be unemployed saleswomen. The posters of such accidental models, symbolizing individual and collective tragedies of the unapt and corrupt economic and political system, adorned streets of Zagreb without any further word of explanation. The sheer vagueness of the message created media frenzy sparking debates and brought the striking employees to the center of public attention. The crisis was resolved soon thereafter, and NAMA department store chain functions today successfully.

My favorite work is the kinkish 2005 'Austrians Only' that involved newspaper ads, posters and direct mail items for the Festival of Regions in Upper Austria, a well-to-do heartland of Austria. The project focuses on the usual prejudice of migrants as the second class citizens. The labor conditions and requirements usually considered sufficient for them were here exclusively and discriminately offered to Austrian citizens only. Project's design by Dejan Dragosavac Ruta, mimicking late '50s and early '60s advertisement aesthetics, gave the humorous and slightly surreal edge. The idea was to inspire local citizens to identify with migrants by placing themselves in the situation they would consider unacceptable for selves, but consider it adequate for the foreign work force.

'Bosnians Out or Workers without Frontiers' Andreja

Kulunčić did through the collaboration of Osman Pezić, Said Mujić and Ibrahim Ćurić, bosnian construction workers in Ljubljana, Slovenija. Project was realized by Moderna galerija of Ljubljana in 2008 for the Museum in the Street project. The entire project was focused on survival strategies, migrants, workers' hostel, prisons, and similar situations on the margins of society. Andreja has chosen to work with construction workers who were at the time working on the reconstruction of the Moderna galerija building. The concept was to involve persons actively shaping the new face of the museum and to open the channel of communication that would enable workers to speak out on their living, working, and personal conditions. The light boxes brought to the fore all stereotypes of Bosnians in Ljubljana while simultaneously publicly exposing the truth on their living in Slovenian capital. The posters were ordered removed by the City authorities, but after the public protest by Moderna galerija were returned to their posts. Artist and construction workers signed an equal terms contract with the museum regarding the work undertaken for this commission. As always, a glint of hope remains.

SECOND SESSION



BREDA KOLAR SLUGA

When museum meets innovation.

I shall present a few ideas regarding the spaces that are nowadays considered suitable and authorized for reception and promotion of creative artistic innovation.

I have based my reflection on the issue of the museum since that is also the status of the Umetnostna galerija Maribor / Maribor Art Gallery, the institution where I work. When trying to answer the question whether a museum today can be a promoter of creative activities, I find myself in a slightly awkward position as today there are not many representatives of museums here. And it would make sense to ask ourselves why that is the case. Don't many interesting relevant experiences come from this direction? Let me reply with a practical case: UGM is located in a former urban palace in the very centre of the town of Maribor. The most representative space of the former palace is the so-called Knights' Hall with an elaborately painted ceiling. The main scenes are in line with the official programme scheme of the 19th century historical painting, which glorified the power and importance of the monarchs. The author of the fresco Baruzzuti carried out the programme by portraying battles from the times of Turkish invasions in Europe. Furthermore, this hall is the biggest and highest exhibition area of the gallery, and as such has always hosted exhibitions of the largest and most representative works of art. This logical habit has continued by invitations to individual artists who have been asked to create installations specifically for the Knights' Hall. So far the artists have reacted to the existing fresco in very different ways; as a starting point some

have used a detail of the fresco, while others worked with colour symbolism... On the other hand, Jasmina Cibic, the artist whose life is divided between Slovenia and London, encouraged reflection on the space and achieved a shift between the virtual and realistic by a complex spatial installation, similar to her previous works.

Not long before this exhibition, she prepared a similar project in the frame of the 'Muzej na cesti/Museum on the Road' project, led by the Moderna galerija/Modern Art Gallery in Ljubljana, whereby she originally interpreted and twisted the established perception in the public space. Previously, she performed an artistic act with a similar starting point as the one in the Knights' Hall of the UGM. The act was part of the opening process marking the expansion of the main Ljubljana airport (Jože Plečnik's airport). It is almost unbelievable that the artist managed to persuade the management of the airport to allow her to carry out the project in such a sensitive organism and system as that of an airport. The project becomes all the more amazing when we consider that a real arrivals and departures board was used. Instead of the actual places of destination or arrival, for a few minutes the passengers saw the names of imaginary cities, lands, states from the Dictionary of Imaginary Places (collected from the history of literature by Alberto Miguel and Gianni Guadalupi). Jasmina Cibic understands the role of the viewer very well, but often she places the viewer as the passer-by in a transitory place. Her works of art are complex, communicative and humorous. Often she shares her role with co-creators, such as a police sketcher, where the created space becomes a poetic reconstruction of a transitory space/waiting room/airport terminal, where myths are expropriated and experience impossible – a space of airplane magazines,

tourist brochures and advertisements where there is only one thing left to the passenger: to wait for the promised destination.

Jasmina Cibic's projects are hard to pin down and open more questions than offer answers. By incorporating her work into different spaces, a unique opportunity is offered to us – to consider the differences between them. How much does a project carried out at the airport and most of related projects affect reality and does it affect the reality in a different way when exhibited in a gallery? Did the public even notice the act? Is it possible that the act was more important to the artist and her experience than to the public? What does spatial construction inside the gallery bring?

Today it is not my intention to suggest answers to question on concrete works of art of Jasmina Cibic; instead, I would like to conclude at the point in which her works have also brought me. Gestalt field-theory begins with a whole. It does not refer to 'things' which make contact with other 'things'; its meaning is rather in the sense that 'contact is the simplest and first reality'. The theory further emphasises that it involves a processual approach, whereby the elements with which the world is constructed are in movement (what mathematicians would define as 'vector quantities'). If I apply this reflection to the field of art, relations are our first and simplest reality and at the same time an attempt of searching for completeness. Art has achieved its expansion in all the areas where – besides visual elements – it enters into the field of joining media, and even wider, everywhere the field of art is connected with other fields, which erased the borders between various disciplines. As a consequence new issues, social and political, have emerged, so has the distinction between

ethics and aesthetics as well as searching for the spaces which are closer to the areas covered by these issues. Nevertheless, we should not digress from the starting point, to simplify – looking for completeness which needs to be – ever since our first experience of reality – a contact – also upgraded at least with the process of self-awareness of our own position and purpose of establishing the relation(ship). In order to create it, each and every artist has to strive to understand how his/her work is positioned in the wider context of the public domain, regardless of where it is located. Therefore we are not talking about the difference between where art is taking place/happening, but rather between how artists enter the field of relations and how they shape their own processes of co-creation. Therefore, every work must reflect on where it speaks from, and in this sense it is necessary that it is aware of itself. This does not mean that every work should redefine its context, but every artist should invent a methodology which would enable him/her to find his/her own dialectics of art creation.

What role can space have in this connection? We should be aware of strict limitations of art which is positioned into an institution; regardless of its size the space is always privileged and rare. Nevertheless, to presume that by merely moving our practice from a gallery onto a street we would attract interest of a new audience or public is similarly patronising and naive. If art is not aware of the relations, it can remain 'salon art', equally closed although it is not surrounded by walls of institutions or an exhibition space.

The Knights' Hall is seen as only one of the possible points of identification which establishes relationships by means of insight into the field of history and meanings of a specific

space. There are countless identification points and every time they are somewhere else, they are found where a possibility of verification is likely to happen. Therefore, there is no single definitive reply to the question of what is the real art space or what is the real museum space today. Museums, as any institution or an individual, must focus on how they enter the field of relations and how they shape their own processes of co-creation, as only they can open up their walls and doors. The more space art covers the better it shapes its own varied ecosystem. The more spaces a museum connects, ranging from physical, interpretative and symbolic, the better it understands processuality of relationships and easily creates possibilities for new verifications.

NATAŠA IVANČEVIĆ

**Pedro Meyer's retrospective exhibition 'Heresies'.
Bringing to life a revolutionary model of museum
presentation of photography.**

Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art of Rijeka, among 100 museums in the world, was invited in 2006 to participate in an international project – a retrospective exhibition of four decades' work of one of the world's most innovative photographers, Pedro Meyer.

In October 2008, it was simultaneously opened in 64 museums around the world as an attempt to bring a revolutionary model of museum presentation of photography to life.

Rijeka Museum was the only one in Croatia and in the entire region which had the opportunity to present this outstanding exhibition.

The Mexican photographer Pedro Meyer is known for his captivating and provocative photographs, but also for his pioneering work in digital technology. Meyer's photography consistently tests the borders of truth, fiction, and reality. With the development of digital photography in early nineties, Meyer evolved from a documentary photographer of the so-called "real photography" into a digital "documentarist" who often combines photographic elements from different periods and spaces in order to achieve a different or a 'higher' truth. Meyer has often expressed the opinion that all photographs – digitally manipulated or not – are equally 'true' and 'untrue'. This has been called heretic among orthodox documentary photographers, hence the title 'Heresies'. Meyer's personal innovations in the field of digital photography include the creation of the first CD ROM that combined sound and visuals (1991), the first digital prints ever made, and the creation of the famous online photographic forum www.zonezero.com in 1994. It has been one of the most frequented web pages on the Internet. In its online galleries, ZoneZero today hosts more than a thousand renowned international photographers, and the page is visited by more than 500,000 visitors a month and more than 5,5 million a year.

