

A hand is shown holding a sandwich in the upper right corner. Below it, a picnic spread is laid out on a grassy area. The spread includes a white paper bag, a clear plastic bag containing several pieces of salmon, and a red apple. The background is a dense field of green grass.

**CONTINENTAL BREAKFAST. THE EXPANDED MAP**

**Second CEI Venice Forum  
for Contemporary Art Curators**

# CONTINENTAL THE



Venice, UNESCO Office in Venice -  
Regional Bureau for Science in Europe (ROSTE)  
Palazzo Zorzi, Castello 4930  
7 – 8 June, 2005

# BREAKFAST EXPANDED MAP

**Second CEI Venice Forum for Contemporary Art Curators**

**edited by Giuliana Carbi**

**Trieste Contemporanea 2005**



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# Introduction

After the two previous editions, which were reported extensively in our magazine "Trieste Contemporanea", it is the first time that the proceedings of the Venice Forum are published in a volume. It is a natural and required development for an undertaking that has earned a solid international consensus. The Forum is organized every two years since 2001, with the objective of collecting the voices of the curators of Central Eastern Europe and widening the discussion to the international colleagues during the opening-days of the Venice Biennial Exhibition. The Venice Forum is one of the most important events organized by our Committee and it has witnessed during its editions the growth in the number of participants and collaborations by supporting bodies.

This year the opening speeches by Harald Kreid, Director General of the CEI Executive Secretariat, by Giovanni Puglisi, President of the Italian National Commission for UNESCO, by Domenico Ronconi, Head of the Cultural Action Division, Directorate general IV of the Council of Europe, and by Marie-Paule Roudil, Head of the Section for Culture of the UNESCO-ROSTE of Venice were extremely intense, attentive and full of participation. They confirmed the strong ideal value for the creation of a shared future and the concrete fundamental importance of exchanging directly and with continuity our ideas and experiences, which have driven us to work with enthusiasm. I would venture to say that they have given us their unconditional support. On behalf of everybody I sincerely express my gratefulness.

The volume is divided in two sections. The first section

collects theoretical contributions, reports on activities and proposals for innovations on communication, exchange and the tools available, involving topics such as identity, the changes that have taken place and the EU perspectives in relation to the curatorial work. The second section is centered on the crucial problems and perspectives of specialized information of Central Eastern European magazines.

I would like to emphasize the participation that characterized the discussions due to the friendly climate that was created among the new and the old participants in the incomparable setting of the Renaissance Palazzo Zorzi, generously offered by the UNESCO Office of Venice. Trieste Contemporanea was already aware of the fact that during these meetings it is possible to reach, very easily, an effective operational network: during the 2003 edition it had proposed to the participants to organize a common co-curatorial project to be carried out in the following two years. "Continental Breakfast" was born spontaneously. It generated the international conferences in Warsaw (March 2004), in Belgrade (September 2004) and in Trieste (December 2004) as well as the international exhibition at the 45th Salon of Belgrade; in the next few days Ljubljana will be hosting an exhibit which precedes the exhibits that will take place at the end of the year in Tallinn, Maribor and Trieste.

I believe that it is precisely because this result, due to a strong common activity, was an objective of the CEI-Central European Initiative cultural program as well, that this important body uniting 17 European states has chosen to participate to our project, and for its participation I wish to express my thankfulness.

As a matter of fact, the Forum itself is part of that project

and it is in Venice that it was decided to continue "Continental Breakfast" and to start the following common activity of the consolidated group of institutions and the new friends that are joining the project. In the 2007 Forum the results of a complex integrated program of residencies for curators will be presented.

The idea of comparing different curatorial practices and seeing what the needs of contemporaneity are is extremely stimulating.

Therefore the Venice Forum, creates concrete results and whoever wishes to participate is welcome.

Lastly, Trieste Contemporanea is glad that this type of active and international initiatives with uncommon ethical characteristics can start from Trieste and from a very particular area in Italy such as Friuli Venezia Giulia, with the important patronage of local authorities from the Veneto region, to be carried out in Europe.

Giuliana Carbi  
Trieste Contemporanea Committee



## (Open) Conclusions

At the end of these intense days of work I would like to share some thoughts with you, in the light of our common feelings and expectations.

We have gathered here, in this appropriate and inspiring space, from many walks of personal and professional life, joined in the name of art and culture. May I say that we gave a more cohesive image here than perhaps the one our representatives offered, during the same time period, in Brussels or Strasbourg.

We made up a good panel, able to enrich each other with our mutual experiences, problems and desires to build something constructive together: from this Central Europe area, and beyond; from our different viewpoints, and common preoccupations.

Bringing together our knowledge, opening up to different realities, checking the possibility of a global approach, inventing a holistic strategy... all of this input has animated our addresses and conversations during the "Breakfast".

What I shall underline as future priorities (for us, for those in charge of policies, for our public and private partners, for the general public, for society at large) are the following two issues, particularly dear to us. They are not new concepts or wishes, but they have been refreshed, confirmed and clarified during our meeting.

The first is the idea of networking, that Trieste Contemporanea started to facilitate and intends to continue to frame, as an example of concrete, person to person, practice to practice, fruitful cooperation.

The second is a new concept of residence (of artists, of arts professionals, of women and men of culture, of

people in dialogue) to which, in this Palazzo Zorzi, once a privileged place of similar humanistic encounters, we were able to give a limited but illustrious example.

Let's stay in contact, then, let's think of future places where we could stay together longer, each of us and the colleagues we work with and for: creatively; consistently; happily managing our different identities and... diversities.

Countries – and communities! – of Central and Eastern Europe are likely to fit, in a timely and appropriate way, into such a scenario of solid networking, creating a system of persons and of places (residences), existing or to be constituted.

It is sure that we cannot escape the crises, challenges and dramatic situations of our time. On the contrary, we would monitor them, deal with them, and face them, together, with another more humane, cohesive, reciprocally generous approach. Arts and culture would help us to express and to understand better, to find fairer solutions for living well today. Celebrating, sharing and enjoying our common esthetic gifts would add to these efforts, as the arts and artistic expression can be a source of genuinely equitable exchange among equals.

Let's "expand the map" then, in this sense and with a perspective. Let's have a project, promise each other to stay in contact.

With gratitude for the generous commitment and contributions of our organizers and impeccable hosts, at the Unesco-Venice Office, the director Marie-Paule Roudil in particular. The meeting was compelling. We hope now that we have opened the way to even better ones in the future.

Domenico Ronconi  
Council of Europe







## FIRST PART



# Aleksandra Estela Bjelica Mladenović

## A great experience

My exposé at this year's, second, CEI forum is dedicated to the October Salon, the most important cultural event in the sphere of visual arts on the territory of Serbia and Montenegro. You might think it pretentious to define a traditional event which has been held for forty-five years already as prestigious, but the very existence and the long life of an exhibition of this kind, the praise and criticism it has received, the arguments it has provoked in the expert circles, could be used as proof of its confirmed value. This exposé is also connected to the October Salon due to the fact that in 2004 this event became part of an international project entitled "Continental Breakfast", initiated in the course of the first CEI forum held in 2003 in this very city, during the Biennial, the prestigious event presenting artistic creations from all over the world.

A few words about the history of the October Salon first. It was established in 1960 with the aim of presenting the most representative works in the sphere of fine arts on the territory of today's Serbia. Over the forty-five years of its existence, the Salon has become a reference point and an important segment for defining and studying contemporary Serbian art production. Also, the Salon represents the most important cultural event in the sphere of visual arts on the territory of today's Serbia and Montenegro. Decisions about the Salon's concept are made by a team of experts made up of art historians, artists, architects and journalists, in cooperation with the Art Director. The exhibition is held under the auspices of



the Assembly of the City of Belgrade and is organised by the Cultural Centre of Belgrade.

Last year's 45th October Salon was characterised by a lot of innovations. First of all, we should mention the internationalisation of this event (which, from its very beginning, had only represented the art scene of Serbia), approached as the inevitable choice when it came to providing the exhibition's concept. By breaking out of its local boundaries, within which it had operated for forty-four years, and by conceptualising "a traditional review of fine arts" as an international exhibition, the 45th October Salon, entitled "Continental Breakfast Belgrade" in accordance with the concept of Art Director Anda Rottenberg, presented for the first time in its history the current art production of both the domestic and the international scene. Turning this exhibition, very important for Serbian art, into an international event was significant on account of exchange of ideas, views and attitudes connected with a culture which is basically European after all. It is important to stress that it is a culture having the same basis, but its achievements are manifested in different ways. The perennial conflict between the local and the universal, that is, global, which characterises our (Balkan) space (in its /un/real geographical dimensions), probably derives from the frequent designations of the Balkans as an area which is the antithesis to the Continental tissue, or an interzone which exudes bisexuality. Turning from the "nearby" East to the "far-off" West is a commonplace phrase for typical "Balkan" behaviour. The vagueness manifested when it comes to taking sides results in hesitancy when it comes to defining artistic behaviour and a reluctant acceptance of a new/another/different way of artistic thinking. The

local has turned into global, causing fears and apprehension of the conservative segment of the expert Serbian public. Conflict between the old and the new, the known and the different, is accepted as a cliché of the “modern” age.

Opting for and inviting a foreign art historian to provide the concept of the 45th October Salon was a normal thing to do in the process of transformation. As an outside observer, having a similar historical heritage and the experience of a recognisable tradition (which is not identical in different basic frameworks), Anda Rottenberg, the well-known art historian from Poland, provided a neutral exhibition concept unburdened by local values. Through a reciprocal selection of domestic and foreign artists, well-known and lesser known ones, Rottenberg connected the divergent positions of those artists and established a dialogue between them. It is not a matter of confrontation but of joint presentation, which the Serbian art scene needed very much after a long period of isolation. The review-like character of the fine arts event was transformed into an objective overview, interpretation and presentation of current artistic trends within and outside the borders of Serbia and Montenegro. The Continental Breakfast theme connected artists from very different backgrounds, suggesting a lasting, endlessly idyllic idea of a community, group, “family”, as a primal scream for generalising, shaping, naming a common goal – identifying and signifying the origin. Whether it is a matter of food (material or spiritual) or behaviour (general), the question of genetic attribution or qualification in the sphere of artistic practice is a matter of discovering “the sixth sense” in this area of real life. The Serbian variant of Continental Breakfast

offered, better to say – served, an uncompromising overview of the experiential part of man's existence, the most recent one, spanning an average human lifetime. No one should burden himself with what has passed, or with what makes up the present moment, or by any means with what is to happen.

The question arises: where to find or what to use as inspiration?

Do we wish to “enter” Europe and “become” (again) a part of it on an equal footing? That has been one of the most frequently posed questions in Serbia lately. The 45th October Salon entitled “Continental Breakfast Belgrade” was the first in a planned series of events connected to the eponymous project, which serves as the starting point for the development of future cultural networks and will be realised in the course of 2005 and 2006. The aim of the project is to research, through the language of fine arts and visual arts, the idea of identity and the perception of “the other/different” within and outside the boundaries of Europe. Accidental choice, acceptance of that which is offered or deliberate involvement in the inevitable European developments – these are only some of the issues pertaining to today's art, the art we see, present and interpret, the art we live.

My exposé is entitled “A great experience” for two reasons: the first one is highly personal, for I was directly involved in the organisation of this exhibition as an assistant to the Art Director; the other one is metaphorical, for this reminded me of the first steps a child makes, the first experience a young person lives through. For, this is precisely what happened in the organisation and realisation of the 45th October Salon and the exhibition Continental Breakfast, Belgrade. The

local public's reactions were rather tempestuous. We do not know much about the reactions of the foreign public. Initially, we dreamed of getting support for our project, but in the course of its realisation all we got were verbal promises. After years of isolation in all spheres of cultural action and behaviour, we introduced three radical innovations in a traditional event: we organised the October Salon as an international event for the first time, we invited an internationally recognised art historian to be its Art Director and we had a concept which represents the initial step of a broader international project. All this provoked some very radical criticism, which we still have to face.

On the other hand, the positive reactions to the involvement of the October Salon in the international project Continental Breakfast have resulted in continued cooperation with other partner signatories and participants in the project. Continental Breakfast in Belgrade has served a purpose – for the art story from the area of Serbia and Montenegro to be told elsewhere. Aleksandar Kujucev will participate at the exhibition "Memory (W)hole/Continental Breakfast Ljubljana", to be held in Ljubljana in early September this year, with his project The Closet. This work investigates private and public experiences in the process of discovering and identifying various experiences. Towards the end of this year, another exhibition will be organised, entitled "Transitory Places/Continental Breakfast Maribor", and it will feature Mileta Prodanovic, who will be contributing a series of photographs whose main motif is the White Angel, a specific detail from a fresco from the mediaeval Serbian monastery Mileseva, which has become a symbol of renewed religiosity and national awareness. I hope that

these acts of stepping out of the imposed boundaries will be refreshing, not only for the artists in question but also for cultural institutions such as the Belgrade Cultural Centre, whose sphere of activity has been limited. At least until now.

## Branko Franceschi

### Residency effect. Impressions of an accomplice

As I recall, the full swing of residency programs hit Croatia together with the rest of the former European East - West division, sometime in the mid-nineties. Nothing was ever the same. The entire realm of the contemporary visual art scene was suddenly on the move.