With 'Heresies', Meyer has directed his visionary look at the concept of the museum exhibitions of photography, questioning how they look today and how they can be remodelled for the future. In the era of financial restrictions and the redefinition of the museum's basic role, Meyer's new and heretic paradigm of a photographic exhibition

included:

- creative collaboration of curators and artists;
- global networking of 64 museums participating in the Heresies program;
- enhanced research and collection-building capacity for museums;
- educational programs for the iPod generation.

What is the innovative essence in the revolutionary model of the museum presentation of photography?

The characteristics of 'Heresies' set it apart from other photo projects that came before it. The aim of this project was to construct an immense retrospective involving the publication of his images, as well as more than 60 museums around the world that have joined in this global retrospective.

On media pyramid we can see all elements the 'Heresies' project included:

Pedro Meyer posted 300 selected images in a private section of the web site pedromeyer.com. Participating curators have chosen between 10 and 90 of these images to hang in print form for the duration of the 'Heresies' exhibition. The large-format archival-quality prints were delivered to the museums no less than five weeks prior to the opening. Each photo is labeled by a certificate which guarantees that the print of the current work of art has been supervised by the artist himself and carried out by the printer with inks that last 200 years. Participating museums have been charged a shipping and handling fee of \$ 995 USA. Any print selected for inclusion in the 'Heresies' exhibition became the property of the museum's permanent collection at the conclusion of the exhibit at no additional cost. As a curator of the Rijeka exhibition, I have chosen 90 black and white or color images from

different cycles, which are now part of the collection of photography. Additional prints, and prints delivered but not displayed as part of the exhibition should have been sold to the museum. Each of the printable images on the website has been linked to a one- to two-minute audio file containing the artist's comments about that particular image. Audio files could have been downloaded by the museum for use in audio guides or visitor provided iPods. 'Heresies' book was published one month prior to the opening. Museums purchased copies of the book from the publisher for sale at the museum.

Pedromeyer.com is a website that serves as a living collection of his works, and online portfolio. However, the database is the website's most important feature for it contains the entire body of Pedro Meyer's work. The objective of this database is to generate an online collection of images serving people in the field of research, communication, and knowledge. Furthermore it was an interactive site where participants and visitors could fully take part. In addition to the printable images, Meyer posted 23 "digital galleries" on the website. Each digital gallery contained between 12 and 80 of Meyer's photographs selected by a leading editor or curator. We presented in the exhibition five digital galleries in a continuous loop. All digital galleries posted on the website were available for viewing by visitors, which means that they could investigate through 1.500 images. Pedro Meyer and his staff have developed different educational programs which were available on the website. During the preparational period his main assistant Nadia Baram was sending newsletters with instructions and information necessary for successful preparation of the exhibition, to everybody included in the project. The museums' staff were invited to communicate between one

another, and to post all relevant data on the specially designed link on the website. Each museum was invited to download photos related to preparation and opening of the exhibition. Participating countries were: Brazil, Chile, Columbia, Ecuador, Mexico, Uruguay, Cuba, USA, Bangladesh, China, India, Pakistan, Singapore, Croatia, Italy, Slovakia, Spain, Australia.

Since the opening was all over the world during the first week of October, Meyer couldn't attend all openings. Instead of being present physically, he screened himself and welcomed his visitors virtually all over the world.

For my conclusion we can listen to Meyer's welcoming speech.

SANDRA KRIŽIĆ ROBAN

Forgetting Everyday Life, or Possibilities for a New Art History in Croatia.

Allow me to comment on the questions that were raised as the starting point for today's debate by basing my contribution largely on my personal experience.

I come from a setting that has gained recognition throughout the region for its achievements in contemporary art production, especially that of conceptual provenance. My colleagues and I were formed within a practice that was gradually, and sometimes even radically, breaking up with post-war modernisms. Mostly we were gaining knowledge of what was going on through the activity of curators at the Gallery of Contemporary Art (today's Museum of Contemporary Art – although still lacking its museum

building), who were transmitting to the public all that has meanwhile become a part of national art history, mostly according to their personal preferences and recognizing the specificities of the moment. Events that were taking place in various off-venues, such as the Extended Media Gallery in its prime (whereby I am referring to the 80s) or Podroom, the meeting place of conceptual artists, as well as the Multimedia Centre, Gallery of the Student Centre, and individual actions that were taking place in the street or in private apartments of the artists – all that had a crucial impact on the way we now understand art and the mediation of its content to the public, the students, and all those who are interested in it.

Within the given context of these colloquia I cannot take a different approach but that of an art historian, since I am aware of the historical context that has strongly influenced my interests. Nevertheless, I am trying to view my parallel engagement as an art critic and curator as objectively as possible, with respect to the acquired knowledge and the activities of my colleagues. An issue has been raised here about the criteria of knowledge that the curators are using in order to define what is going on, to evaluate all that is new and important, and should therefore be supported. It seems necessary to illuminate the sensitive nature of that which is currently achievable in that field in Zagreb and Croatia. I do not know to what extent you are acquainted with the long history of often traumatic events around the new building of the Museum of Contemporary Art in Zagreb, whose collections were last shown to the public in a gallery setting more than 20 years ago. That rupture was additionally aggravated by the fact that the collection of contemporary art preserved at the Modern Gallery in Zagreb was likewise stored and inaccessible to both the

experts and the general public from the early 90s until recently, which says a lot about the circumstances in which one had to acquire knowledge and the criteria that the present-day curators need in order to continue what has been started. As the editor-in-chief of art journal 'Život umjetnosti', I have recently arranged with several younger colleagues that they should edit an issue dedicated to the curating practices. It is owing to them that I have realized what amount of problems they have to face, problems that are a specific consequence of our marginal situation, in which curators are almost regularly self-trained.

Our socialist past, in which many among us were educated, belongs to the broader Central European setting, whose member countries have gone through experiences that were far more traumatic than ours. Nevertheless, we do have a lot in common: our marginal position, our wish to participate more actively in the history of European art, the fact that we are rewriting some of its sections by participating in the complex processes of transformation in order to fill the gaps produced during the post-war period. In Zagreb, there were places that we could call galleries according to any criterion, places that have given birth to radical art, yet no longer exist, more precisely – they no longer have the form that they used to have in the past. The present situation is rather lethargic, not only in Zagreb, but also in other Croatian cities, despite the initiatives launched by young people engaged in curating practices. Thus, the question raised here is not easy to answer. It has a lot to do with the absence of a central institution with collections through which young people could gain the initial knowledge, since this way each generation must start from the beginning; besides, we are facing the lack of a written history of contemporary

art, and we are mostly forced to search for information in exhibition catalogues, which are often inaccessible. The educational model has been unsatisfactory for quite a while regarding the new needs of knowledge, and we are lagging behind the international artistic establishment, whose member we have never really become. What should we do? How should we set our criteria in such an unenviable situation? Personally, the only thing that I consider possible in this position is to persevere in what we are doing – therefore, each issue of our journal, 'Život umjetnosti', is dedicated to a different topic, and mostly we do not seek to produce a synthesis, but rather to offer various interpretations of events that are important as a part of history and also as a part of the present moment. As for acknowledging cultural innovations, it seems that we are again left to our own devices, but in my opinion, the main problem is the fact that culture has not been the most prominent element in our environment, which has been and remained marginal in this respect. Besides, there are curators who have accepted the prevailing globalization circumstances and seem undisturbed by the superficial division into western and eastern positions, or the new imperialist – or even feudal – relations, based, as it seems, on an aprioristic attitude towards all that is or was happening behind the wall, behind the curtain, somewhere that was elsewhere.

For eight years, my husband and I were managing a small, non-profit gallery in Zagreb: a place that was trying – mostly successfully – to operate on the same principles as it had once been the case with the Extended Media Gallery, which was certainly among the crucial extra-institutional institutions in Croatia. Exhibitions were organized as we went along and the gallery welcomed all

those who liked its disorderly and neglected space. Mostly it was realizing undemanding projects of production, a part of which was dedicated to the relationship between politics and art, defining the meanings of those aspects that determined their interplay. Our artistic attitude during those eight years may be described as a sort of striving that aimed at changing the society, moreover in a very sensitive period of transition, when artistic terminology was being supplemented with items that were not inherent to it, such as "economy", "market", etc. Together with several artists and curators who organized a number of minor group exhibitions, we sought to offer an interpretation of the situation in contemporary art.