There was always someone somewhere in desirable locations in Western Europe and, especially important - though harder to reach due the distance and visa regulations, in USA. Likewise, the presence of foreign artists was apparent on the local art scene. Though the residency system was designed primarily for artists, the surrounding gallery/museum structures were also affected. Although programs conceived to meet needs and interest of art managers, fundraising or curatorial issues, were fewer in number compared to the artist residencies, the good results in that area were reached thanks to the inclusion of gallery/museum professionals in various stages of the residency's organisational processes such as participation in juries, panel discussions, selection committees, creating guidelines, decision making or, thanks to the contemporary art practice, participation in



the context of art and related art projects where curators, critics and managers acted as metaphors of their respectful professional positions. This briefly outlined activity brought deep and profound changes to the contemporary art-related strata of society. Involvement of the foreign foundations based on their level or, if you want, mode of administration brought the new ideas and criteria on how to run local endeavours in terms of requisite standards of application procedures, documentation requirements, impartiality of decision making, expert jury bodies, etc. For smaller countries like Croatia this, at a certain moment, meant not only parallel art administration system, but also a more effective, vital and absolutely fairer one compared to the official bodies. Slowly, after a decade, this system spilled off and in some case merged - either literally, either through the personal carrier moves, with the local governmental, regional or municipal bodies and offices incorporating higher criteria and efficiency levels to the administrative personal. In some cases it was a complete make over. One can't help but make a parallel of the total corporative identity that for instance Soros's Foundation shared with the general attitude of the global corporative world. Entering its Open Society's premises was, to dismay of some and pleasure of others, like stepping on foreign soil. Everything was different, from floor covering to pencil holders, voice message of telephone system, mannerisms of the employees to colourful POST-IT aesthetics and transparent doors. The latter I recently introduced to the Rijeka's Modern and Contemporary Art Museum offices to the dismay of curatorial staff who immediately understood it as one more control-oriented contrivance. The same may be applied to European based cultural centres such as

British Council and Goethe Institute. To conclude: the institutional frameworks, the residency system has to be recognized as two-ways endeavour. Besides facilitating residencies of local artists abroad, it brought a respectable number of artists and professionals into the country for extensive projects and exhibitions research, lectures, symposia and related activities. This gave ample opportunity to local art institutions and artists to present themselves.

While art institutions usually lacked sufficient documentation, the excessive curatorial staff was proverbially articulated and could explain the specifics of the local art context. The majority of artists still lived in a blessed state in which one need not explain his/her artistic discourse and as well didn't consider self-promotion and self-marketing viable at all. A few rejected applications and proposals; later portfolios were put in order and English language courses frequented. During many presentations, moderations or translation I performed at the various selection panels, I realised how important was an artist's ability to define his/her artwork and how important was one's command of English language to gain desirable residency. The famous, albeit insufficiently quoted Mladen Stilinovic's 1992 work "The Artist Who Cannot Speak English Is Not Artist" righteously implied it. The ones who were able to achieve the presumed international standards of presentation, actually those of the western hegemony, were more likely to succeed regardless the, let's call it, "integrity and merit of their oeuvre". The craft of portfolio design and concept, talent to recognize guidelines and hit the key words prove to be more important to get one a few weeks of residency than anything else. And then, list of gained residencies, grants

or awards made it psychologically easier for the subsequent panel to decide upon one's next success. For some it may become the way of life. When we recently discussed possibilities and conditions of her visit or residency in Croatia, an American artist, told me just to send her an invitation letter. "I am the grant queen" she added half-mockingly, "I got them all". We didn't put it to the test. For the contemporary Eastern European artist coming out from the non-existent contemporary art market, participating in the residencies may solve existential problems, a way to survive harsh winter in the cooler place. When prolonged for years, such a way of life creates the feeling of estrangement and pointlessness prevails. The Bulgarian artist Luchezar Boyadjiev in his 1998/9 Cultural GastARTbeiter work, presented at Carlos Basualdo's exhibition Worthless (Invaluable) at Moderna Galerija, Ljubljana (2000), sums up the years and amount of money spent on his residencies during the nineties throughout Western world. The final sum is incredible and Boyadjiev wonders how much better he might have used it and fruitful if he were allowed to stay and spend it in his homeland. To many unrealistic artists, and here we are discussing the majority, instead of 'dream-comes-true' situation, residencies end as a bitter experience. It seems that artists are everywhere regarded as survivors; since money is never sufficient, especially when project based residencies are considered. While per diem and accommodation budget usually covers bare necessities, the production budget is usually ridiculously small. Since the actual goal and important part of the experience for the resident artists usually is an exhibition or any sort of artwork through which he/she can present themselves, it means further cutting of the life's budget or finding out

the sponsors frequently within the expatriates or Diaspora circle. Sometime they even encounter difficulties in squeezing out the agreed production money from the host institutions. More than once I've heard complaints upon return how the host institution participated in the program just to earn money for themselves. This notion I personally don't find strange, but one can object to the fact that division of the budget is rarely transparent - a standard we are supposed to learn from the western democracies. In a role of negotiator, on few occasions I fought quite hard, for the sake of fairness, to obtain same level of conditions for the artists in the exchange programs.

But, that is all part of growing up and shouldn't darken the complete picture. It is hard to imagine present cultural discourse without the residencies and friendly professional apparatus built around them. These people are allies in the fight to integrate our art scene to the international circuit. In recent discussion held at New York's Art in General conceived by Andreja Kuluncic as her project during EERE (Eastern European Residency Exchange) residency, a diverse group of participants coming from the local commercial, non-profit, independent gallery circles, together with their Eastern European guests, tried to find out how to better the residency programs, experiences and results, in brief how to meet needs of the communities involved. While the ideas were many, the most important insight for me was the realisation that need for residency programmes for both of the communities comes from concern of becoming intellectually provincial and insulated unless the constant exchange doesn't take place. This is a positive proof of the agenda of the Trust for Mutual Understanding

Foundation, which after being established by anonymous donor in 1984 to add insufficient USA governmental funds dedicated to the East-West cultural exchanges soon became one of the most visible in the field, stating how "... Encouraging the free flow of information and ideas among individuals is an essential first step toward achieving peaceful and lasting relationships among nations. The Trust's grant program reflects donors conviction that grant-making organizations can make at least a small contribution to that process by supporting international exchanges featuring direct person-to-person contact and professional interaction."(1).

Many on the American side believe that for them this goal is at the present moment more important than ever. To illustrate briefly the amount of involvement and achievement of a single institution I'll use data published in a catalogue on the occasion of the Flipside exhibition celebrating more than decade of Artslink in SOHO's Artist Space Gallery in 2004/2005. The ArtsLink program was established in 1992 as a combination of private and public resources of National Endowment of Arts, Soros's Open Society Institute (who abandoned program in 1999), The Trust for Mutual Understanding and CEC International Partners (today CEC ArtsLink), in order to support the arts projects of US artists in Central Europe, Russia and Eurasia and Residency Fellowships for that region's artists in the United States. Since inception more than three million dollars were distributed to 817 artists and art managers from 22 countries and over 180 universities, non-profit visual arts, music, and performance spaces, residency organizations, museums and theatres have introduced visiting ArtsLink fellows to their communities and acted as conduits for the artists continuing creative endeavours in

the United States (2). Appreciating this, the list of donors broadened widely since the crucial 2001/2002 year and program is presently safe.

During the last week I've received two e-mails asking for the moral support in order to prevent the governmental cutbacks of cultural public funds that will directly affect existing residency programs. E-mails were distributed from NIFCA (Nordic Institute for Contemporary Art based in Finland) and ISCP (New York based International Studio and Curatorial Program), pointing out similar governmental reasoning on the both side of Atlantic. Let's help them in order to prolong the irreplaceable effect of residency programs for a contemporary cultural context.

1. Excerpt from the statement by Richard Lanier, director, Trust for Mutual Understanding
2. "History and Acknowledgments", Fritzie Brown, Flipside catalogue, published by CEC ArtsLink, 2004

## Giancarlo Graziani

### The Art Advisory for the Art Market. The Italy Case

#### DEALERS AND ART ADVISORY

- "An asset manager, an expert on art, a lawyer and a tax-expert: here is a dream team" (Delia Russel, Di Mascio, "Wealth Management")
- "Private banking does include not only investment services supply but also complete tax planning, security insurance, liabilities optimisation, builind planning and art advice" (by Paola Musile Tanzi, "Manual of the Private Banker")

- UBS and Deutsche Bank have turned their private divisions into Wealth Management Departments and they both provide for Art Advisory Services.

#### THE MARKET OF ART

- The Market of Art has been fast-growing worldwide since 1994: referring to an index in 1994 of 5360,43, that index has equalled 11419,901 in 2003 (+ 113%);
- The Market of Art can be divided into four segments: paintings 84,7%, sculpture 10,5%, engraving 2,6% and furniture and others 2,2%;
- Geographically, the Market of Art can be divided this way: the U.S.A. 41,9%, the U.K. 27,5%, France 8,6%, Italy 2,9%, Germany 2,7%, Switzerland 1,7%, Others 14,7%. (The U.S.A. and the U.K. together make up for 69,4% of the whole market against 15,9% of the European Countries)

#### REAL AND POTENTIAL PRIVATE CUSTOM

- Private custom can be thus divided: Europe 32%, North America 29%, Asia 20%, Latin America 13%, Middle East 3,8%, Others 2,2%.

(A private customer has got 0,5 million euros at least to invest in art – in Italy there are some 300.000 private family units, about 1,4% of the total).

- 60% of people approaching the Market of Art are over 40, i.e. they belong to the highest-income segment (23% of them includes people between 40 and 50 years)
- 51% of customers attend this Market to buy art, 15% to invest and collect art.

#### INSTITUTIONAL POTENTIAL CUSTOM

- Pension Funds represent 1% of the financial activities

of the Italian families. In the U.K. they are 23% of the total (9% in Europe and 23% in the U.S.A.)

- The first 20 independent National Insurance Funds in Italy run an assets of over 23 billion euros, almost equally divided into movables and building assets: 1% equals 230 million euros (the average yield of shares & co. has been of 3,32% while that of buildings is 4,61%).
- The 89 Italian Banking Foundations totally run an asset of 45,5 billion euros, mostly invested in movables (29% is represented by banking shares) 1% equals 455 million euros (the average yield reached by Foundations was of about 5,2%).

#### DEVELOPMENT FACTORS

- Operators Certification: Artservice has formulated the regulation of the professional certification of Art dealers according to the Uni En Iso 9000, Uni Cei En 45020, Uni En Iso 9001 rules (the first in Europe).
- Trasparency: Artservice is cooperating with the Nomisma Laboratory of the Market of Art to reach a clear determination of the fair value of Art.
- Appropriate Legislation: Artservice is proposing appropriate measures to liberalize the Market of Art moving with the times and with the new integration development in Europe

#### ART ADVISORY SERVICES

- Assistance: insurance and transport, packing, stockage, safekeeping, restoration and preservation of works of Art.
- Advices: valuation and estimate of works of Art and enhancement of Private or Institutional pieces and collection; analysis and solution of legal, tax, import-export and financial problems.



- Broking: investment and disinvestment of Art choosing the suitest market and the most appreciate sector in an advisable timing.
- Information: strong values, indication of trends and performances reached in cooperation with the Laboratory of the Market of Art.
- In Slovenia an import-export movement of works of art between 1.5 and 2 million euros was registrated between 1996 and 2001: it is important to note that import-export movement particularly involved Russia and Countries of the old Yugoslavia, i.e. with more depressed values than other countries, such as Europe, for instance.
- The Market of Art is ever-growing and a dynamic one also because our Government has really set us free Between 1998 and 2001 our market grew by 7% while the European one has decreased by 7,2% (thus aith a negative index of -14,2% in Europe) There are no limitations or restrictions to our import-export movements. (Gilbert Edelson, American Art Dealer Association Director)
- Artservice proposes to the dealers of art in the New Europe to create a permanent working Group in the CEI area made by the representatives of each Country involved and operating to create an integration of import-export movements free from any legal bounds thus competitive with the Anglo-Saxon Countries and able to generate richness and employment enhancing local professionals. We hope CEI will support us in doing that as well as in this precious occasion.
- The Market of Art must be recognized as a basic part of the economical development in the New Europe.

# Anders Härm

## Curating the East

### Local tendencies and Western expectations

Although we have been operating in the same political conditions over a year we still see how the West creates an image of the East from a certain superior position. Even if they mean well. There are of course many reasons for this but what is the most important one? Is it money? Is it the art world and art market? Is there some other reason? Maybe it is the specific curatorial positions that are playing an important role here? How does the East reach the West? What are the criteria? These are the questions that interest me within the framework of this text.

- Locality demand...

It is basic post-modern claim, so well put in the book by Mika Hannula called "Why do I like Rock Music?" that we shouldn't speak of it in the context of relativity but rather of plurality and pluralism. We should acknowledge that self is always situated and we can not make any universal claims about it and even the psychology of a post-modern person has changed and so should the psychoanalysis. Pluralism does however not mean that there are no real positions, they do exist and collide, they create conflicts etc. and we should acknowledge them as relevant within the existent time and space. This is all very good and clear and I am ready to sign this statement every time. However, what happens if the locality becomes some kind of a demand, something that is expected from you, a certain position that you have to take even if you are

speaking only from and for yourself. I see that something like that is happening in Eastern Europe and specially in the context of Eastern European art and the way it is treated over the nineties and more than ever –NOW. What I see and I am speaking now solely for myself is that there is a quite clear horizon of expectations for Eastern European art and what it should look like. You are expected to speak of your locality, preferably your own home village if you have one, to create somewhat sweet but socially adequate view of it. While doing so shows a certain personal relationship with this all and shows your ability to feel empathy. And it is truth that it has had some very fruitful outcomes. And I would be exaggerating if I would say that all this positions taken by artists are not motivated by an inner need to mediate these experiences. However, if you have been raised in a city, be it the city as small as Tallinn, you have different experiences of your surroundings and you want to mediate them differently. What if you don't play according to the given rules "of socially adequate" contemporary Eastern European art? You are simply not able or invited to participate in the discussions over the new Europe or whatever the subject is. What if you don't see your self-image related to a certain agrarian perspective that is so openly offered for you to fulfil. What if you see your experiences not that differently from the West?

There is a certain tendency towards locality clichés and this is definitely one way to create rather than rethink them. We have seen how Russians have quite cynically accepted it - in the words of Ekaterina Degot - "if you want this we give it to you". What is given is a certain image of Russians going totally crazy whenever they see a samovar somewhere. There is no doubt that Eastern

European or for that matter all art outside the West has been mediated through a very tiny perspective. But more important than this is the question where have these demands come from?

- ...and where it comes from?

To answer that, we must ask ourselves, in which context does Eastern European art emerge at all? And it is quite clear that it is mostly some "social project" with a very determined aim from the beginning. Who does, for example, a neo-minimalist project with Eastern European artists or if that matter new European painting? So I think that comes with an access to European market and that the market niche is always related to your locality not to the things you might have in common and share. Despite the rethorics there is always a certain amount of exoticism involved in dealing with this subject.

So I will claim that this has come from a certain international curatorial practices that have reached Eastern Europe and in certain other contexts these positions are not even shown. I would also claim that there are certain ready-made expectations within curatorial practices. To alter that I strongly suggest the "inside out" curating- first the research and then the concept rather than other way around.

The other thing is the market- I also claim that this locality demand is related to the market values while protecting their own goods and not circulating the art that could invade the Western commercial market. So it is better to keep Eastern Europe out of that picture. This claim might be not correct, but I think it certainly emphasizes the situation.

So to conclude, I think that the main reason is the narrow-

minded view on curating and the expectations that “mainstream” curating has. To overcome that I suggest a stronger collaboration in the East. For a long period of time we were not able to produce this view of us ourselves. I think now we are slowly but definitely moving towards this aim. I think it is time to produce and curate ourselves from the local perspective with the problems that interest us rather than the West. This is the way that we are really able to realise the problem: “Wer Geld gibt kontrolliert” that has dominated East European art for over 15 years.

## Ania Jagiello

How to convince to contemporary art?  
Activity of the Polish Institute of Rome

Thank you very much for the invitation to this debate called “Expanded Map”.

What I find very significant is that the map of a European conscience is infact still growing and there is still a lot to do. I have lived for an one and half years in Italy and I can observe a sort of confusion regarding the countries which are new members of EU, candidates or non-members of the E.U. I work for the Polish Institute of Rome, which is responsible for Polish cultural promotions in Italy and Malta. Before and after May 2004 we noticed a big interest of Italian Institutions in the process of enlargement. We had a lot of invitations to participate in collective events dedicated to the new members. We were confused with other new members. After May 2004 who

thought that Poland would enter the EU in 2007 called the Institute inviting us for an event dedicated to the enlargement in three years. This kind of misunderstanding shows the lack of knowledge about our countries and the importance of their promotion (of course not only cultural). I am going to deal with an experience of Polish art and especially contemporary art promotion in Italy. I will start with a short presentation of our Institute. It is a state institution founded 13 years ago by the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs. There are more than 10 Polish Institutes all over the world (mostly in Europe) whose task is the promotion of culture and science. The Institutes and other ministry units dealing with promotion receive a very general kind of instruction every year but actually the programme and particular methods depend on the individual choices of the director and people who create each Institute. Malgorzata Furdal has been the director of Polish Institute of Rome for 4 years and she proposed a new, very dynamic policy based on the good knowledge of not only Polish but also of Italian cultural environment. She distributed tasks among the persons working in the Institute inviting me to look after the section dedicated to contemporary art. There are a few conditions that have to be fulfilled to promote an art of one country in another one and now I would like to describe them from my own perspective.

1. First of all study and recognition of the Italian contemporary art scene beginning with Rome, a city full of galleries; there are two big, new museums of contemporary art Macro and Maxxi, a lot of exhibition spaces, plenty of artists, art critics and curators. It is very important to find proper Italian partners and to establish contacts with them to collaborate in common projects

and to try to become a recognisable place in the contemporary map of the city.

2. We started our visual art program based on shows of young artists already well-known in Poland and abroad. The first exhibition was "The Pole and what's more heavier than the air" of Kuba Bakowski. Obviously a very important part, besides the show and the small folder with text was the promotion of the event as a beginning a new contemporary program of the Polish visual art for the Polish Institute of Rome. Then we invited other artists as Janek Simon, Robert Maciejuk, Krzysztof Zielinski, Julia Staniszevska or Jacek Malinowski showing them in the space of the gallery of the Institute.

3. The collaboration with Polish art critics, curators, galleries and museums (of course besides of artists) was always very important. From the beginning our contemporary visual program preferred projects of Polish curators, for example this one of Karolina Lewandowska from Zacheta National Gallery in Warsaw and speeches of Polish art critics like this one of Piotr Szubert dedicated to the committed art in Poland. We collaborated with institutions as for example: Centre for Contemporary Art Zamek Ujazdowski in Warsaw, Zacheta National Gallery in Warsaw.

4. The specific of the national space (in case of national Institute we should describe it like this) makes that place quite limited. It is not a criticism but just the fact that we have to remember and try to confront the Polish culture with this what is happening around. That's why a very important work of the Institute is to go outside one's own space and to present (in my case) artists or projects in the city as for example: "Consequence" of Dominik Lejman and "Virtual Quartet" of Wojciech Kosma Janek Simon

within the limits of the Festival Celimontana in Rome or "In Art Dreams Comes True", the performance of Katarzyna Kozyra within the limits of Roma Europa Festival

5. We are also happy to invite artists, curators and art critics from other countries to Polish Institute of Rome. One of a first exhibition in our space was Clone, a project dedicated to the international artists and made together with some Italian curators. Soon we are going to open a show together with Roberto Anecchini consists works of a few artists from different countries (Kader Attia, Bigert and Berstrom, Bogna, Burska, Nathali Grenzhaeuser, Regina Hubner, Jacek Malinowski...) A few months ago we closed a common exhibition of Mirosław Balka and Alfredo Pirri curated by Anna Maria Nasissi in the Polish Institute and in another Roman space called "Volume!"

6. The majority of those artists, which I mentioned till now are the recent artists. I am going to continue with this line but now I would like as well to propose some exhibitions showing some parts of our history of art. In the end of the year we will present the Polish legendary artist Jozef Robakowski.

7. Everything I have said concerned of the direct activity of the Polish Institute but there are some other aims less visible by public but also very important as information and help for Italian curators, art critics, journalists, galleries, institutions concerning of the Polish art. We have quite big collections of books on the topic, catalogues of exhibitions, documentations of artists and videos. We are also ready to help to bring into contact Italian curatorial world with Polish artists. A few months ago we organised the study tour in Poland for Italian curators and critics. They saw the most important Polish



galleries and centres for art. They met a lot of artists, curators, art critics. They had an opportunity to speak with them and to know Polish art in Polish context. I hope that this experience will be useful in their future work.

There is not the special policy of the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs for the promoting of visual art and especially contemporary art; there is even no interest for this sphere. Therefore this, how it is promoted, depends really only on a team of our Institute. The most important goal for us is to manage for a good programme and at the same time to confront it with Italian reality and to collaborate with good selected Italian partners and so provoke interesting meetings on the international contemporary art scene.

## Beral Madra

### Positions in East of EU in the expanded map Micro and macro policies of contemporary art and culture

In Turkey the effect of EU cultural policies began in the 90's mostly on individual networking level and gradually, with the growth of the NGO's developed into a private-institutional relationship. In accordance with the global economy, the political and integration process of the EU the culture in Turkey gained independence, autonomy and private sector interest. Consequently, the rupture between the Istanbul-based contemporary art productions and Ankara-based cultural policy became distinct, Ankara was not able to follow the needs and

dynamics of the younger generation of creative people. The ruling government unified the Ministry of Culture and the Ministry of Tourism with the aim of privatisation of official cultural institutions which caused a further break between the actual artistic production and the cultural policy of the government.

The Istanbul art scene has turned its face towards the EU since the end of the 80's, neglecting its historical and cultural links with its East and Southeast. Even the Mediterranean identity has not been enhanced. If one should be more realistic or if one should confess: the position of Istanbul towards the EU culture is still a "oneway" relationship; we are still receivers rather than givers.

In my opinion, the cultural relationship of Turkey to the EU is at the moment quite pragmatic and has no genuine interactive commitment: Culture is being used- not to say abused - by the state, local governments and the private sector in their own interests to enter the EU. This goal is being achieved with old-fashioned national, folkloric and populist "festival" packages, that are launched in the cities with Turkish minorities all over Europe.

On the other hand the professional "culture actors" are still too vulnerable and insecure. The infrastructure of international art and culture management is not developed into a continuous and effective interaction with their partners in the EU. For the current local art production that can compete with the art production in EU there is sporadic support from the EU, reluctant support from the Turkish private sector, but no support from central and local government. Official and public funds are hardly available for the individuals of the art scene. Therefore the institutions and individuals cannot

respond to “exchange” programs, which is the basis of genuine relation with EU countries

We might describe this relation we have by saying it is ambiguous, complex and detached, because the conditions of the culture industry in Turkey cannot fully respond to the requirements of the culture industry in EU. This yet incomplete process is at a very crucial moment: the EU immediately started to expand its culture policy at first to the East European countries and later to the Balkans after the fall of the Wall. Although the process is not yet complemented there yet, Turkey very quickly - maybe too quickly- became the field of expansion towards the East and South East of Europe. The policy obviously is being extended over Turkey to the South Caucasus, to the Near and Middle East. Therefore, Istanbul is no more the border or bridge, but a “complex” transmitter of EU culture towards the “further” East.

There is a problem of identity within the concept “complex”: It is an emblematic / charismatic position. Istanbul is still distanced and nonchalant to Anatolia and to East and South-East of Turkey. Istanbul is spoilt by overindulgence. There is a hegemony of micro-politics against the macro politics. With this complex identity Istanbul is in a state of continuous fusion and con-fusion. The border has shifted to East and Southeast Turkey, around which the countries are expressing themselves with the cultures of their emblematic / charismatic capital cities and urban life, which are astonishingly similar to Istanbul. In the near future – I might be exaggerating- Istanbul can become a sort of “cultural representation territory” of Tibilisi, Yerevan, Baku, Teheran, Damascus, Beirut, Amman, Cairo and Tel Aviv...

And, most of these cities are in globalisation distress.

For these cities, Modernity was a false appearance and rupture, Post-modernity was the outcome of post-colonial/post-soviet period and the capitalist drive, Globalism became a hurricane.

These traditions and history-laden cities are not centers of welfare and democracy. Yet, unfairly the historical status and the sociopolitical context of these cities determine the "gaze" of EU societies at the Non-EU territories.

This "gaze" is quite suspicious and anxious. It stares at some fundamental facts:

1. Global capitalism and politics inflame strong reactions as local cultural resistances in the name of cultural, linguistic or ethnic identities. These manifestations are being misused by the governments for populist goals.
2. Cultural exchange and production in the form of immigrant art or so called ethnic market art are reflecting the profound cultural crisis which is accompanying globalism. These manifestations are being misused by the market-oriented wholesale exhibitions and related events.
3. Not only the Non-EU but also EU nations are undergoing a profound cultural crisis of identity because globalisation with its requisites to hastily absorb the foreign influences is depriving them of their traditional, economic and political independence.

I think the "NO" of the French and the Dutch referenda clearly revealed these facts.

Under the same conditions, Istanbul is commissioned and designated not only to be a territory of transculturality, but also has to construct a genuine exchange – which I hope is a communication based on equality and mutual understanding or reciprocity – with Turkey in the whole but also with all these cities around its Eastern and South-eastern borders.

This is a twofold task; a task that should have been fulfilled long before...Better late than never...

As a curator in this territory I am going after the artists who are fully aware of this crisis and phenomena, who are thinking and creating art beyond the visible and official facts of the cultural relation with the EU, who are carrying the burden of transmitting micro and macro culture entities– which is obviously inevitable – with criticism, with an exceptional consciousness and an unpredictable sense of humor .

I will finish my words with a quotation from an Italian scholar, Giovanna Lelli:

“I believe that transculturality can never really exist until workers, intellectuals and artists are free to move from one country to another, until all citizens and countries have the same access to culture, knowledge and technology. Transculturality today, especially regarding aesthetics, is the exception, not the rule. That is why I would consider transculturality a transitory, problematic concept belonging to a time of deep cultural crisis. But I would also consider it a challenge for the future. Transculturality will really exist only when the word is no longer needed and we can simply call it culture or civilisation.” (1)

1. Giovanna Lelli (University Oriental Institute, Naples, Italy), “Transculturality: A Problematic Concept. Aesthetics Between Islam and the West”, Intercontinental Conference October 25-28, 2000

## Dragana Palavestra

City of Belgrade – City Administration. Realisation of programmes and the mutual relations of participants in the financing of contemporary art (events, institutions, artists)

Through its Secretariat for Culture, the Assembly of the City of Belgrade provides financial assistance for the organisation of a great number of art programmes that are seen in galleries, museums, cultural institutions and in other, alternative spaces serving other purposes. The City Assembly's plan and programme of financing encompasses a selection from the broad programme offer submitted to the Secretariat for Culture by institutions, art associations, organisations and artists through public bidding. The selection of programmes in specific areas of culture is made by specialised committees and by a special Committee for Programmes in the Sphere of Culture, established as an expert work group answerable to the Mayor. In its programme selection work, the Committee makes its decisions based on the quality of the programmes being offered, and whether they serve the basic function and advance the programme concept of cultural institutions, and the quality of individual authors' programmes and projects which may expand and enrich Belgrade's cultural offer.