I am convinced that it was one of the ways in which it was possible to create an adequate place for acknowledging and promoting new and creative art. I have mentioned this experience as a possible answer to the second question that was raised here. Namely, in the situation in which independent organizations were "conquering" – temporarily and formally at least – the neglected and derelict sites that were waiting for neo-transitional investors to transform them into a new image of the city, while museums and galleries failed to function in a satisfactory way and all depended on the meagre budget that the state and the cities had set apart for cultural needs, it seemed to us that we could offer art in our backyard. It was somewhere along the line of Groys's reflections on activities that turn our life into an art object, so to say. We wanted to offer something beyond the established forms of power – beyond the models that were prevailing in socialism and still prevail today – or, paraphrasing Groys, we wanted to "make things visible" – and for a simple reason. It was to show that something like that was

possible, that there was such a thing as an art scene and that it was functioning despite the insufficient resources, despite the “language of trauma” that the “Wild East” was using to justify itself before others.

Eight years later, we decided to give up our gallery. First of all, it proved impossible to function outside of the established institutional patterns, the bureaucratic rule that needed to be appeased in order to secure a few hundred Euro per year to do what we were doing. There is no regret, though: the time that we spent was ours, and the benefit was multiple. Perhaps it was a way of overcoming the trauma of transition. It was interesting to try and create a link to that separate line of alternative modes of producing and presenting artworks, which had existed in Croatia since the late 60s. To be sure, I will not be as subjective as to equate the operation of a gallery that carried our names (our intention being to emphasize that it endorsed a very personal way of looking at art events in Croatia and throughout the region) with those important sites that participated in redefining the status of art and the way it was mediated between the artists and their audience. The issues we were raising were not that radical. First of all, we wanted to see whether it was possible to achieve autonomy and whether the collectivist model was even possible today – whereby collectivism was primarily based on the open possibility of cooperation between younger curators, curator collectives, and artists-curators.

‘Život umjetnosti’ and Galerija Križić Roban are adequate places for all that, as platforms for promoting and presenting contemporary art. The Gallery’s activity is known to a relatively narrow circle, while the journal is far more popular, primarily owing to its bilingual publication, but

also to its longevity. To what extent that is innovative, that is difficult to say and remains to be assessed. Personally speaking, it seems to me that, as those who edited the journal and managed the Gallery through eight years, we have indeed contributed to that participatory model of operation, which largely depends on others. In terms of politics and ideology, we have offered a possibility of parallel distribution of art, and we have also freed the space of the medium/journal for art-related themes, cleansing it from advertisements or from loud and bombastic topics that nowadays tend to penetrate the spaces of art from all sides.

Let me conclude: I do not see great innovation in all that, on the contrary – I think that the activities that I have briefly outlined are rather traditional. However, considering the numerous existing and new ways of mediating and transferring art-related issues, which some of the participants of the Biennial use as well, it seems that it still makes sense to present those artworks that do not necessarily rely on the effect of shock, or on a politically or socially engaged position as a privileged (artistic) attitude of provocation, since their content is understood in the space of individual (and often subjective) relations. That is precisely the way in which the gallery used to operate, and the same thing we are trying to do with our journal, hoping that the “micro”-issues such as those we are publishing in ‘Život umjetnosti’ will become a part of the broader meta-narrative of art history.

JULIA TROLP

From IKEA to reality and back again. Guy Ben-Ner's video 'Stealing Beauty' inside the logics of corporate communication.

In 2007 Guy Ben-Ner, who often deals with the question of the border between private and public sphere, produced the video entitled „Stealing Beauty“. Herein the artist adopted the so-called room settings of several IKEA stores as stages, his family members and Ben-Ner himself represented the actors, while everything got filmed by a hidden camera.

To produce 'Stealing Beauty' Ben-Ner and his family went nearly 80 times to several IKEA stores, most of them in the Berlin area, where they had been living at that time. The artist filmed without permission, which resulted in the fact that the IKEA personnel became some sort of a "co-producer": each time an employee interrupted the filming, now there is a cut in the video.

To work with the members of his family was a way for Ben-Ner to be close to his wife and kids. As he put it in an interview: "I knew I would hardly see my children if I would work in a studio. This was therefore my way to work at home." Interesting in our perspective is especially that Ben-Ner equals the fact of spending time with his family in IKEA stores with "working at home".¹

The impulse to produce the video – in the dialogues economic topics are risen – came from a five-year-long stay in New York, where the family had to face money problems. The daughter asks her father for example: "Would you ever sell us for the right profit, dad?", and the son wants to know what private property is. The fact

that every object in the home of the Ben-Ner-family carries a huge price-tag is bringing the economics-question even visually into focus.

But of course the daily life of the family is not all that idyllic as the life of the people represented in the IKEA catalogue: the wife is accusing the husband of masturbating under the shower, the daughter came home after midnight without permission, and the son got caught stealing money at school. On top of that, their private sphere is constantly invaded by strange German people armed with huge yellow shopping bags: the IKEA clients. They walk into the sceneries or discover the registering video-camera. At one point we can even hear the announcement that the driver of a car outside the store is asked to move it.

To be able to understand why Guy Ben Ner's video so cleverly comments our globally shared imagery and therefore works so well for a large public, we should have a close look at the facts & figures of IKEA, and their communication:

IKEA

The IKEA concept is know all over the world. As the company itself puts is:

"The IKEA Concept is based on offering a wide range of well-designed, functional home furnishing products at prices so low that as many people as possible will be able to afford them. ...

The IKEA Concept makes it possible to serve the many by providing low-priced products that contribute to helping more people live a better life at home."²

IKEA was founded in 1943 by Ingvar Kamprad. The name IKEA is composed by the initials of the founder, Ingvar Kamprad, plus the first letters of Elmtaryd and Agunnaryd,

which are the names of the farm and village where he grew up.

The worldwide turnover of IKEA in 2008 was € 21,2 Billion. In the same year, 127.800 people have been working inside the company. Currently there are 296 IKEA stores in 39 countries. Germany is it's biggest market, with 44 stores, followed by the United States with 36 stores. There is no big presence of IKEA in developing countries.³

IKEA likes to present itself as a socially responsible, family friendly company (see the IKEA motto above). When talking about taxes though, this responsibility all of a sudden seems to go up in smoke: IKEA has a complicated organizational layout, made of not-for-profit and for-profit corporations. This multi-layered structure, combined with a clever franchising system, results in the fact that IKEA and it's owner Ingvar Kamprad – who is by some sources declared to be the richest man in Europe or even the whole world – pay very little taxes.

In 2007 IKEA therefore got nominated by the Berne Foundation for the 'Public Eye Global Award', a prize highlighting corporate irresponsibility worldwide.

Here some excerpts from the text accompanying the nomination:

"The Stichting Ingka Foundation (SIF), formed in 1982 by IKEA founder Ingvar Kamprad, owns the Ingka Holding Group, which operates 210 of the 240 IKEA furniture stores worldwide. According to 'The Economist' magazine, SIF has a current value of US \$36 billion and is therefore the richest foundation in the world. ...

The Dutch firm Inter IKEA Systems (IIS) owns the rights to IKEA's concepts, product designs and the IKEA brand. As franchiser it receives 3% of global sales from all IKEA shops (€ 631 million in 2004). Who exactly owns IIS is

not known; it belongs to a certain Inter IKEA Holding, registered in Luxembourg, which itself owns a corporation of the same name based in the Netherlands Antilles, which for its part is run through a “trust company” in Curaçao. Such organizational structures, that combine various legal forms with multiple tax havens – some with bad reputations – are hallmarks of dubious structures rather than of a family-friendly corporation...

With profits of € 553 million in 2004, Inter IKEA Holding, together with another Luxembourg Holding, paid a total of only € 19 million in taxes. Kamprad has lived in canton Vaud for years, where he benefits from lump-sum taxation, offered by Switzerland to a few thousand foreigners. The richest man in the world pays 200,000 Swiss francs in taxes annually. Nothing is impossible with this “Swedish” furniture store.”⁴

Apart from this, IKEA is profiting from international wage differences, producing in low-wage countries and selling in those with a higher price level. Every second article today being sold in IKEA stores has been produced in a low-wage-country, such as China for example.

Since the year 2000 – and after having had troubles with several activists groups – IKEA is operating according to a code of conduct, called “The IKEA Way on Purchasing Home Furnishing Products”, short: the IWAY. It describes minimum requirements on social and working conditions, together with environmental demands, at suppliers of the IKEA range.⁵

Communication

In 2009 the IKEA catalogue has been produced in 55 editions and 27 languages for 34 countries/territories. It has been distributed free of charge in 199 Million copies,

both in stores and by mail. It is considered to be IKEA's main marketing tool, consuming 70% of the company's annual marketing budget.

In terms of publishing quantity, the catalogue has surpassed the Bible as the most published work. However, since the catalogue is free of charge, the Bible continues to be the most purchased literary work.

Most of the catalogue is produced in IKEA's hometown of Älmhult, where IKEA operates the largest photo studio in northern Europe at 8,000 square meters in size.⁶

After explaining these important facts, I would now like to speak about the corporate identity of IKEA:

IKEA is Sweden: the company colours are blue and yellow, such as the Swedish flag. The positive image of the Nordic country, with its excellent social system, helps IKEA to have a positive image itself.