The basic programme orientation of the Secretariat for Culture is aimed at: the selection and providing incentives for the quality of programmes, the reorganisation of the "institutions network" and the manner of financing.

Through direct monitoring of the work of cultural

institutions, the Committee for Programmes in the Sphere of Culture gets an insight into their programme activities and monitors programme realisation; the Committee also provides expert assistance when it comes to a clear profiling of the programme concept and offers proposals for advancement of the activities of cultural institutions. Through the work of cultural committees, special committees for providing incentives for creative work, councils of cultural events, expert committees, selectors and juries, over 750 artists, scientific researchers and experts from various fields are involved in the work of the Secretariat for Culture. They provide competence, objectivity and ensure the quality of programme activities. Apart from regular programmes, the Secretariat for Culture also provides incentives for the realisation of special programme projects in the sphere of culture: the making of documentary and short films, publishing capital works in the domain of art and the humanities, buying up works of art in the sphere of visual arts and presenting the works of young music and fine arts creators in international contests.

- Contemporary art: the Secretariat for Culture of the Assembly of the City of Belgrade also provides incentives and financial assistance for fine arts and applied art, visual and expanded media, within the framework of exhibition activities taking place in 24 galleries and exhibition spaces. These are primarily galleries and cultural institutions established by the City. Financial assistance is also provided for the realisation of programmes in socially and privately owned galleries. The City has opted to finance 324 exhibitions (individual, group, collective-traditional, retrospective, international, occasional, authorial) in 2005.

Proposals for exhibition programmes are submitted by gallery councils through a process of public bidding wherein artists and project authors participate. The City Assembly also provides funds for programmes on the basis of proposals or invitations by art directors and councils, as well as traditional programmes with a different manner of selection.

The Secretariat for Culture has also opted to provide incentives for research-type programme and exhibition activities (authorial projects), international exhibitions and authorial artistic production. Reimbursement is granted to authors for the preparation of individual exhibitions or artistic projects. The amount of reimbursement varies depending on the type of exhibition and the space it is held in.

The Secretariat for Culture of the City Assembly of Belgrade also finances special, individual, independent projects representing some phenomenon, research or establishing connections between artistic phenomena and trends, which are not included in the plans of institutions that are within the framework of the system of financing.

- Institutions: the Assembly of the City of Belgrade has decided that in 2005 one of its priorities in the plan and programme of financing should be providing incentives for the professional advancement of personnel employed in cultural institutions and talented young artists. In accordance with this, activities pertaining to faster and all-encompassing information exchange, procurement of technical literature, updating the work methodology and organisation (evaluation of the work of institutions, defining priorities in the programme scheme and the preparation of long-term strategic plans of institutions) will receive support.



This year the Secretariat for Culture, in cooperation with the Centre for Professional Development, has already realised the first workshop within the framework of the experimental education programme, which should become a project of permanent education of personnel employed in cultural institutions of the City of Belgrade. At a time when abroad, and also in our country, the question of the functionality and justification of the existence of cultural institutions financed from local community budgets is often raised, this kind of programme is necessary for a number of reasons. First of all, it raises the overall level of awareness among the personnel employed in cultural institutions and encourages them to review the role, position and the manner of functioning up to now of each organisation. This programme fits in with the new cultural policy of the City, which poses new demands and anticipates changes which must inevitably occur in the sphere of work of cultural institutions. Hence the strategies of establishing connections at all levels – from the local through regional to international – have become firmly established.

- International cooperation and exchange: as one of the priorities of its programme activities, the Secretariat for Culture carries out, organises and finances projects of international cooperation.

Within the framework of the Secretariat for Culture of the Assembly of the City of Belgrade, the Committee for International Cooperation has been formed, which proposes priorities in the financing of projects in this area and develops a long-term concept of the international cooperation programme of the City of Belgrade. A significant improvement of international cooperation and

exchange in the coming year will be effected through the signing of protocols on cooperation between the City of Belgrade and foreign cultural centres and embassies located in Belgrade. This kind of agreement aims to improve and dynamise well thought-out, institutionally supported and guided cooperation in the sphere of culture. The Secretariat for Culture will also initiate a campaign for signing new protocols on cooperation between the City of Belgrade and cities in Europe and in the world; such protocols would be of particular importance for exchange of know-how in the sphere of creation of cultural policy and exchange of development solutions for cultural institutions and cultural industry. There is a plan for the Secretariat of Culture to renew its membership and actively participate in "Les Rencontres" – Association of European Cities and Regions for Culture, whose head office is in Paris.

The aims of programmes within the framework of international cooperation ensure the visibility of Belgrade's culture in the Balkans and in Europe, provide the possibility of evaluation of our own achievements against European standards, make comparisons possible and ensure better conditions for the development of Belgrade cultural institutions, create new possibilities for development through partnerships in culture, broaden the horizon of cultural activities for both the artists and the public (discovery and presentation of world experiences). The concept is based on the premises that Belgrade occupies an important place in the culture of South Slavic peoples and strives to take the key position in Balkan cooperation. Belgrade must also be open to European artistic creations and must acquaint its public with the diversity of world cultures.

- Events in the sphere of culture: the Assembly of the City of Belgrade has initiated nine events in the sphere of culture, all of them international in character. Among them is the October Salon, an event in the sphere of visual arts. The Assembly of the City of Belgrade appoints councils of these events and adopts rules in accordance with international rules for international festivals. The Secretariat for Culture insists on defining clear profiles of programme concepts for these events, on the quality of programmes and on well thought-out presentation of such programmes to the public. Although the Assembly of the City of Belgrade finances these events to a large degree, their organisers are obligated to provide additional sources of financing (sponsors, sale of tickets). International events initiated by the City are, to a small degree, financed from the budget of the Republican Ministry of Culture and the Media.

In 2005, the Secretariat for Culture will help the realisation of programmes of 43 events to be held in Belgrade that have not been initiated by the City of Belgrade.

- Artists: within the framework of its plan and programme of financing projects in the sphere of contemporary art, the Secretariat for Culture provides incentives for individual artists and realisation of exhibitions, buys up works of art and passes the programme of financing pension and welfare insurance funds. The Secretariat for Culture helps artistic production by granting reimbursement to artists for the realisation of exhibitions. In view of the fact that the contemporary art scene and production in our country are based on a vaguely defined market in terms of sale of works in the sphere of visual



arts, the Secretariat for Culture of the Assembly of the City of Belgrade has concluded that there is a need to introduce the practice of buying up works of art for the purpose of supplementing the collections of museum-type institutions with contemporary works of art and providing incentives for artists. Within the framework of the Secretariat for Culture there is a Committee monitoring artistic production, establishing criteria and procedures for buying up works of art and submitting proposals for buying up works in the sphere of visual arts. The Committee's term of office is two years. The Committee submits proposals for buying up works of art from retrospective exhibitions, individual and group exhibitions, authorial and occasional exhibitions, directly from artists and owners, from exhibitions organised by museums, state-owned and privately owned galleries, upon the request of City museums for their collections, and through public bidding called by the Committee.

For years, the Secretariat for Culture of the City of Belgrade has been paying pension-disability and health insurance for independent artists on the basis of a Decree which contains criteria that artists should fulfil in order to realise their right to social insurance. This year the Secretariat will continue to pay welfare contributions for 1.343 independent artists after a new Decree on paying contributions has been passed.

Through the Secretariat for Culture and based on the approved financial plan and programme, in the ways mentioned above, the Assembly of the City of Belgrade exerts influence on the culture of the City, and thereby on contemporary art as well. Through its expert bodies and committees, the Secretariat provides support to quality contemporary art programmes suitable for both the

domestic and the foreign scene. Through cultural institutions, be it indirectly or directly, it exerts influence on the quality of their programmes intended for the domestic public, and through the initiative for personnel development and additional education abroad, our cultural institutions prepare long-term plans for international cooperation and for their own work. Through its committees, the Secretariat for Culture itself defines the strategy of international cooperation for the coming period, as well as the long-term strategy concerning the financing priorities in the sphere of contemporary art through cultural institutions, large-scale events and individuals.

## Alfredo Pirri

### Traces of identity outside the “white cube” art spaces

Various animals purposely mark the territory through their urine, corporal secretions, and other techniques to signal their presence in that specific place to their fellows. Taking our dog for a walk in a park where other dogs are, we can easily observe how the animal is interested (sometimes feverishly) in tracking these marks, how he moves and orients himself showing a major interest in some of them and omitting others. I have always wondered what it means to the dog, if through a particular smell the dog reconstructs an identity “desirable” from any point of view, sexual, relational, etc. At the same time, we can notice how the animal loses interest in the others if the “place” of encounter is a room, even if attended by other

animals, but regularly washed with disinfectants that eliminate the smells or that overlap them.

These rooms are everywhere in Europe, just like in America or Asia. They have no decoration of those tales by images that have accompanied us during all the past, orienting us into the forest of senses, meanings and symbols that is our history, the European history. These spaces don't house anymore the "Works", in the full sense of the term, that spaces out from its object to its spatial meaning, but "Works of art" meaning the result of an activity, of a process that sees in an exaltation of the term "Work" the attempt to make all human activities homogenous, emphasizing those productive and creative characteristics of "Value", ... "The work that creates exchangeable values is then a work abstractly general" according to Karl Marx's words of 1859. The next step from the plural term "Works" that referred to object results with manual and handicraft implications, to that of the singular "Work of art", makes of it a symbolic process that extends, (with a mystic and mythological attitude) the working practice to all human activities, making a creative engine of that value which is at the basis of any economic exchange. That is how work becomes "conceptual", through the accentuation of one of its possible variables, the "speculative" one. With this term at least two things should be intended: first of all the studying, in other words inquiring with the intellect everything in front of or around us to make it ours, as if it was ours. Secondly (and maybe with a priority by now) the use of our acquired knowledge (of any knowledge, being it spiritual or economic) as a treasure to be invested with the end of an immediate earning to the detriment of other people's work, in fact incorporating it in our own sphere of

interests and possibilities, paying it below cost (again both spiritually and economically) and drawing out the highest profit from a future sale to a public who is often unaware of participating in a high financial cultural game, yet who is more often approving the cynical sentiment that makes it appear the winner at a table where human resources and the survival of our own species are at stake.

This cruel, refined, at last conceptual game; based on the assumption that it's possible to reach out at a treasure of knowledge frozen in forms and thoughts to make of art some sort of "investment" with the purpose of managing and augmenting a parasitic income, is exercised indistinctly in either "abstract" places, that is, deprived of environmental or historical characteristics, or "contextual" places that is, overwhelmed by related factors so called memorable.

In both cases, speculative art is incapable of proposing itself as a transforming force, it continues using a vocabulary already given as a book with formulas to be applied. A conjunction of formulas deposited, once and for all, in that mental rather than physical place called long ago, "white cube". By now it's not only a spatial experience but a human and artistic practice profoundly ingrained. The "white cube" is us, our head, our home, and also our treasure that we think we can reinvest with a profit.

In it, each body tends to disappear and with the body each trace of functionality. On the outside it's stained with the blood of those "workers" that contributed to its realization, victims of Central, Southern and Northern Italy, Bosnian women, Wandering Jews, frontier inhabitants, mystic Ottomans, never appeased minorities, serious Polish, impoverished Yugoslavs...etc.

Diaphanous inside, infinite, it's like the house in which we would like to live (or where we do live). The house is often called "mirror of the soul". I'm sure that with this definition it's not (only) meant that it represents us as individuals reflected and recognisable in it, that is identified with it, but instead it's the place of the soul. "Alma Mater" reflects itself in the house passing through the bodies and showing itself externally in its typical colour, that blinding white in which our orientation gets lost, that smells just like detergent, spread out, wisely, even in the most remote corners.

To show art could and should mean the narration of something, to be part of a story and be able to narrate it, making at the same time a commune and a solitary act. Solitary, because such is the risk of the image, commune because this risk is perpetuated with the language. The places of art are the ones which protect the image risk in favour of the singular identity. These are symbolic-places but also passage-places. Places where one is free to use a multiple interpretation without falling into a vague shapelessness. Closed or open spaces that help the exchange between different identities, but where the word exchange shouldn't be intended as merchandise, economic exchange where everything has a price, where, for example some traditions are worth less than others, and for that same reason of easy hoarding and utilizing. The word exchange should keep something from the old barter and plus, with love; exchange of caress with the purpose of giving and taking pleasure, exchange of gifts, that could be reciprocal.

Besides each representation, a place of art is each place that can lovingly keep the image, making it a stone of confrontation and measurement of reference for the



body, intended either as singular body or as social body. Do we have these places in Europe? Places that are able to narrate, that express themselves with images and stories not taken from the vocabulary of the “white cube”? Non classical or anti-classical places but places for the being of art capable of revealing limits and joys of the human beings?

These places exist, sometimes they are the same art places that we all attend, other times they are the shadowy arcades where the voices of the passing echo under painted arches, closed squares like medieval cloisters, grey suburbs playgrounds, rooms in front of the beach, libraries in which no one steps in...these places exist inside of us, its ourselves, our head, our house, our treasure...