IKEA is selling Swedish design. Or at least people think that what IKEA sells is Swedish design.

IKEA products have Nordic names that sound strange and make people laugh. They are in fact a very important piece of IKEA's sales strategy and psychology: in this way, a piece of furniture is more like a person than an object. We can create a relationship with Olle, Klippan, or Krokholm.

Through restaurants and food shops IKEA visitors can deeply indulge themselves into Swedish culture. If this is not enough, you can watch IKEA videos on youtube, where a grandfather-like cook – with a very bad English accent and seemingly a bit tipsy – is preparing Swedish recipes.⁷

The Books inside the IKEA room settings are all Swedish books – we can see this clearly in Ben-Ner's video.

Every single IKEA shop, and the company as a whole, is nowadays constructed as a kind of Swedish Disneyland:

Anders Dahlvig, IKEA's CEO, put it this way: "We tried to make IKEA into a short-trip-destination".

Through the facts just explained it becomes clear that IKEA is more than a big company selling furniture. IKEA is a power tool operating worldwide, not only on financial, but also on cultural level. It is influencing the taste of millions of people and the way they live every day. Me included obviously.

Conclusion

For Ben-Ner IKEA is not only a short trip destination, he turns it into his work-place, into the scenery of his artistic production and the location of a get-together with his family. By appropriating the perfect 'room settings' for his artwork, he is deviating the company message of a "better life for everyone" and turning it into a critical instrument. He is highlighting questions of public and private, economics, individuality and globalization. Maybe our next visit to IKEA will have a different taste...

¹ Guy Ben-Ner in: Meisner, Ines: 'Ich bin ein Kannibale', www.art-magazin.de, 06.01.2009

² <http://www.ikea-group.ikea.com/?ID=5>

³ <http://www.ikea-group.ikea.com/?ID=10>

⁴ http://www.evb.ch/cm_data/ikea_e.pdf

⁵ <http://www.ikea-group.ikea.com/?ID=3>

⁶ <http://franchisor.ikea.com/txtfacts.html>,
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/IKEA_Catalogue

⁷ <http://www.youtube.com/user/Ikea>

MARINELLA PADERNI

The creativity in the age of the Open Source culture.

In the last decade, the culture of the information age has generated technological forms of communication that have quickly become part of global behavioral models used by a broader range of people than the web community alone, like FLOSS (Free/Libre Open Source Software) or mainstream circuits like Youtube, Flickers, etc.

The functions and methodologies of FLOSS has informed ideologies shared in several spaces both within the FLOSS world and the art world.

Today the open source model – that means to put on the Internet, available to all, parts of one's own conceptual and planned work that can be subsequently enriched and developed by others re-posting it online – is shared by the information universe as well as the visual arts culture, among many other spheres. Open source offers a set of new methodologies for developing the creativity and innovate artistic work.

These methodologies find new applications in fields of cultural production outside of the Internet. The topics related to are first of all that of openness as a social ethics, a diffuse authorship, open content licences, an organisational strategy and its democratic reality in economy.

This type of democratic model of cultural production is adopted by several artists to aesthetically and critically reflect upon the current system of western societies, as well as those of the Second and Third Worlds. Operating upon the concepts of soft and creative economy; of exchange/trade not only of objects, but also of ideas, information,

and above all services; of post-production between different languages and knowledge, contemporary artists work with the connections between individuals not only in the art world but also in different, more global circles.

Contemporary art had already anticipated practices connectable to the present open source culture with works founded upon collective exchange and post-production.

Jens Hoffmann speaks of "post-representative strategies" to indicate those artists who do not limit themselves to interacting with relational modalities, visual and textual metaphors, but who implement collaborative group strategies – collective rather than individual – and instead of producing objects, formulate projects, workshops, and actions.

Adopting the open source methodologies, artists can use different modalities to innovate the art research: for instance, some elaborate new site-specific interventions, others show ongoing processes, with the exhibition of diverse materials – online platforms, websites, slides, information sharing, open online archives, videos in an apposite position of vision and supervision, drawings, and linguistic samples of various types, works organized "at a distance" through a series of instructions for use that will serve to construct the work 'in situ'.

One significant illustration of that shift is the rising interest from artists in constituting archives, digging old material that were falling into oblivion, preserving memory and presenting histories that have been out of civic knowledge for political, economical or bureaucratic reasons. The idea of making material publicly available is already an act of openness, only possible using Internet to reach large numbers of people.

All these works reflect in many ways some of the

questions that artistic and curatorial practices have been addressing in the last five to ten years. Yet, what is striking is that despite the increasing tendency for artists to work collaboratively and the multiplication of practices that require participation to become meaningful, the issue of who should be credited and how the collectively-produced knowledge should be distributed and re-used is still poorly addressed. A lot of artists still strictly copyright their films while the content is entirely based on other people's knowledge, and don't make them publicly available.

Open Source model can also produce new curatorial attitudes and have already produce them, like online curatorial platforms.

One significant example is kurator.org, a curatorial research project associated with the University of Plymouth in the UK, which links curating with programming systems and software. Also, art institutions have opening recently blogs instead of websites, thus allowing for comment and feedback; or they have starting sharing their archives, like for instance the art magazine *Frieze* which give now access to its archives to magazine subscribers.

Open Source model can practice the idea of human knowledge shared by everybody. It can teach artists as well as curators to be less secretive and more open and generous with one's research, to break down hierarchical and social boundaries, to introduce the relaxation of competitive behaviour, to share part of their research. In that way discourses and movements would advance faster and change would not be such a remote possibility.

'Same Democracy' is a curatorial project on new art forms based on the Open Source model, curated by Elvira Vannini and me. It was structured in two exhibitions – presented at Neon Campobase gallery in Bologna last year – and an

online platform of discussion with other curators about these topics published on the website Undo.net. Among these curators, we invited Anna Colin and Mia Jankowitz, who were working in the same time to 'Disclosures', a project presented at Gasworks in London, that seeks to scrutinise the notion of openness across fields of cultural production at large. The online discussion was an important and open way to share with others our first reflections on this new topic.

For 'Same Democracy' we used Open Source model as a metaphor for openness rather than referring to its technological underpinning. We invited several international young artists to present their own idea of Open Source practice in the visual art field. The artists were Zbynek Baladrán, Fabrizio Basso+Strange&Alternati ve Team, Filippo Berta, Silvia Cini, Dafne Boggeri, Carolina Caycedo, Francesco Jodice & Richard Sympson, Domenico Antonio Mancini, Andrea Nacciarriti, Daniele Pario Perra, Maria Vittoria Perrelli, Julien Prévieux, Tadej Pogacar, Oliver Ressler, Stefano Romano, Stefanie Seibold, Ian Tweedy. The format wasn't that of an exhibition in the traditional sense, but of a formal device developed in two phases (volume 1 and volume 2) that generated relationships between people and was born of a social process. Some artistic works were presented on the first date and enriched during the exhibition by interventions of other artists; other works were exhibited in the first part but will remain visible on monitors during the second.

The project, in fact, aimed to reflect upon different forms of curatorial work and, between interferences, superimpositions and contact zones, attempted to bring into focus a methodological discourse on contingency, between artistic practices and relational dynamics with

the public, in a system of sharing that make the art space a catalyst of urban and social experiences.

Another significant example of Open Source process applied to art is the the work by the Italian artist Carlo Zanni, who has been working with the new media since many years.

One of his recent online works called 'The Possible Ties Between Illness and Success', is a two minutes short movie transformed by an Internet data flux and re-edited server-side when web statistics (Google Analytics) are available: in this way public can watch a new movie every day.

The core idea of the work is the relationship between maniac depressive illness forms and success at large, a theme it symbolically tracks through the filming of an ill man lying in a bed and the presence of his partner (actress Stefania Orsola Garelo).

The body of the man (actor Ignazio Oliva) progressively fills with stains: quantity and position depend on the number of users (and country of origin) visiting the website. The more users, the more stains, thus causing the "illness" to spread all over the body.

The public grants success while appropriating the body of the artist.

LORENZO FUSI

We're at a place now where technology allows the democratization of storytelling.¹

I would like to present the audience with the case of 'World Trade Center 2006', a video-work conceived in

2006 by American visual artist Chris Mourkabel (1978, New Heaven).

This is a 12-minute film adaptation of a dialogue taken directly from a bootleg screenplay of Oliver Stone's then-forthcoming motion picture 'World Trade Center'. The video was filmed and staged in the artist's studio using student actors and then released on the Internet, intentionally pre-empting Stone's official film release in August 2006. Mourkabel's video was part of a thesis project for his Master of Fine Arts at Yale University and allegedly cost 1.000 USD to be produced.

The artist – who distributed his "pirated" version of the script online anticipating the much-advertised and promoted launch of the actual film bearing the same title – somehow ridiculed Paramount Pictures' 60-million dollar investment in Oliver Stone's movie. As a consequence, he was sued for 'copyright infringement' by the notorious film-production corporation and restrained from disseminating, distributing and showing his work in public.