## Domenico Ronconi

Looking ahead: Cultural and political considerations at the Second CEI Venice Forum for Contemporary Art Curators

- A framework

The times are tough, opaque, depressing; they are difficult in many parts of the world and for a huge amount of humanity. The situation in Europe, and its underlying causes, now influenced by the blockage in the process of building a Europe of Europeans, seems more than ever beyond the horizon.

We, as people of good will, must therefore call on our knowledge and understanding, be ready to discuss and be

aware of the problems and possibilities, for action. Looking at today's situation in a neutral light, we can ask ourselves what part we play in this, what does it mean for mankind, how were these events conceived and produced by each of us and by our societies? This is the challenge today!

This implies that, intelligently and consistently, we begin to consider, the "Others", for who they are: our inescapable, gifted, human partners. This is the main reason, ladies and gentlemen, for the momentary failure of the European construction, it is this profound ignorance of and lack of contact with our fellow citizens - their identities, their expectations, their richness, their human value - that has been so overlooked by too many representatives and decision-makers.

Only on this basis will it be possible, one day, to have a common wish, an ultimate human dream, or a consensus. Having this in mind means that we cannot escape a thorough understanding and debate – to be done repeatedly together during our gatherings. Such discussions must be placed at the very heart of any reflection, any dialogue, any project to come.

Identity and diversity is the first issue. It must be studied and explained in every practical opportunity offered or consequence that results. "United through diversity" is the motto of the European constitutional treaty. Do we realize what it means? Do the French, for example, understand that their abounding, deep identity has an enriching quality and latent potential of 'identifying,' and allowing others to 'identify' them as well? Do we emphasize enough that - together with the economic goods, indispensable to life - the cultural goods are the most likely to reciprocally enrich human beings and, as a

consequence, to pave the way to other kinds of exchanges?

Why then, if not to face the issue of living together in harmony, don't we start to find new creative solutions to both old and new problems, and share them; in order to better our original human nature, to preserve our common space, to purposefully and fruitfully continue in our quest for knowledge, sense and virtue; to prevent and solve conflicts; to keep peace; to make possible the tremendously exciting adventure of discovering what is ahead.

Living together on the basis of a shared, accepted, embodied code of principles, rules and values, was tackled in an open forum discussion on our culture of ethics. All the countries of Central and Eastern Europe have been members of the Council of Europe for many years now. Its statute and its very *raison d'être* are the protection and promotion of values as fundamental as democracy, human rights, and the rule of law. Yet, they must be shared, exemplified, embodied, discussed, enriched. Publicly discussing and defining what can help us all to live together, in Europe and in the world, would enable us to defy any obscure and technocratic text.

The issue of values (in the sense of *liberté, égalité, fraternité*, solidarity, social justice, sustainability, dialogue and exchange), coupled with the issue of living together, cannot be separated from the 'equity' issue. It is in the name of equity that the European constitution was implicitly and explicitly rejected. But people should be treated, as thinkers, emotional beings, and as recipients and donors alike, according to the best of their most authentic human nature and the embedded heritage of wisdom that history has provided since the dawn of humanity. Any kind of economic and social exclusion, any

lack of solidarity, any kind of egoism, unfair accumulation of goods, or the selfish enjoyment of them, is against the deep human experience of *épanouissement*. This is known. This is proved. Let's tackle it then. Terrorism, has a cultural basis, that must be explained, but its origins are also related to underdevelopment, social and economic injustice, and to the 'cultural' fight against disrespect, the lack of recognition of unequal, unsustainable situations. The question of old and new divides (social, cultural, economic, digital) should consequently be at the very heart, of current debates, including the arts. Experiencing the pleasure of communicating and gathering in the name of one of the most enjoyable human experiences, which is artistic expression, then sharing the preoccupation of making it accessible to all, would make us feel fully immersed in the real world, and aware of it, with empathy. We will be better equipped to be creative, receptive, dialoguing, and effective in enriching this same world from the esthetic propositions we would elaborate, the ultimate aims of which are intended for us all, fellow members of an 'artistic' community.

- A (Council of) Europe approach

Let me now inform you briefly, as a second part of my considerations, of the current cultural policy and action of the Council of Europe. Not to make unwelcome propaganda for a bureaucracy, but to introduce you to what a forum of European representatives, a council, according to its eloquent name, the nature and mind of which is international, and not supranational, is currently doing. Eastern and Central Europe being fully a part of it, we might be interested and possibly inspired by its current 'forward-looking' plan of action.

A Third Summit of Heads of State and Government took place, from 16-17 May, in Warsaw. An expected and very welcome Plan of action, laying down the principal tasks of the Council in the coming years, has been drafted. This is interesting, because it espouses, in the form of a programme and on the basis of clear assumptions, a sort of vision of the existing and potential political (social and cultural) situation in terms that each one of us, citizens and professionals, can attain and share.

The third chapter of this plan of action deals eloquently and in a timely fashion, with “building a more humane and inclusive Europe” and, when it comes to culture, it includes “protecting and promoting cultural diversity, and fostering intercultural dialogue”.

Protecting and promoting cultural diversity is seen as essential for societies to exercise solidarity. In this framework the Council - and I quote - “will foster dialogue on the role of culture in contemporary Europe and define ways to support diversity and artistic creativity, defending culture as a purveyor of values. Steps will be taken to enhance access to cultural achievements and heritage by promoting cultural activities and exchanges”. Here is something for all of us! It will be very interesting to hear about and to learn from your reciprocal approaches and experiences on such matters, and to see what our discussions will add.

While fostering intercultural dialogue - the Action plan announces - the active involvement of civil society (again, us!) will be ensured, including work on issues faced by cultural and religious minorities. Convinced that dialogue between cultures is also fostered by accurate understanding of history, the Plan endorses the Council of Europe’s work in history teaching, and related projects,

encouraging more active involvement of civil society (again!) in this work also.

You see, then, the priorities. Moreover, or globally speaking, promoting democratic citizenship in Europe is one of them, as a specific goal, and/or a methodological framework. The task of building a knowledge-based society, and promoting a democratic culture among “us” citizens, will require ensuring access to culture and education for all, according to a comprehensive and creative approach, everywhere action is conceived and implementation is needed.

Concrete activities are currently implemented at the Council of Europe and, from them, I will mention of special interest to us, the following:

The analysis, the development and reform of cultural policies in member countries is one of the most important, as it implies a theoretical and normative approach together with its practical implementation. The experience and expertise of those concerned are mobilized in member countries on the basis of an elaborated request for assistance and partnership. When it comes to sectorial policies like, policies regarding museums, a whole system of comparison and harmonization is set up, so that the parties participating in the exercise mutually benefit.

But it's not only sophisticated and visionary theory that comes out of the cultural policies implementation. It is also living experience, encounters in the field of action, among professionals, like you, who have experience and problems to share. Without having to say so, Europeans meet Europeans to achieve their highest mutual benefit, and the knowledge of the 'other' comes naturally from the common intelligence of a situation, from the very

scheme and content of the cooperation, while looking for the best way to give a shared project its merited success, and synergetically finding the necessary means.

That is why our STAGE project (Support for Transition in the Arts and culture in Greater Europe) is one of the most successful: it develops national and sector-specific cultural strategies; launches activities for the training of trainers in all areas of culture; develops cultural policies for cities; fosters relationships among cultural professionals and reinforces regional cultural exchange.

A visible set of activities, even more likely to interest our present and future meetings, are the Council of Europe Arts Exhibitions. The original purpose of this series, initiated in 1954, in the Cold-War period, was to demonstrate the basic unity of European art and thus strengthen the notion of belonging to a broad European culture transcending more divisive national feelings.

Since this time, 27 exhibitions have been organized, largely dealing with movement of people and ideas which have modeled Europe: the ancient civilization of Anatolia, the Bronze Age, the Vikings, the Portuguese discoveries, the French revolution. Others, like "Art and power" and "The art of the historicism", illustrated the powerful interplay between society and its art and artists. For 2005, 2006 and beyond, the Council has awarded its patronage to the 'Universal Leonardo Project' (ULP), a uniquely integrated programme presenting Leonardo as a major European figure in art but also in science, through an entirely new kind of exhibition. It aims to create a wholly unique experience for popular and scholarly audiences, through exhibitions and personal interaction, in a variety of locations, sustained by new technologies, the media and traditional publications.

The Council of Europe Cultural Routes programme is another activity which is relevant. It was launched in 1987 and its initial concept was to demonstrate in a visible way, by means of a journey through space and time, how the heritage of different countries of Europe always represented a shared cultural heritage. The Routes provide, as you can easily understand, a concrete demonstration of principle and values: cultural diversity and identity, dialogue, mutual exchange and enrichment, across boundaries and centuries. The Santiago de Compostela Routes, served initially as a source of inspiration, then became the reference point for the many other examples which followed.

Access to archives is another, both sophisticated and plainly... accessible, effort of the Council of Europe to build a feeling, among Europeans, of belonging to a common past, of shared memory, from which comes learning, inspiration, enlightenment and, again, a free and constructible identity. Archives, are tangible and factual records of the past. When the Berlin Wall came down, the opening of national archives in Central and Eastern Europe at once provided a reminder of their prime function as guardians of the nation's memory. It is in this context that the Council of Europe has, with the backing of the International Council on Archives, started working on them and, more particularly, on the fundamental question of making them accessible. A recommendation – which to date is the first and unique intergovernmental standard on access policy and practice, was drafted in 2000. A handbook of guidelines for its implementation will be published this year. Parallel activities - like the computerization of the Komintern archives, the reconstitution of the memory of Poland (thanks to an



inventory of sources held in other countries, made available via an international data base), the strong interest expressed by Turkey on inventorying the sources of the immense Ottoman archives - show an original way to join in the project.

- Looking ahead

Yet, a failed Europe? Europeans with no awareness of their interconnected past and of their future opportunities? Without memory (of l'Europe avant l'Europe), backed by a retrospective nationalism? With no ambition to share? Without generosity?

Let's see, in this forum, what we first, and the people we are working with and for, feel is still missing from our cooperation. Because cooperation is at stake. Avoiding isolation and staying open, giving and taking, exchanging, and not just in quantified material goods, but in a qualified way of enjoying them, in a fair, mutually enriching interchange.

Let's do this in our meeting, beginning with our experience and good will. There should be dialogue because of this. It is not only a psychological and ethical question, and a cultural one, but also at the end an exquisite political choice.

We should be able to think of specific action, producing examples in which all art of our time – its content, its significance, its message, its promise of fulfillment – give us the gift of not only celebrating but also deeply enjoying the different diversities.

We will be able to discuss the meanings and the roles of the existing cultural premises and goods (museums, exhibitions, celebrations). We will be creative, from this Central Europe lieu de mémoire, on our way to

contributing to a Central European, and consequently fully European, dream.

A European dream that, quoting the words of the American Jeremy Rifkin, might “emphasize community relationships over individual autonomy, cultural diversity over assimilation, quality of life over the accumulation of wealth, sustainable development over unlimited material growth, deep play over unrelenting toil, universal human rights and the rights of nature over property rights, and global cooperation over the unilateral exercise of power”. As you know, numerous pages of comments have been produced by the French intellectual elite to explain the French and Dutch ‘no’ to the European constitution. Some of them make the point:

“Il a cruellement manqué, depuis de longues années, à la fois des pédagogues et des prophètes du grand dessein européen” - says one.

“La dynamique du non n’a puisé sa force dans l’espérance, positive, d’une Europe plus généreuse” - says another. “C’est une réaction nihiliste, populiste, xénophobe et volontiers parano”, that did its work. “Agacement de payer continuellement pour les autres, peur soudaine d’un espace ouvert à toutes les immigrations, vertige d’une identité qui se cherche” : all the ingredients of a temptation of curling up . It’s going back to a ‘balance nombriliste’: how much will it cost me, how much do I get? Nobody dared to say that a Union, for the nations as well as for men and women, implies, beyond the exchange, *une part d’abandon*, a bit of free giving.

What is required of us? Just giving, for the pure pleasure of sustaining a brother, or sister out of humanity, and in the name of an inspiring idea, and project, taking into

account a common heritage, and its values. 'In fact - says a British journalist - belonging to Europe cannot be just geographically evident, a social and economic jackpot. Europe will sort out its nervous breakdown when she has a true element of cohesion, when she knows which values she has to share.

In my opinion, in our opinion I may dare say - promoting contemporary art; confronting modern goals and the role of contemporary art promoters, in a rich heterogeneous panorama like Central Europe; 'expanding the map', as our programme wittily says: this is an exemplary project. Perceiving the 'other' in a new Europe, investigating some common cultural foundations and roots, identifying in them those nourishing elements which can increase a new type of wealth, this, if you allow me to say so, is a genuinely forward-looking agenda.

And all this, in such a serene city, with an eloquent momentum. Let's chose the way of the arts, then, and create the art of the 'way'.

Let's enjoy the journey.

# Gabriela Świtek

## Invisibility. The Cultures of Collecting Data

Four Polish artists, Oskar Dawicki, Igor Krenz, Wojtek Niedzielko, Lukasz Skapski, the members of Azorro group, sit in a small garden around the square mini-table, smoking cigarettes. The artists have been invited to an exhibition, so they are trying to formulate a new, preferably revolutionary concept of a contemporary work of art. Here is a fragment of a play, a kind of "lazy brain storm" based on their film Everything Has Been Done. The tragedy (for it is a tragedy in 3 acts, without an epilogue) takes place in Poland, at the beginning of the 21st century:

Third: - And... or... what about walking. Somewhere.