Despite the fact that the United States District Court of Washington deliberated against Mourkabel, several public art galleries and institutions in Europe and elsewhere refused to withdraw the work from their exhibition spaces and these are currently the only arena and dimension where the piece still exists.

For instance, the decision performed by the District Court in Washington has not prevented the Frac Lorraine in France from acquiring the video for its collection in 2007. I am not aware whether the artist has received any monetary compensation for this purchase, although one might argue that an undisputable profit for the artist derives from having his work included in a public collection. A profit (whether economical or in the form

of a formal cultural approval and validation of his skills as an artist) that interestingly questions Mourkabel's initial position and counter-argument in his defence, namely the non-profit nature of his action and making of the video.

Ever since, various attempts have been made by the artist and his lawyer to circumnavigate the restraining order issued by the District Court. The possibility of a second version of the video with no sound or direct reference to Oliver Stone's film was negotiated between Mourkabel and Paramount Pictures.

Nevertheless, the video is still not currently available on the Internet and is not featured in any of the artist's websites.

The press release of 'Don Quijote' – a group show organized by Witte de With in Rotterdam which included this piece – reads: "'World Trade Center' describes the relationship between two firemen caught in an inescapable situation, stuck in the rubble of the World Trade Center. The dialogue between them reveals their admiration and professional respect for one another, and is completely out of synch with their present circumstances. Moukarbel offers a glimpse into human behavior at a time when death is imminent, making it seem perversely futile."

This short description basically synthesizes how far art criticism has gone in terms of commenting the actual content or formal quality of the work. Very little – in fact – has been said about the so-called artistic merit of Mourkabel's video work, if there is any in a conventional way.

It immediately emerged that what we were debating and was under scrutiny was not if 'World Trade Center 2006' was a "work of art". The cultural frame within which it originated (a Master course in Fine Art at Yale) seemed enough to validate it as such. Furthermore, nobody

seemed to care or be interested in whether it was a good piece of art or not.

I would argue that Mourkabel's video was exceptionally well shot (given the artist's equipment, budget and general circumstances) and it has some aesthetic qualities to it in terms of formal solutions. But this video would have passed generally unacknowledged, unless it was contributing to a broader debate around the relationships between the visual arts and authorship (a conundrum or unresolved matter dating back to Marcel Duchamp that in the eyes of some seems not to have reached a peaceful solution), copyright regulation, new media and Internet-related accessibility, diffusion and distribution. In short – it seems to me – we are still debating sampling as opposed to the notion of originality. May all the DJs in the world keep their peace!

Furthermore, the political reading of and strong bounds with history making that 'World Trade Center 2006' brings to the fore seemed immediately much stronger an argument than its artistic (in the art-for-art-sake sense of the term) contribution. According to Mourkabel his video "is a commentary on Hollywood's authority to write history. Through its depiction of an historic event, the film industry is ultimately in the position to influence ideas and affect policy". A statement or a take we might wish to explore a little further.

After an initial paralysis (a suspended and tabooed era during which artists have refused to confront themselves with what the German composer Karl Heinz Stockhausen infamously described as one the greatest pieces of art ever conceived), who gives Oliver Stone and Paramount Pictures the right to describe the collapse of the Twin Towers and to portray this event in our name? Where does the notion

of authorship stand in the depiction of this catastrophe? Is Oliver Stone's account of the facts any more valid or truthful than that provided by Chris Mourkabel? Hasn't this plot been written by altogether another group of people, namely politicians, terrorists, victims, intelligence agencies, media, etc.? Shouldn't they have copyright jurisdiction on this subject matter?

What is discussed here is power, free speech, access to information and ultimately (as the artist has correctly pointed out) the way Hollywood devises memorials and represents historical events on our behalf.

The artist's restraint to circulate his video has not stopped me and many other curators from sharing it or presenting it in different occasions or circumstances. I am proud to have taken part to this conspiracy against the Court's decision and Paramount Pictures' legal action. I cannot be prosecuted and (as far as the copy I exhibit of this work is not handed to me directly by Chris Mourkabel) neither can the artist. This surely does not save me from any future abusive and manipulative reconstruction or representations of our recent or past history neither does it prevent history from being reshaped in order to fit the political agendas of the media, of economical bodies/lobbies and national and international governments.

It only guarantees and makes it possible for the same story (our own personal and communal history, in fact) to be narrated from multiple angles and presented from different viewpoints.

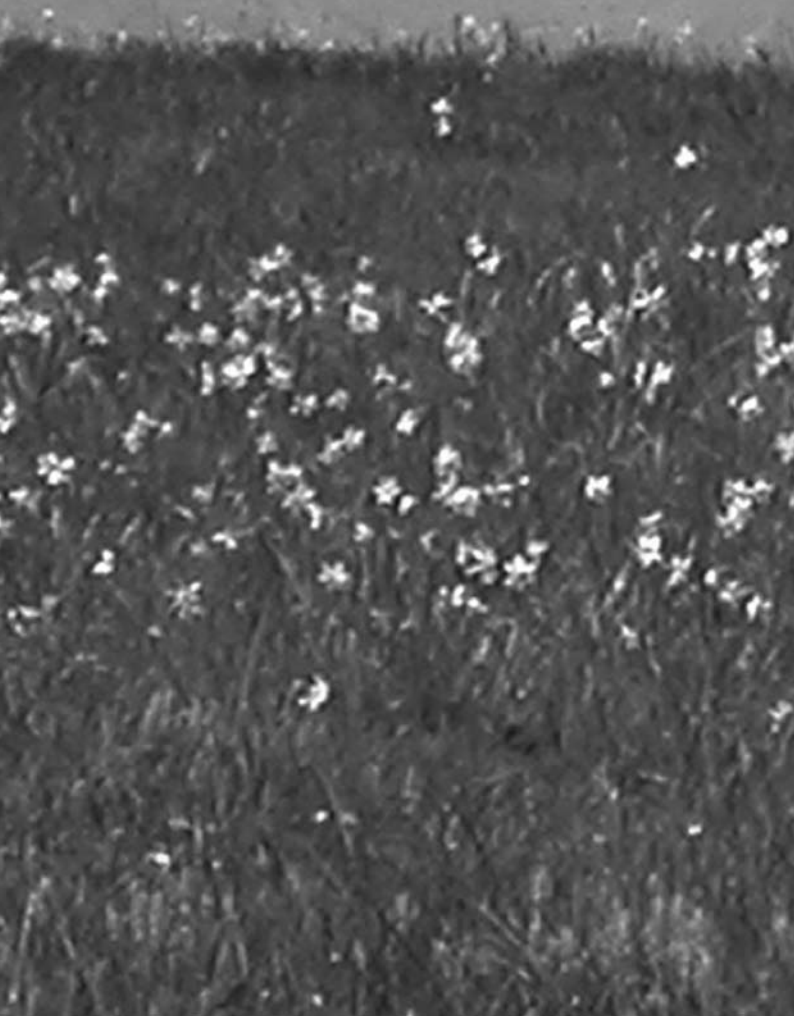
Mourkabel makes no revelations and does not unveil any hidden aspect that clarifies the 9/11 premises, developments or consequences. This is something that good journalists and honest politicians should do. But I believe he has the right to exploit and question the film

industry's unconditional desire and unrestricted willingness to depict the 'one and only' life of the two survivors, as if no other story would exist or could be told beside that directed by Oliver Stone.

The impact this "little revenge" can have on a wider audience and its relevance outside the art world bubble, I leave to you to imagine. This does not mean that the battle isn't worth fighting.

¹ Quoted from Chris Mourkabel speaking to the New York Times.

ADDENDA



ALEKSANDER BASSIN

Looking for answers on more or less rhetorical questions.

Both Forum's key questions can get very simple on one, but even complicated answers on another side. The criteria of evaluation and acknowledgment need to be changed because of cultural innovation of contemporary visual arts only... or because of something what is growing up without artists mind and work: 'Under the pressures of neo-liberal capitalism, how can museums continue to pursue their common interests with regard to being more market-oriented and treating their audience as consumers? How do the museums go on in view of the global economic crisis and the undermined faith in the infallibility of the free market? Will museums fall prey to the looming financial restrictions or can they take a pre-emptive position and propose new methods of work and association and, after all, international solidarity'. This was one of the question put on the International Conference of Museums of Modern and Contemporary Art, hold in Ljubljana on 9/10 May 2009.

I'm looking on the production of contemporary arts first with the eyes of the curator in the museum/gallery, then with the eyes of critic and at the end with the eyes of commissioner whose duty is to select the innovative curator and the artist which had to be presented on the international biennials.

Do we get the opinion that on the international biennials the regionalism makes its appearance, the particularities of a specific cultural milieu? They mingle and develop 'a new cultural cartography of the multicultural society'

(Peter Weibel). These we need to be aware of, not only as neutral observers, but as critical fellow travelers. This is particularly the case for those of us who are involved in the sensitive artistic organism that we are attempting to present, having critically assessed it. And if the artwork started as an individual creative act, can it retain its individuality in such a contemporary constellation? Does it start to adjust to the common, more or less definable, artistic 'consensus' that endangers its creative growth which escapes categorization?