Second: (wondering): - Walking...

Third (confirming): - Walk, walk on foot...

Fourth: - On foot. Along the beach. By the ocean. That's been done, I saw a documentation...

Second: - But it's been done, for sure? Done? (turning to First) You've seen it?

First: (disorientated, because he was just thinking about something else, but he answers solemnly) – That's been done, I saw that.

Fourth: - I saw that too, those...

Third: - And to walk without producing a documentation?

Second: - Without a record? (laughter)

Fourth: - Go to the curator without a documentation. (laughter)

First (naively): - That hasn't been done before...

Fourth: - It has, it has. It's common (1).

What is the moral of this dialogue? Does it mean that if any kind of artistic gesture is not recorded or documented, it is as if never existed? Or, what kind of documentation are we talking about? About an elusive artistic performance that is documented? About an artistic activity which is itself a document of the elusiveness of everyday practices? About digital records? About internet resources, web pages, a promenade through an artistic cyberspace? Or about paper documents, catalogues, descriptions of the projects that have already taken place, but will not be seen ever again? What is a difference between a documentation and a portfolio of an artist? Who should be the one who collects these data? And the final question, who really needs documentation and what for?

For me these questions are not just theoretical. They invade my mind whenever I enter the documentation department in Zacheta National Gallery of Art in Warsaw - as a curator or as a researcher. The very word "archive" sounds old-fashioned and uncanny to me. Or in other words, archive-like or museum-like culture seems to me such an exploited Enlightenment project when confronted with some ambitions of visual culture as a barometer of the present, the fugitive, the new or the trendy.

There are two extremes in Zacheta Gallery concerning documentation and information on contemporary art. On one pole there is a huge, traditional archive, that is paper documentation. On the other pole there is a need for data digitalization and the already existing, so-called "Informatorium/Netforum".

The traditional archive is as old as the first post-war institution based in Zacheta building; it was the Central Bureau for Exhibition Organisation founded in 1949. The

contemporary archive has two main profiles inherited from the previous documentation practices. One profile is to keep records of the exhibitions and other events organised by the gallery. Except for an exhibition catalogue, one can find here invitations, posters, press releases, press reviews, plans demonstrating the distribution of art works within each exhibition hall. A separate collection consists of all kind of photographs, the photos of openings, exhibition overviews, specific artworks, and short films on DVD. Especially the latter ones render well the spatial arrangement for those who have not seen an exhibition in "reality".

The other part of documentation consist of so-called "folders" and "envelopes" of Polish artists active after 1945; at the moment there are about 27.000 names registered in the catalogue - one of the biggest in Poland. The folders and envelopes include catalogues, invitations, posters, press reviews. Their volume depends not so much on the actual status of an artist and the scope of his or her activity, but rather on the effectiveness of monitoring Polish art world during past fifty six years, that is on monitoring the activity of the galleries in Poland and abroad, or on scanning the newspapers and art magazines on a regular basis. This archive is not about creating a new canon in contemporary art. I want to believe that it rather follows a Foucauldian principle that we do not have a universal History. We only have archives. Who is really using this documentation? Mostly the curators from Zacheta Gallery while writing an essay for a catalogue or a press release. Also curators, art critics and art historians from other institutions, and students writing up their dissertations. The latter ones sometimes come up with very direct requests. A sociology student, for

example, wrote an e-mail that he is not interested in contemporary art but he was told to prepare a questionnaire on scandals. He heard that there had been some scandalous exhibitions in the gallery, so he would like to know which ones could be classified as such, what was really going on, and is there a specific web page dealing with this issue. He definitely had no time to see the archive and do some research here.

This anecdote points to the problem of accessibility and effectiveness of documentation. Given the number of names in the catalogue or the number of shelves in the archive rooms one may say that Polish contemporary art is well-documented. Yet there is still an unsolved problem; most of data are not available in a digital form. In contemporary world it means that they are practically invisible. In Zacheta an attempt to introduce a computer program especially designed for documentation purposes failed in 2001 when the Polish company changed a digital platform and fired the programmers working in a specific language. Since then the gallery has been testing different programs which would not only enable to create a proper data basis, but also provide a whole system of managing a cultural institution.

The network is an invitation to design and construct the Archive of Bits - so much for paraphrasing the title of a famous book by William J. Mitchell, "The City of Bits" (MIT Press, 1996). Mitchell claims that we have already reinvented the human habitat; our network connections are becoming as important to us as our bodily locations. Unfortunately I cannot draw a parallel conclusion when it comes to Polish archives on contemporary art, even if Polish newspapers keep on reprinting the articles from an American magazine "Electronics", warning against "the

epoch of spiritual machines". On the other hand, as an academic teacher I strongly object to any kind of writing which is entirely and uncritically based on internet recourses. We should not put fire in the traditional archive even if we managed to digitalize all data in the nearest future. To find a balance between paper and digital world, that is a question.

For the time being, Zacheta Gallery opened a new space called Informatorium/Netforum in 2003. It functions as an internet library with 10 computers and easy access to art web pages, but not to the galleries own archive. There are some sample links written on the walls, divided into four main categories: galleries, museums, art magazines online, and new media. Within the category "galleries" one can find for example:

[www.zacheta.art.pl](http://www.zacheta.art.pl); [www.csw.art.pl](http://www.csw.art.pl);  
[www.bunkiersztuki.com.pl](http://www.bunkiersztuki.com.pl);  
[www.laznia.pl](http://www.laznia.pl); [www.ica.org.uk](http://www.ica.org.uk);  
[www.kunsthalle.wien.at](http://www.kunsthalle.wien.at).

Within the category "museums":

[www.moma.org](http://www.moma.org);  
[www.ps1.org](http://www.ps1.org);  
[www.guggenheim.org](http://www.guggenheim.org);  
[www.tate.org.uk](http://www.tate.org.uk);  
[www.ludwigmuseum.hu](http://www.ludwigmuseum.hu);  
[www.mumok.at](http://www.mumok.at); [www.ncca.ru](http://www.ncca.ru).

Art magazines online:

[www.spam.art.pl](http://www.spam.art.pl);  
[www.raster.art.pl](http://www.raster.art.pl);  
[www.magazynsztuki.home.pl](http://www.magazynsztuki.home.pl);  
<http://free.art.pl/artmix>;  
[www.hysterics.pl](http://www.hysterics.pl);



[www.artforum.com](http://www.artforum.com);  
[www.e-flux.com](http://www.e-flux.com);  
[www.artmargins.com](http://www.artmargins.com).  
New media –  
[www.zkm.de](http://www.zkm.de);  
[www.egs.edu](http://www.egs.edu);  
[www.transmediale.de](http://www.transmediale.de);  
[www.runme.org](http://www.runme.org).

“Informatorium/Netforum” is also a place for net art projects as well as computer workshops for children. On International Women’s Day—somehow still celebrated in Poland but no longer in a traditional socialistic form, when women were given a red carnation and a pair of stockings—Magda Bielez presented an artistic intervention unsurprisingly called “8th of March”. On the computer screens one could see short scenes pertaining to the stereotype representations of Polish women.

In April 2005 a young Polish artist, Karol Radziszewski presented a project “Office” inspired by his parents’ office spaces. The project consisted of photographs taken by his parents’ colleagues who were to record their everyday activities at workplace, a film shown on computers, made by the artist illustrating rather boring and absurd life in the office, and a series of “office” paintings, the copies of typical calendars and company posters.

Earlier this year, in January Janek Simon - an artist from Cracow, who often deals with the specificity of computer games - presented a collection of used beer cans, perfume bottles and chewing gum stickers, entitled “People from Cracow like tidiness”. This kitsch yet material collection, critical towards the petit-bourgeois

obsession with accumulating souvenirs and exhibited on small shelves just above the computer screens, stood in stark contrast with information accumulated in a virtual world. Would it be better if this space functioned exclusively as an information point? Or more as a lively internet cafe for teenagers?

“For the past few years contemporary art has witnessed a remarkable trend towards the documentary style. Exhibitions and events such as Manifesta 5, Documenta XI, and several Biennale shows are featuring an increasing number of documentary works, but their specific character has certainly not been studied in greater detail.” This is a motto of the exhibition with a title very appropriate for our discussion - “The Need to Document”, a con-joint project of Kunsthauus Baselland, Muttentz/Basel, Halle fur Kunst e.V., Luneburg and “transit”, Prague (April 2005). Since contemporary art moves towards documentary practice characterized by “objectivity, by an acute sense of reality, and by the desire to remain entirely factual”, then what shall we do about documentation on contemporary art? Should the gallery take on a role of a research centre, for the university has no equivalent archive?

Visual culture is not only about the visual field, about what we see, and the manner in which we come to see it - claims William J. Mitchell. In his famous “Counter-Theses on Visual Culture” he states that visual culture entails a meditation on the invisible, the unseen, and the overlooked. A fully accessible and well systematized archive of contemporary art will allow us to trace the visible and the invisible, the overestimated and the overlooked. Yet who is really “us”? Those, who are using this kind of documentation for everyday practical

purposes, such as writing a press release, or those, who are to reflect on the contemporary, the most fugitive?

1. Azorro, "Wszystko już było. Tragedia w 3 aktach bez epilogu. / Everything Has Been Done. A tragedy in 3 acts, without an epilogue", trans. Maja Brand, Wydawnictwo Bunkier, Kraków 2003, p. 40.

## Vittorio Urbani

### Reflecting on mistakes

The purpose of the following reflection is to offer a first, bare outlook on the negative aspects of our practice of curators and managers of art centers, and to try to draw a list of the main reasons for failure in the non profit and independent art organizations. My chosen ground is that of Italy, in the hope it can be usefully compared to the situation of similar institutions in the East of Europe and Middle East Countries. My intervention is partially a re-working of a more general analysis for the "Venice Agendas" inaugural day, co-chaired by Beral Madra and myself.

Why does such a high "death rate" affect small independent art institutions?

One first provisional list of main factors of failure:

- 1 - lack of contact with the community demand.
- 2 - lack of focus on the organization goals.
- 3 - failure in providing funds.
- 4 - failure in building a network.

- Lack of contact with the community demand

Our organizations are fairly well able to talk with international culture. But more than often the dialogue with the local community, and the understanding of its needs and unspoken demands, is really scarce. The contemporary visual art sector may be a very specialized one; this doesn't excuse us from the practical and moral obligation to talk with our own community. The Mayor of Venice appointed recently has had the occasion in a conference to define Nuova Icona's activity "refined but a bit elitarian". This is a compliment, but a slightly negative one.

- Lack of focus on goals

An organization "mission" is very often clearly drawn, felt by the audience and it is a motivational aspect which makes all the institution staff feel motivated and proud. This presence of a vision is maybe one key point of difference with the commercial sector, but doesn't help greatly in making the institution survive. The problem is the idealism and lack of strategy that goes with the word vision itself. It is easy to mistake a desire with a project, but this is a dangerous mistake. The institution managers and planners should make a great effort to study their own territory not only in terms of possible funding resources, but also in term of cultural demand. A more austere look at the link between the program of the institution and its sustainability would often prove a sobering but healthy exercise.

- Failure in providing funds

This of course accounts as the most obvious of factors, but it is not always the principal one.

- Failure in building a network

The building of a network is an experience made of many

frustrations. Several may be the reasons for it: facing the difficulties could help us to avoid new failures.

1. Scarce attitude to understand and study our own failures.
2. Differences/divergences of policies – sometimes the difficulty may come from diffidence in sharing with the partner the sources of funding of a project.
3. Funding problems.
4. Scarce sharing of information.
5. Too much of our time, energy and funds is given to the production of shows of the conventional kind.
6. Tendency to accept competition on the ground chosen by the Western Art System, which is its absolute commercial predominance in the art world. In this field not only independent art institutions can hardly compare to the established art market, but what matters more, they don't have attitude for it.

### Building for the future

A few checkpoints to follow.

1. Study with attention our own weak points and errors.
2. Detect common points in policies and parallel interests with a would-be partner institution (this would require first an intellectual effort to identify and describe the institution own core activities and goals, an activity many of us probably never gave much attention to).
3. Build common funding plans and share research for international cultural funding, which often rewards collaboration.
4. Share information, and improve communications on all level.
5. Work more on "immaterial" activities, like seminars and residencies. Production of shows has been our prime

occupation (and preoccupation), but by now we have learned shows production is a great luxury most of us have found difficult to afford, and experienced as a great burden. Although working in the visual art sector makes “natural” the attention we still pay to the production of exhibition, strategy-wise, we should keep “light” this sector of our activities and concentrate our planning on the network-building ones.

6. Have the courage to turn our back on the Western Cultural System. I believe almost all of us have for long time tried to “plug into” it at all costs. Many of us have dedicated to this too much of our energy, only to understand one day to have been treated like an instrument or - at best - service provider by the System - but never fully integrated or accepted within it.

By abandoning this uneven and pointless struggle we will be able to dedicate all the energy saved to the effort of building a new cultural system of our own.

## **Maria Vassileva**

### Visual Seminar

The Visual Seminar is a project run by the Institute of Contemporary Art-Sofia in collaboration with the Center for Advanced Studies-Sofia and German Cultural Foundation. It is devoted, from one hand, to the visibility of today society in transition (where the public life and tastes still bear the marks of the communist visual environment, where the totalitarian visual legacy is

present in the urban surroundings, architecture, monuments and in the everyday material culture), and from the other hand – to its theoretical explanation. In the post-totalitarian context the creative and innovative codes of the contemporary arts are confronting a deficit of interpretation. We can say that the visual arts in these countries suffer a lack of “readability” and therefore cannot achieve a significant public impact.

Practically that means that there is a lack of communication between the small group of internationally-known visual artists in these countries and the critical minds there: one can speak metaphorically about a split between “visual” and “reflexive” élites - the academics and researchers in these countries also remain isolated in their own field of closed academic debates with insufficient public impact. Thus the potential of these critical élites to influence the cultural policies of the respective country, to be social critics and opinion leaders remains unrealized.

Our intention is, firstly, to create a “shortcut” between artists and academics in order to reinforce both groups’ public impact and, secondly, to create a channel for this impact by connecting them with the field of cultural journalism in the mass media. Thus, we propose neither to focus on the specific production of visual arts nor on specialized academic debates, but on their possible public interaction. The zone of interaction is broadly defined as the visual interface of contemporary culture, which is a zone, shared with the public. The zone is observable in the city of Sofia. The ultimate goal is to influence the cultural policies in the country through debate and an increase of public literacy in the field of visibility.

The Visual Seminar project has four modules:

The Forum of Visual Culture is the public forum for debate on a particular agenda.

The Guest Program involves ICA hosting “by invitation only” two artists of international standing, for a negotiated period (up to one month), to work on or to present a specific project related to the objectives of the Visual Seminar.

Publishing program – publications related to the Resident Fellow program; Catalogues for the Guest Program artists; Interface Sofia – one volume resulting from the two-year Forum of Visual Cultures discussions and developing ideas; Newsletters, posters, informational and educational leaflets and postcards related to the corresponding events and/or steps in the development of the project.

The Resident Fellows Program is the product of a partnership between the ICA-Sofia and CAS-Sofia activities and programs on a more theoretical level. Within a given year, CAS hosts four resident fellows from Bulgaria for a period of six months each. They come from the fields of contemporary visual arts, other artistic areas, or academia. The resident fellows have a stipend and reside in Sofia for the period of their fellowships while working on a specific artistic or research project related both to the topic of the “Visual Seminar” project and to the other activities of CAS.

The Resident Fellows program of the Visual Seminar project is an attempt to synthesize two different but equally successful practices.

The first one is related to the tradition of the centers for advanced studies in Europe and the world to invite for a given academic year several established writers, artists or musicians (sometimes these are theater people,



journalists, etc.) jointly with their own research fellows. Their presence in the academic community however, normally turns out to be extremely beneficial for these people have highly original ways of thinking and come up with startling ideas that have the effect of a heuristic viewpoint with a specific angle for the scientific debate. Thus, the research team becomes an intellectual community while the artists themselves, outside of benefiting from the discussions, are in touch with the really innovative ideas in the life of science.

Some of the resident fellows are: Luchezar Boyadjiev with the project "Hot City Visual"; Milla Mineva who investigates the official representations of the city through post cards, which role is to attract tourist and how these representations change through years; Svetla Kazalarska which project "Route 76" creates a cultural heritage trail focused on interpreting the urban history and culture of Sofia, following already established public transport routes; Ivan Moudov who with his project "The city through the museum window" organizes a simulation of the opening of a Museum of Contemporary Art. This is a basis for analysing how a Museum of Contemporary Art would function in Bulgarian and, furthermore, it draws once more the interest of the public to the lack of such a museum.

A specific sub-module of the Forum of Visual Culture is the exhibition project "Red Riviera Revisited" that involves the outsiders' perspective on the chang(ed)ing visual interface of the country by mainly German and other artists who had been to the Bulgarian Black Sea coast (the Red Riviera) before 1989 as vacationing youngsters.

The Red Riviera is the nickname of the Bulgarian Black Sea coast during the last decades of the socialist camp. Every

summer caravans of Trabants, Wartburgs, Skodas and Ladas – all cars from former GDR, HNR, PNR, CSSR – entered Bulgaria to reach the multitude of the camp sites along the coast. Many children are fruits from that late socialist paradise; many East-European adolescents stepped to their mature age in those summers. Many of the latter adolescents became artists, who have not come back to Bulgaria after 1989. But they have kept their visual memories alive. Meanwhile, Bulgaria, the Bulgarian coast and cities have changed a lot and the unprejudiced eye of the foreigner perceives the changes with ease. Red Riviera Revisited aims at analysing through artistic product the changes in the visual environment. Last summer, the authors that were invited – all internationally renowned – revisited the places along the Bulgarian coast that they have once been to. They created their works on the basis of the new impressions and the old memories especially for this project.

## SECOND PART

Mapping the Gap.  
Activities of publishing art



# Konstantin Akinsha

Reporting on Tabula Rasa  
Coverage of Russian art life in the mainstream  
American art press.

To say that coverage of the events in art life of Central and Eastern Europe in the main American art publications such as ARTnews, Art in America, Art Forum, etc. is imperfect is an understatement. Majority of the mentioned publications have no permanent correspondents not only in Zagreb or Prague but even in such major international centers as Moscow. Integration of the Central European countries into the European Union didn't provoke any increase of interest to their culture. It is possible to state that the integration led to the opposite result - Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Baltic States and Balkan countries, which once were treated as the romantic terra incognita hidden behind the Iron Curtain turned into easily accessible but not too intriguing cultural provinces of the grand European Union.

American publications are lacking expertise in the region and in the same time are not eager to use local art critics and reporters. The second problem is easily explainable - the majority of art magazines have no funds to translate articles into English. However it is just a half of the problem. Unfortunately very often attempts to involve the local "cadres" failed because Central European art critics are writing in "different language." They are unable to provide straight reporting and have passion to heavy style overloaded by metaphors and unnecessary cultural references.

The coverage in the American art press is motivated by the market success (practically excluded for the countries of the region) and news element. As a rule sensational events are not happening in the art life of the majority of the former communist countries (and if they are happening, they are underreported). Such absence of sensationalism in reality is not more than a positive sign of certain stability. However there are centers, which are generating more than enough scandals and events able to attract international press coverage. Without question Moscow is the main supplier of the "hot news" on the Western media market. Interest in Russian art life is easily explainable. After the wave of Gorbymania of the late 1980s the early 1990s Russia fell out of the radar screen of the Western art press. The great expectations of the period of perestroika proved to be false on all counts. The yesterday fashion looked not more than ridiculous. However by the late 1990s Russia started to attract attention again. This attention was provoked not by the quality of Russian art but by the obvious peculiarity of Russian life - political turmoil and turbo-capitalism became the signs of the new Wild East. It seems that artists adopted many tactical elements of the "permanent scandal" of Russian politics (in the beginning of the 1990s one observer said: "There are three artists in Russia - Kulik, Brenner and Zhirinovskii. Unfortunately Zhirinovskii is the best." - Zhirinovskii is he fringe nationalist politician, who incorporated elements of performance in his political "clownery."). On the other hand many prominent figures of the Russian art world became involved in different political manipulations. Marat Guelman, the Moscow gallery owner is the most notorious of them, however numerous artists participated in different election

campaigns working in the best case in capacity of image-makers and in the worst as agents-provocateurs.

Such close connection to politics defined two main topics in the coverage of the Russian art life - art and politics and the politics of art life.

Very often the Russian art scandals started to attract not just art press but general news coverage. One of such scandals was connected to the exhibition "Caution Religion" opened in 2004 in Moscow. The exhibition was organized by the Anderi Sakharov Center, the respected human rights organization, which succeeded to annoy the Russian leadership by numerous attempts to tell the truth about the Chechen war. The main topic of the show put on display in the Sakharov museum was the danger of the religious fundamentalism in contemporary Russian life. Two days after the opening the exhibition was vandalized by a group of the fundamentalist activists. The hooligans were arrested but they were released soon. The well-orchestrated political campaign participated by a group of the nationalist MPs demanding the abolition of the "unpatriotic" Sakharov center led to an unexpected legal retribution - the prosecutors office opened a case not against the vandals, but against the museum. The curators of the exhibition and the artists who participated in it were accused in the "provocation of the religious hatred." The peculiar case attracted a lot of attention of both liberal and conservative press in Russia, however Moscow art magazines preferred to keep silence and not to step on the shaky grounds of the politically dangerous swamp.

In the United States the case of the Skaharov museum was reported by ARTnews magazine and later attracted attention of such newspapers as New York Times,

Washington Post, International Herald Tribune, etc. The extensive coverage of the scandal had positive results - in 2005 the organizers of the exhibition were found guilty and sentenced to pay a fine. The Moscow court preferred to choose the minimal punishment. It seems that such decision was provoked by the loud international outcry. Unfortunately different outcome was more than possible. Urii Samodurov, the director of the Sakharov Museum told ARTnews on the eve of the final session of the court that he is taking with him the monthly supply of medicine, being afraid that he would be escorted to prison directly from the courtroom.

It is interesting that only one American art magazine found the story of the Skaharov museum directly connected to the problem of the freedom of artistic expression in contemporary Russia worth of extensive coverage.

Another example of the "news worthy event" is the first Moscow Biennale, which took part in January of 2005. In difference to the Skharov museum scandal all leading American art magazines and some major newspapers covered it. The biennale was surrounded by scandal from the very beginning - Moscow curators involved in its preparation couldn't reach agreement with each other. This struggle led to expulsion of Viktor Misiano from the organizing committee and the emotional exchange of the open letters. However the struggle of the organizers was not the only "hot news" of the Moscow show. It has quite a few other issues - the main of them was censorship enforced by the Ministry of Culture. The organizers of the Biennale were strongly "recommended" to avoid such topics as the criticism of president Putin, the Russian Orthodox Church and the government military



operations in Chechnya. In addition to the main Biennale exhibition situated in the former Lenin Museum, the cultural program of the event included numerous shows organized by different interest groups and often confused by journalists with the official program of the Biennale. In addition to this the mentioned Marat Guelman curated an exhibition called "Russia 2," which elaborated on every topic the exhibition in the Lenin Museum couldn't mention and immediately turned into a loud political scandal. (In the new Russian fashion the organizer of "Russia 2" and the participating artists immediately were sued by a group of the Orthodox activists, a group of the nationalist politicians belonging to the "Motherland" party and ...the Moscow Union of Artists. All three groups accused Guelman in "provoking of the religious hatred." The Moscow Union of Artists came with the most creative proposition to prohibit to contemporary artists "to use religious symbolism in their works.")

Understandably all these complicated events provoked a lot of confusion. The journalists involved in the coverage of the Biennale hardly could grasp the meaning of the local politics and were not able to find the hidden truth if they had no reliable sources in Moscow. However the massive coverage of the event provoked a lot of attention in the United States and even became a topic of the discussion on such well-known blog as the Grammar Police, where an anonymous author reviewed ARTnews and Art Forum articles dedicated to the Moscow Biennale. However the intensity of the American attention to the Moscow show had its secret side too. The Trust of Mutual Understanding, a nonprofit New York organization, gave a grant to organize a trip of the New York art journalists to Russia (participated by everybody except ARTnews.) If

not this generous support the majority of the US art magazines hardly could find money to send their reporters to the far away Russian capital. (The ethical side of this story is a serious problem - to accept coverage of the travel expenses even if it is provided by NGO is the obvious manifestation of the conflict of interest.)

The mentioned examples are proving that today the mainstream American art press is able to cover only the events, which have evident news value. Such coverage is primarily concentrated with the news element. Art in this case is the secondary issue. The far away East is remaining a remote terra incognita.

It is difficult to await any increase of interest to the art life of the former communist countries not only because of the problems mentioned above, but also because of one strange phenomenon, which is worth of future investigation. It seems that globalization led not to increase of attention to the other cultures, but to rapid decrease of the notion of internationalism and multiculturalism. If East and Central European countries want to make their art known in the West in general and America in particular, they have not to rely on the glossy New York art magazines, but to use their own devices of which the Web looks the lesser expensive and the most promising one.

# Alena Boika

## To Kill a Scarecrow!

Almost everybody knows about Lukashenko and almost nobody knows about Belarusian contemporary art, if it exists. The main problem is our self-isolation: we are closed to the outer world and to each other. The historical essence of Belarusian is “partisan”: both in everyday life and in art activity. Different kinds of power create many scarecrows around and inside us: power of old traditions and stereotypes, power in man-human relations, political and religious power. We can overcome it with the help of art and to kill scarecrow in all its manifestations with the help of laughter!

Apart from a few interesting personalities, Belarusian art does not exist. Contemporary art is not possible in a country, in which time has not only stopped, it somehow retreated. Contemporary art does not exist as an integral phenomenon, that makes room such that a balanced creative dialogue can be possible. There are a number of reasons for this. For one, civil society has failed to progress in Belarus, without which the actual development of art is not possible. In many respects, this country remains a traditional agricultural area. There is an ethnic tendency toward isolationism. The society is closed; it is suspicious, and sometimes even hostile toward outward influences. The society says: It is no concern of mine. This isolation exists in all aspects of society, including art.

Everyone occupies his own hillock and sits, each like a frog, but alone in the rain, singing a proud and ingenious song. Actually, this national trait could not but develop in

the course of the last 500 years, during which the territory of this country suffered constant invasions and partitions, and served as a base for military operations run by other states. In the 20th century, with the takeover by Russia and Poland, the nation's most prominent, educated, and talented people were liquidated. The nation's basis and flower—the language speakers, scientists, and people of culture and art—were annihilated. Only those who could adjust to the situation, hide, or put on a mask, managed to survive. From this past, our permanent game of hide-and-seek evolved on private, national, and state levels.