Such are the questions that are omnipresent in today's artistic world, and justifiably so; the future path of art across the impersonal world of technology is further endangered by globalization and marginalization of artistic creativity. To put it another way: the open questions that face us today are to do with the quality in art on the one hand, and the criteria of judging it on the other.

'It can be said that one way of judging quality is to distance ourselves from schematic formulae, to effect a removal from the horizon of expectation, as the aesthetic of reception would have it. Such a distancing, however, entails a risk, for the artist as well as for the interpreter or the critic. At the same time, an aesthetic distance as a criterion of quality brings along a danger that quality will be overlooked because of its very nature. The question of quality has yet another critical dimension. What distinguishes works that are comparable both in the method of production and in structure?... An analysis of formal, contextual, contextual and other qualities can only be justified in the light of the above.'

(Igor Zabel: 'Art and Quality', Platform SCCA, no.3, p.49, January 2002, Ljubljana).

As far as the criteria for judging the quality of art are concerned, it is nowadays beyond doubt that they are in crisis and that being aware of this fact is a 'sine qua non' if criticism is to exist at all. Art criticism would re-become viable:

1. If it were to return from general verbosity to an analytical, descriptive and workable discourse and used it in a strategically thought out way when trying to categorize a work of art;

2. If it were to accept the principle of democratic reciprocity; the critical discourse is for the reader a mirror image of artistic language. Therefore, the review must return to the 'art of description', to the delineation of the individual, the special and the specific in the work of art; emphasis, critical tropes, literary metaphors and allegories are only valid if they reflect the visual experience. The review must get away from the 'archetype', the style, the -isms, the 'art' and reintegrate with the singularity and the exclusivity of the artefact (the prototype);

3. If it were to cease hiding behind the context. Context and universality of the models are of course in full agreement with creative strategies which are the ones that bring to the fore the general themes, the social context and anthropological content. They are all important and are a legitimate generator of contemporary artistic production. They must be read, but in the parallel discipline of artistic anthropology. As far as criticism is concerned, however, it is important for it to use the filter of formal and iconographical analysis and not to buy into everything going, such as the current 'social conceptualism' or the banal forms of contemporary return to painting and the statements about 'post-media' art.

4. If it were to seek new linguistic paradigms for new content. What is happening now is that a few verbal categorizations, comparisons, syntagms, lifted from the 20th century theoretical tradition, cover extremely diverse visual phenomena. Always the same expressions, metaphors, examples, expressive models, are used in relation to the most diverse and contradictory artistic forms, actions and concepts. Art is diverse, criticism (verbally, terminologically, 'literally') uniform...'

(Tomaž Brejc: 'Crisis of Confidence, Crisis of Language, Crisis of Vision: some local experiences', paper given at the international congress AICA, Ljubljana, May 2005).

If these were the words of my distinguished critical colleague Tomaž Brejc, who just now got the very specialized national award for his critical writing, I would like to end with the quotation of Daniel Birnbaum from the end of the book Hans Ulrich Obrist: 'A brief history of curating' (published by JRP/Ringier, Zurich, Documents Series 3, www.jrp-ringier.com). I quote:

'But no doubt there will be new start. Somewhere in the near future, it will happen, because things don't just end like this. When new cultural formations appear they tend to use fragments from already obsolete forms. Panofsky pointed this out: the future is constructed out of elements from the past – nothing appears ex nihilo. The future of exhibition making will deploy devices we once knew but had forgotten about.'

DOBRILA DENEGRİ

When Multitude Becomes Form.

In this case multitude stands for hundreds of emerging young artists, coming from different cultural backgrounds, using diverse artistic languages. They are joint in the open laboratory which gains its final form in the exhibitiv event lasting 24 hours: a platform that we have called 'Real Presence'. Exactly this numerous 'real presences' of young artists are carriers of a new creative energy that gets released in a multitude of places that are dedicated to art or that gets transformed by it.

'Real Presence'

Workshop for emerging generation of artists and art students is curated by Biljana Tomic and Dobrila Denegri, nKA / ICA, Independent Cultural Association, Belgrade, Serbia

"The new type of art manifestation should be like a power station: a producer of a new energy."

Based on this conviction 'Real Presence' shaped its character as open and dynamic platform for upcoming generations of artists coming from different cultural backgrounds and working in a wide variety of media and expressive languages. 'Real Presence' set off in 2001, when Serbia undertook the path of democratic changes after ten years of crisis and cultural isolation. Parallel with processes of democratization, this manifestation acted with the goal to sustain the value of culture as a field of coexistence of differences, as well as to open up channels of communication and artistic exchange between Serbia

and other cultural contexts and encourage post-war generations to articulate and express their creative visions, ethical attitudes and positions towards reality in the multitude of its aspects.

In the last 8 years 'Real Presence' involved more than 1500 young artists from 59 countries, from more than 100 art academies and therefore can be considered the biggest international workshop currently operating in the Balkans. With its activity it contributed that Belgrade become again an active link within cultural network of the region and it stimulated great number of collaborative artistic projects that dealt with issues of identity and diversity, urgency for the communitarian engagement and most of all, preciousness of direct, personal experience in the process of knowing the other.

This is the legacy but at the same time the starting point for every next edition of 'Real Presence', that seeks to re-edit its inner dynamic but also remains coherent to its basic conceptual and organisational guidelines that shaped its originality and uniqueness. 'Real Presence' is focused on the concrete artistic practice and functions as permanent laboratory in which cross-cultural dialogue and art production are closely interlinked. As annual event 'Real Presence' maintains its basis in Belgrade, but it also seeks to expand the radius of action and interact with institutions and manifestations in other European cities. In 2002 it was one of the organisational partners of Staedelschule in Frankfurt for the "Gasthof" – encounter of European art academies that gathered about 200 students and professors in the occasion of Manifesta 4. In 2005 'Real Presence' was realised as parallel event within official program of 51° Venice Biennale in collaboration with FDA - IUAV, in 2007 within 10° Istanbul Biennial and

in 2008 it was hosted by Castello di Rivoli – Museum of Contemporary Art and within its program was presented the 7th edition of European Biennial Manifesta held in Trentino Alto Adige.

'Real Presence' means being aware of "here and now", and for artists it means being receptive and engaged in the surrounding context, functioning as a sensor capable of capturing inputs and contents, experiences and stories that can be analyzed, elaborated and narrated through different artistic media. Therefore, different context and cultural/geographical provenience of participants provides different content of the workshop, and in this case, specific geographical constellation of involved partners furnish additional sources for thematic articulation of the project. Notions of borders and boundaries, openness and closeness, inclusion and exclusion were as a subtext, interwoven in the core of this manifestation from the very beginning, since it is originated in a country which is struggling with its recent past and uncertain political present, still on the borders of EU. Overcoming the sense of closeness and exclusion is still an urgent issue in Serbia, that matters especially for young generations. Overcoming barriers and boundaries is still intellectual and existential need. Encounter of young artists coming from different cultural backgrounds, stimulated to share ideas and engage themselves in collaborative projects, is an antidote to this condition.

NEBOJŠA VILIĆ

Towards the "societalization" of the art work.

1.

Are there still 'universal' "criteria of evaluation and acknowledgement" "for defining and distinguishing the cultural innovation (and the responsibility) of the contemporary visual arts"? How does one artwork from India, for example, "work" in Germany? How it is read or understood in Germany, or elsewhere? What a German curator can say for it, not knowing anything about the context in which the artist lives, the conditions in which the artwork is created and the community in which it functions? Do we really understand and are we really able to decode any artwork from all over the world? Had we ever? From here on, "how would art curators be able to forward new issues concerning the role assigned to art in the production of (visual) meaning with regard to the new use of images created for mediation and transmission" when the curator lacks the idea of the universal?

2.

But still, the curator has to evaluate and acknowledge. Here are some criteria proposals. The work of art has to provide 'communication' understood as exchange of information as symbolic value. This replaces the passive role of the recipient of art into a proactive one. This involves 'interactivity' (which differs from the interaction of the happening, for example) as a way to the 'rhizomatic' structure of the artwork which definitely realizes the "open work" according to Umberto Eco. Such an involvement of the recipient enables her/him to include

her/his understandings, meanings and values which turned the art work into phenomena of the 'societal'. The role of the artist then is switched from the position of "creator" into "provider" of the possibilities that enhance the social role of the artwork, artist and art in general. This puts the need of implementation of the 'discursiveness' which makes the artwork 'contextual'. And here comes the most responsible and difficult element for the artist to keep - the 'aura': only the aura keeps the work out of the danger of turning it into a simple narrative, game, play or entertainment.

In this way the 'communication' understands the share of the communal interests both of the artist and the members of the commune, by which the artist "speaks" on their behalf, aesthetizing their everyday life and actions, putting them into the frames of the general, i.e. through the "aesthetization", turning the particular into the common or even universal. For such a purpose, the artwork involves 'interactivity', which means that the artist is no longer the sovereign of the process of creation, but that she/he accepts the work to be developed outside her/his control and leadership. The interactivity, understood as such, leads then, to the 'rhizomatic' structure of the artwork, where the basic or starting point of the artist's idea loses the center, and creates either multi-centrality or non-centrality. And as such, the artwork becomes 'opera aperta', opened through the process into self-developing activity of the community.

From here on, the starting point of the artwork then is that it can not avoid the others of the community which brings it all to its 'discursiveness' – it opens the dialogue, or even the multi-logue, between different subjects of the community (and by that – with the society). In this

way, what was once original, authorial, unrepeatable and unique turns into activity of consistent 'context' in which communal subjects, individuals and entities are able to discuss the issues of their interest – the artwork as actual praxis leaves the throne of the untouchable museum object.

So, what the artist has to keep in mind, as a provider of the idea and possibilities for social activity, is the criteria of the 'aura'. Any activity which tends to be an artwork has to implement the category of the 'sublime'. Only this differs the artistic work (even process) from the group of activities specific for humankind – the production of symbolic values. This "auraticness" may appear either as visual representation (even in a form of a documentation) of these activities in the presentational system of the art world (gallery, museum, catalogue, art-book, etc.) or through the activities themselves 'in situ'. Regarding the latter one – it seems that this way of appearing of the art activity is more in the sense of the redefined definition of the artwork itself and is more in accordance with the general concept and the new understanding of the "art". The only concern about the former one is the danger of losing the sublime if the visual representation or the documentation of the activity turns into a banal retelling of what happened during the process (which is the case of many "artworks" dealing with this concept) – the danger of becoming a simple and banal story-telling instead of "sublimization" of the simple and the banal. One of the crucial criteria of evaluation and acknowledgement of the artwork of this kind is just that – to acknowledge and evaluate the level of the sublime (and by that – the aura) of the visually represented process of the communal activity.

3.

Having these criteria is not everything that a curator needs. The criteria are only instruments with which the curator has to recognize the actuality in which the artwork is or has to be created. Taking this actuality in account, what differs from the traditional methodology of evaluation and acknowledgement is proposing and systematizing. It differs even from how modernist sociological methodology defines the artwork in relation to society. Art does have function and it has social function. From here on, it calls for departure from the modernist notion of having only aesthetical function. It is 'vice versa': today the art turns back to the pre-modernistic understanding of having a creation that disputes with issues from the non-artistic fields: like discussing the 'Weltanschauung' of the time, ideologies of different kinds, activities and practices of contemporary man, etc., or like defining the contemporaneity of the everyday life sublimed on a different, artistic level. Therefore, the relation to the social actuality is a more than evident reason for involving the art practice in the field of the social, but not in the "social" as something general, but, rather, something in relation to the community and the communal that creates the notion of - societal.

4.

The affirmation of globalization gives birth, even more, to the localization [either as a resistance to it, manifested as strengthening of the conservative ideologies or negating it, manifested as strengthening of the leftist ideologies]. If the Modern criteria were based upon the universality and the post-modern criteria were about the globality, should today's criteria have to be about locality? Why

does the local matter so much? The actual local condition necessitates discursiveness, in relation to the local, and appears as even more important for the starting points for defining the items from the question. In other words, today, it seems more important for me to have in mind the social and political issues in the country [the local] in which I have to act as a curator, than any other issue which regards the common (or universal or global) items related to the questioned ones. Today, it is not the same if you have to evaluate and acknowledge the works of art in the world and in Macedonia. [Besides the notion that artworks from different parts of the world are looking very similar, even the same!] This comes from the ongoing actual conditions, political surroundings and prevalent ideological practices in which the artist works and the artwork is created and produced. Hence, as the Macedonian philosopher Branislav Sarkanjac says, I am looking for artwork that will explain my own actuality, 'hic et nunc'. So, the clue terms [besides the everlasting: aura, communicability, crafted or manuality/semirobotic] are the ones related to the "rhizomaticness" and discursiveness, and the derivatives from them – the contextual, all the way to the final one: the societal.

AUTHORS

Slovenia / ALEKSANDER BASSIN (1938) has been Museum councilor and Director of the City Art Museum in Ljubljana from 1989 to 2008. He was Vice-president of AICA International from 1996 to 2004, commissioner for the I International Triennial, New Delhi in 1968, deputy commissioner in the Venice Biennial in 1976, 1981, 1984, commissioner in the Venice Biennial in 2007 and 2009, and Curator in Sao Paolo Biennial in 1994, 2002.

Hungary / BALÁZS BEÖTHY (Budapest, 1965) is an artist, curator and editor of exindex (<http://exindex.hu/>). He works in Buda and lives in Pest, Hungary.

Serbia-Italy / DOBRILA DENEGRI is an art historian and independent curator, living and working in Rome and Belgrade. Since 2001 she is artistic director of 'nKA / ICA' – an independent cultural association which organizes the workshop 'Real Presence'. From 2002 till 2008 she collaborated as a curator at the Museum of Contemporary Art (MACRO) in Rome. Since 2007 she teaches history of contemporary art and fashion at La Sapienza University. Since 2008 she has been curator for international programme at ALI-Arts Learning Institute in Rome.

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of recently published 'Time at Work' (Milan: Postmedia Books, 2009) and a regular contributor to catalogues.

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Italy / LORENZO FUSI studied art history at the Siena University. His research and professional career range from medieval and Renaissance art to applied arts, from architecture to contemporary art. Following a long experience as curator in Palazzo delle Papesse in Siena (now *sms contemporanea*), he is currently working as International curator at the Liverpool Biennial.

Italy / FABRIZIO GIRALDI (Trieste, 1976) is a member of Grazia Neri photoagency since 2003. He specialized in social and geographical reportage, and is particularly interested in Eastern Europe. He's also a portrait photographer and works for corporate. He publishes on national and international magazines such as 'National Geographic', 'Les Echos', 'Panorama', 'D di Repubblica'.

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in Genoa with the exhibition 'Del paese e altre storie. For Manifesta 7' he was assistant curator for the Raqs Media Collective group with whom he also curated the Tabula Rasa project at the former Alumix industrial building in Bolzano. In 2009 he launched the first edition of the Prize for passions 'The Second Moon'.

Croatia / NATAŠA IVANČEVIĆ graduated in History of Art and Comparative Literature at the Faculty of Arts in Zagreb. She has been working as a curator in the Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art (MMCA) in Rijeka since 1995. During 2008 she worked as acting director of the MMCA.

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Macedonia / SUZANA MILEVSKA is an art and visual culture theoretician and curator based in Skopje. Her interests include feminist art and theory, politically engaged art and postcolonial critique of hegemonic power. Since 1992 she was curator for over 70 projects and currently she teaches art history and new media art.

Italy / GIOVANNI MORBIN is an artist that lives and works in Cornedo Vicentino, Vicenza. Since 1978 he has been interested in behaviour and performance through the production of objects linked to daily life which he considers to be instruments of expression. In November 1995 he founded 'Superficie Totale' (Total Surface), a container for his actions. From this moment on his performances were to be called 'Ibridazioni' (Hybridisation).

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international contemporary art reviews 'Frieze', 'Arte e Critica' and 'Flashart'.

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Slovenia / DEJAN SLUGA (Maribor, 1965) graduated in Art History and Sociology of Culture at the Ljubljana University. Post-graduate studies at the Sotheby's Art Institute in London. From 1990 to 1993 he worked as critic and editor of Culture at Radio Student Ljubljana. From 1993 to 1999 he was marketing manager in Karantanija Film Company in Ljubljana. In 2001, 2002 he was public relations coordinator in Cankarjev dom Center, Ljubljana. In 2003 he established Photon Association and Gallery, and in 2006 the first 'Photonic Moments' Festival in Ljubljana.

Hungary / ADRIEN TÖRÖK studied art history and visual anthropology. She is a freelance curator and art critic based in Budapest. She worked on various multidisciplinary projects in Spain and Portugal and she's the founder of Hungarian Video Art Festival, Crosstalk.

Germany / JULIA TROLP (Freiburg im Breisgau, 1974) is a free lance curator based in Rome. She has been working for several years at Mart – Museo di Arte Moderna e Contemporanea di Trento e Rovereto, where she was curator of various exhibitions. She has also collaborated with Cittadellarte - Fondazione Pistoletto, Biella, the Peggy Guggenheim Collection, Venice and BüroFriedrich, Berlin.

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Croatia / DEA VIDOVIĆ is chief editor of the portal Kulturpunkt.hr (<http://www.kulturpunkt.hr>) and editor of the Case Study section on LabforCulture.org (<http://www.labforculture.org>). She is currently working as chief editor of portal Kulturpunkt.hr (Clubture Network) and editor of the Case Study section on the LabforCulture.org. She is completing Ph.D. Program in Cultural Studies at Zagreb University, Philosophy Faculty.

Macedonia / NEBOJŠA VILIĆ (Veles, 1962) Ph.D. He's a tenure professor in History of Art at the Faculty of Dramatic Arts in Skopje, SS. Cyril and Methodius University in Skopje, Republic of Macedonia.

PROGRAMME

**Trieste Contemporanea
Dialogues with the Art of Central
Eastern Europe 2009**

**CONTINENTAL BREAKFAST. THE PASS 2009
Fourth CEI Venice Forum for Contemporary Art
Curators**

Venice, Palazzo Zorzi, UNESCO-BRESCE Office in Venice,
June 3rd, 2009

Trieste, CEI Executive Secretariat, June 8th, 2009

Under the patronage of Jan Figel, Member of the European Commission, responsible for Education, Training, Culture and Youth; an activity of the international network Continental Breakfast; a 2009 CEI Feature Cultural Event; an Italian National Event in the European Year of Creativity and Innovation 2009.

The event is conceived and organised by the Trieste Contemporanea Committee, in collaboration with the UNESCO Office in Venice-UNESCO Regional Bureau for Science and Culture in Europe (BRESCE) and the L'Officina Brainwork project Trieste, under the patronage of the Central European Initiative (CEI), the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Regione del Veneto, the Provincia di Venezia, the Provincia di Trieste, the Comune di Venezia, the Comune di Trieste, with the support of the CEI, the Regione Autonoma Friuli Venezia Giulia, the Provincia di Trieste and the BEBA Foundation of Venice and with the participation of the Casa dell'Arte of Trieste and SemeNostrum of Udine.

Venice, June 3rd, 2009: the programme

Welcome Speeches

MATTEO ROSATI, assistant project officer, UNESCO Office

GERHARD PFANZELTER, Alternate Secretary General,
CEI-Executive Secretariat

CARLO MONTANARO, director, Venice Academy of Fine
Arts

GIULIANA CARBI, president, Trieste Contemporanea

First session

DEA VIDOVIĆ (Croatia), Double edged sword. Re-thinking
the treats to creativity and innovation

SUZANA MILEVSKA (Macedonia), The Relevance
of Gendered Interpretation of Art in Contemporary
Transitional Societies

KATI SIMON (Hungary), And where should we Hungarians
line up? Facing the past – chaos in the social thought

BENIAMINO FOSCHINI (Italy), Is still art an aesthetical
choice?

BALÁZS BEÖTHY (Hungary), On voices

EVA FABBRIS (Italy), The bunker of the visual

GIOVANNI MORBIN (Italy), Superficie Totale (Total
Surface)

DENIS ISAIA (Italy), The Second Moon

KAMIL KOPANIA (Poland), Forms of artistic innovation
– what does practice say? (on the ground of Bialystok
experiences)

ADRIEN TÖRÖK (Hungary), Newest developments in
presentations of video and media art in Hungary

DEJAN SLUGA (Slovenia), Practices in contemporary
photography in South Eastern Europe

FABRIZIO GIRALDI (Italy), Photocrisis

MICHAEL FLIRI (Italy), Myself in the role of a Work of Art
MARIA VASSILEVA (Bulgaria), Creativity as a survival tool
BRANKO FRANCESCHI (Croatia) /Session chair, Against
The Grain

Related Projects

ALMUT SH. BRUCKSTEIN ÇORUH (Germany), The Taswir
Project - Pictorial Mappings of Modernity and Islam

BERAL MADRA (Turkey), Istanbul 2010 Portable Art
Project

Central Asia Special Session

NAZIRA ALYMBAEVA (Kyrgyzstan), **MURATBEK
DJUMALIEV** (Kyrgyzstan), **ALMAGUL MENLIBAEVA**
(Kazakhstan), **GREGORY MAMEDOV** (Tajikistan), **BERAL
MADRA** (Turkey)/Session chair

Second Session

BREDA KOLAR SLUGA (Slovenia), When museum meets
innovation

NATAŠA IVANČEVIĆ (Croatia), 'Heresies'. Bringing to
life a revolutionary model of museum presentation of
photography

SANDRA KRIŽIĆ ROBAN (Croatia), Forgetting Everyday
Life

JURAJ CARNÝ (Slovakia), Crazycurators and Superartists
JULIA TROLP (Germany), From IKEA to reality and back
again

MARINELLA PADERNI (Italy), The creativity in the age of
the Open Source culture

LORENZO FUSI (Italy), 'World Trade Centre 2006' by Chris
Mourkabel

ALEKSANDER BASSIN (Slovenia), Looking for answers on

more or less rhetorical questions-written contribution
DOBRILA DENEGRI (Serbia), When Multitude becomes
Form-written contribution
NEBOJŠA VILIĆ, (Macedonia), Towards the
"societalization" of the art work-written contribution
GIULIANA CARBI (Italy)/Session chair

Trieste, June 8th, 2009: the programme

Welcome Speeches

PIETRO ERCOLE AGO, CEI Secretary General
PIERO CAMBER, President, FVG Commission VI-Culture
GIULIANA CARBI, Trieste Contemporanea Committee

Morning session (CB working group meeting)

JAROSLAV ANDEL (Czech Republic), **ALEKSANDRA ESTELA BJELICA MLADENović** (Serbia), **ANDREA BRUCIATI** (Italy), **GIULIANA CARBI** (Italy), **VESNA DANILOVIĆ** (Serbia), **BRANKO FRANCESCHI** (Croatia), **JAROSLAW LUBIAK** (Poland), **JANKA VUKMIR** (Croatia)

Afternoon session

FVG curator's presentations: **ANDREA BRUCIATI**, **PAOLA BRISTOT**, **GIULIANA CARBI**; FVG artist's presentations: **GIANPIETRO CARLESSO**, **ESCAPISTA**, **EMANUELA MARASSI**, **FRANCESCA MARTINELLI**, **ISABELLA** and **TIZIANA PERS**, **PAOLO RAVALICO SCERRI**, **DAVIDE SKERLJ**; meeting with **ADRIANO DUGULIN**, director of the Cultural Department of the Comune di Trieste

Curator and project coordinator Giuliana Carbi
Co-curator Eva Fabbris
CEI coordinator Barbara Fabro
UNESCO-BRESCE coordinator Rossana Santesso
General Secretariat coordinator Laura Spolaore
Project assistant in Trieste Caterina Skerl
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British Contemporary
Exhibition with the British Council
London 2009

CONTINENTAL BREAKFAST
THE PASS 2009

FORUM FOR BRITISH ARTISTS
AND CONTEMPORARY ARTISTS



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Forum's hall in Venice, previous and present page

Carlo Montanaro, Gerhard Pfalzelter, Matteo Rosati,
Giuliana Carbi

Matteo Rosati, Giuliana Carbi



Carlo Montanaro, Gerhard Pfalzelter, Giuliana Carbi

Branko Franceschi, Eva Fabbris





(Branko Franceschi session chair)

Suzana Milevska

Beniamino Foschini



Kati Simon

Balázs Beöthy



Denis Isaia

Adrien Török



Dejan Sluga

Beral Madra, Almut Sh. Bruckstein Çoruh





Forum's hall in Trieste

Piero Camber, Pietro Ercole Ago, Giuliana Carbi

Franco Jesurun, Giuliana Carbi, Emanuela Marassi,
Tiziana Pers



Jaroslav Lubiak, Jaroslav Andel, Giuliana Carbi, Laura Spolaore, Massimo Premuda

Paola Bristot, Paolo Ravalico Scerri, Gianpietro Carlesso, Francesca Martinelli, Jaroslav Lubiak, Jaroslav Andel







Giuliana Carbi

Franco Jesurun



Caterina Skerl, Chiara Tomasi, Laura Spolaore, Massimo Premuda, Giulio Cok

Giulio Cok



Giuliana Carbi, Branko Franceschi, Andrea Bruciati, Vesna
Danilović, Aleksandra Estela Bjelica Mladenović



Giulio Cok, Massimo Premuda, Emanuela Marassi,
Aleksandre Marucci, Eva Fabbris, Julia Trolp, Laura
Spolaore, Beniamino Foschini





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trieste
contemporanea



Creativity
and Innovation
European Year 2009



PATROCINIO
REGIONE DEL VENETO



PROVINCIA DI VENEZIA



PROVINCIA DI TRIESTE

CITTA' DI VENEZIA



COMUNE DI TRIESTE

What are the criteria of evaluation and acknowledgement currently used by curators for defining and distinguishing the cultural innovation (and the responsibility) of contemporary visual arts?

Which are today the appropriate and delegated places for receiving and promoting artistic creative innovation?

In the European Year of Creativity and Innovation and in order to inquire how art curators would be able to forward new issues concerning the role assigned to art in the production of (visual) meaning with regard to the new use of images created for mediation and transmission, the 2009 Venice Forum wishes to offer a challenging critical contribution to the current debates.