The second reason why art has failed to develop in Belarus is the absence of city culture, the culture of a megalopolis where art could be nurtured. Most people living in Minsk and other large towns come from the villages nearby.

On top of that, the pressure of our cultural heritage is stifling. Historically, “artistic parents” (fathers, as a rule) have generated and educated “artistic children,” and Belarusian art in many respects has preserved this parochial and clannish structure. From the moment of their birth, children of traditional artistic parents absorbed their fathers' experience, education, and visual images, which were covered with the dust of the past. They were the successors of cultural traditions and professional experience, rather than creators of art and they became the official artists. While some of them had access to contemporary Western artistic information, they did apply the knowledge and visual experience that they had gained from the contact.

The children of these artists grew up industriously studying Western magazines that featured foreign contemporary art. And when, as adults, they had the opportunity to do whatever they wanted, all this pastiche

of traditional art education, with its old images mixed with the contents of American magazines and more, splashed out. Whereas for the West, such art was emotional, colorful and occasionally very repetitious, for these Belarusian artists, that was the “avant-garde.”

On the other hand, the “cook’s children”—those born and educated outside the artistic environment—are generating stronger and more authentic art. They were not subjected to the pressures endured by those artistic children, and they feel the need to fight their way through and to show themselves. They have to think faster and act in more daring, provocative and talented ways.

Unfortunately, with Belarus’s predominantly patriarchal character, progress of any kind is hampered by an unquestioning attitude, and society is split on the basis of sex. How can artistic dialogue take place among people who suffer from numerous gender and sexual complexes? We have problems of child-bearing, immoral behavior and pornography, but Belarusian society on the whole is asexual and frigid. It is neither ready for excess nor does it seek it out.

Currently considered luxurious excess, contemporary art can be only cultivated and progress in a developed, open and liberated society. It can flourish only in a society free from fear of others’ opinions (“What will people say?”), a society in which people feel a need for exhibitions and a desire to see something new and unusual—for reasons other than maintaining or improving social status.

The final reason why art has failed to blossom in Belarus is the loss of guiding coordinates. For decades, a rigid ideology had opened a wide field for the artistic game. The system allowed for realistic illustration, for resistance within a permitted underground framework, and for

manifold artistic irony. The system was static. When this rigid generating system disappeared, confusion took its place: who was there to fight against, who was there is to resist? This was a painful heritage of Communism; pigpen constructors, who had become accustomed to either obeying or protesting, were not ready for flying free and for the new opportunities that came their way. The society (including the artist), ill-prepared for democracy, resigned a rigid culture over one with art, and for strictly regulated order in place of an anarchic young democracy.

Still, that short period was the brightest—and actually the only period in Belarusian art that could be considered modern and independent; it was a moment in which art had a good chance to develop. Unfortunately, as a result of the aforementioned reasons and due to additional circumstances, it did not.

Returning to the theme of art education and information it could be say that is similar as before. Most people have limited access to Internet and don't know how to search for useful art links and possibilities for collaboration at international art sphere. Most of them don't speak English. The only Belarusian magazine about "actual art" is pARTisan, edited by Arthur Klinov, a modern Belarusian artist. Since 2002 till present three issues in Belarussian and English appeared, and they could be defined as "Klinov and a little bit about contemporary art". Edition of the magazine is 299 copies, and one of the ways of its distribution is Klinov's mother selling them in a pedestrian subway. Magazines are not forbidden, but not welcomed. Means for its creating are looking for by Artur Klinov from different foreign cultural foundations. Now he is sad, totally disappointed and criticizes Americans that don't know how to support

the development of the democracy in Belarus. In such situation of the information lack UMELEC, International Magazine for contemporary art and culture, edited in Czech Republic and distributed all over the world, came to Belarus. The magazine is focused first of all on Eastern European art, and one of the issues (4/2004) included materials about Belarusian contemporary art. After that UMELEC began to be distributed in Belarus (later in Ukraine, Russia and Moldova). As I said before, most people don't like to read in English, but they discovered something really new, saw interesting pictures and non-expected examples of such enigmatical and significant contemporary art. They would like to be in a context, they want to be famous, but first of all they need to know what is it "contemporary art" and participate in it at the international level. Something shocked and surprised them, something makes them laugh and refuse their former imaginations. And this is one of the most important results in the process of a "killing of a scarecrow", a new fresh view, from closed "in" to open "out".

...To Kill a Scarecrow! is working title of the project that is being carried out by Konstantin Goretsky, a Belarusian artist, which was inspired by collaborative ideas during fruitful preparing of the "Belarusian" issue of UMELEC magazine.

# Irina Cios

## Who is the art critic?

The position of "art critic" is quite ambiguous to define. It used to designate a very important person until the mid '80s. The art critic was the supreme judge, establishing hierarchies among artists and, later on, among curators. The text filled with sophisticated terminology and phrasing was aimed to impress and overwhelm the reader. There was a myth about the critic either praising or destroying the author. The writing was focusing more on senses, symbols, narration identified by the art critic in the work.

Such position has disappeared as an icon. There are not any more critics feared by the art world. The text is more a sort of mediator making the public and the author meet half the way and this relies on the fact that the texts' writers have a different profile.

The last decade reinstalled - in a way – in the art world the "homo universalis". After fighting for recognition in a world ruled by artists and critics '60 – '70 and then for separating the roles and responsibilities in the 80's we are witnessing again the factotum curator, designing exhibitions, (sometimes even showing as an artist) fund-raising, editing the catalogue and also writing about the show.

The curatorial experience has a good and a bad side. The good one relies on the deep understanding of the process including artists, concepts, aims in communication etc. The bad side has more or less the same background: too much understanding created a lack of distance.

There are two main reasons for this: there are not so many



art publications (locally and internationally); there are not so many writers providing texts on art.

The current situation in the Romanian art scene fits perfectly this description.

Like everywhere there is mass media and the specialized/profiled publications, carrying on the same communicational gap: the first one is superficial the second one had no audience. The daily publications are vulgarizing, making information understandable for everyone. In 90% of the cases the information is the result of a copy-paste process from the press release. On some rare occasions there are interviews or even essays.

The weekly ones usually have one page on visual arts held by one person and the editorial strategy relies on her/his taste and intelligence, and interest. However aimed at providing public with information these publications can rarely have a coherent choice of themes (e.g. Observator Cultural, Euphorion, Contrapunct.

The specialized publications rarely come out on a regular basis and in most of the cases each issue is a thematic one. At the beginning of the 90s in Romania there was only one visual arts magazine: ARTA. It stopped being published in 1993 due to the lack of funds.

There was a long silence in terms of periodicals filled by the publication of some very dense catalogues filling some big informational gaps (The Romanian avant-garde, Ed. Simetria 1993; Ex Oriente Lux, SCCA Bucharest 1994, The Experiment in Romanian Art 1960 – 1996, SCCA Bucharest 1997 etc.)

In 1997 the SCCA Bucharest in collaboration with Artexpo Foundation started a new visual arts magazine called Artelier. It appeared once a year. The editorial team was

entirely renewed in 1999, which gave the magazine a new look and new structure.

In 1999 another initiative was launched in Cluj: in collaboration with the Budapest based publication a local foundation – Idea - started to edit a Romanian version of Balkon. This new version was focused on mirroring the local scene therefore most of the articles were written by Romanian authors and only few were translated from the Hungarian issue. In 2003 the Balkon project stopped as the Romanian version had taken an important distance and a new publication took the place: Idea.

Also in 1999 there was an attempt to revive Arta magazine, edited by the Union of Artists. It only came out three times. Since 2003 some other publications more specialized on photography for instance - Artphoto – started. There were also projects to try the glossy style for an art monthly with interdisciplinary focus covering also dance, theater and music. Never seen more than one issue. Among the other publications specialized on other artistic fields, it's worth mentioning those focused on architecture: Arhitectura, Arhitext Design, Igloo, Octogon. The life of these publications relies of course on money and audience doubled by good managerial skills. Unfortunately it is not a business opportunity so it can only stay as a hobby for the founder. The specialized public is not so numerous so it cannot live out of the sales. The options are either to make it more “popular” and hope to attract advertisement or to keep it as it is and have an uneven rhythm of appearance.

Money is the sensitive issue in every topic related to contemporary art. The first direct conclusion is that art criticism cannot provide a living. Working for one publication is not enough so people usually write as an

additional activity to a permanent job and sometimes collaborate to as many publications as possible (1).

This is of course a very unattractive perspective for the young generation. If a young

1. Who writes? Who is the specialist with both information and writing skills, writing about art, artists, art events? Most of the people who write are curators. Even if they write on their projects or on other ones the texts are mainly presenting the concept, describing and presenting the project.

There is practically none of the people writing in Romanian who doesn't have curatorial experience.

Writing and publishing on art requires not only information but also style and talent. There are also different kinds of texts: there are reactions/comments on events; there are theory texts, there are essays, personal n

## Marco Enrico Giacomelli

### Another Italian Anomaly? On Embedded Critics

Good afternoon to everybody.

Above all I would like to thank the staff of Continental Breakfast, and in particular Giuliana and Janka, who have invited me to this forum. And I would like to apologize for my pronunciation and ask you to formulate your possible questions very slowly: I am not cut out for English!

Unfortunately, the time is not so much. Therefore, I would like immediately to get to the main point. Or better, the

two points I would like at least to mention. The first matter concerns the situation of the contemporary art criticism in Italy. The second one concerns what we could define a real case study, the multimedia platform Exibart. As you know, Italy is proverbially the country of the anomalies. Its history, both ancient and recent, has been pronounced by these anomalies, in every context of its cultural, social, and political life.

(I would like to point out that the situation which I will briefly describe is not solely Italian. However, it is the norm in my country and this is what makes the anomaly.)

In the field that interests us, the situation is the same as well. With a sad quip, in the title of my intervention, I have talked about embedded critics. We have seen it, once more time in these months: the embedded information that comes from the war theatres is very particular. We can't say it is not information; since news has been made public, it is regularly called information. Neither we can hope it is a piece of "objective" information, like it has been teaching by the ancient journalism manuals, because we perfectly know that this piece of information is an enlightenment chimera.

But the shades between these two opposite thoughts are infinite. And the situation of the art criticism in Italy – excuse me for the comparison with the situation well more dramatic of Iraq – it is closer to the embedded mode.

(A quick note: I will not linger on the situation of "academic" journals, because this would require a lot of time to understand the reason for which there is no department in Italy dedicated to contemporary art; the reason or the reasons for which a magazine like October is not even imaginable in my country, and where the only examples of "brave" university journals are Avatar and

Agalma, that both happen to be published by the Roman publisher Meltemi; not to mention the fairly disastrous situation of the Academies of Arts, that doesn't compare to the University and with limited funds. I hope will be another occasion to speak of all this.)

Coming back to embedded critics, in Italy, the heading that are responsible in specialised way for contemporary art are relatively little. Two of them were presenting an executive "normal" situation, namely the responsible director's figure, and that one of the owner, were distinct. How it generally happens in all serious newspapers, even if they are lined up. One of them was presenting an executive "normal" situation, namely the responsible director's figure, and that one of the owner, were distinct. How it generally happens in all serious newspapers, even if they are lined up. The magazine was *Carnet Arte*. I point out the verb to the past, because actually it closed! And so, sure it didn't happen for his critical level, because among the contributors there were personalities as Obrist, Bonami and Gioni.

The other magazines, or at least, those ones have a certain history back, present a curious overlap of roles. Such as, the monthly *Arte*, a spreading magazine, even it lacks the real figure of the director. But it is not all. In most cases, the editorial staff succumbs by the only figure of the editor-director, so that – beyond the competence of the single contributors – there is not an authentic debate among chief director, publisher and editorial staff.

These conflicts of interests are translated in a few obvious phenomena:

- First: the advertising collection, conditions hard, the presence, in those same newspapers, of a few galleries and public and private institutions;

- Second: the art criticism, especially in the case of reviews, becomes pure headline news;
- And last: the figures of curator, critic, and editor are mixed up in the same pages.

It is perplexing that these speeches are by now proverbial: all the experts in the field talk to about it, also and especially in Italy, but never in public situations. Another Italian anomaly, that it is possible to summarise in the famous way of saying “it rains, government thief”, or rather everyone complains about this situation, but anyone places the reasons to distance, finding a way for not intervening.

I would like to mention a few data that are, in certain ways, the consequence of these anomalies. In Milan, there's not a Museum of Contemporary Art. There are few non-profit spaces, indeed some artists don't mention in their resume the solo or the group shows running in those spaces. And about these non-profit spaces, there is an interesting research led by the economist Pier Luigi Sacco, where the author depicts an incredible reality. On considering French and Italian artists, born after 1930, who reached success in their artistic career; and on focusing their first four solo shows in country or abroad, the incidence of the shows in non-profit spaces, in the French case corresponds to 25%, in the Italian one only to 5,3%. And it is not, because of national subsidies supplied in France, considering that in the Usa-Canada area the datum is of 21,7% (1).

In the little time left, I would like at least to describe the situation where I work, Exibart. It is a multimedia informative platform. It was born in 1996 on the Web and it is still online with an up-to-date site several times a day, for a total around thirty reviews and around tens

speednews a week. Among web site peculiarities that I would like to introduce, I believe to be very important the possibility given to the readers to comment on the news, creating a virtuous circle among artists, galleries, museums, critics and readers. It is not as the heart-break "letters to the director" we usually know.

Afterwards, the communicative tool is Exibart.onpaper, a tabloid magazine of about 72-90 pages, a free press printed every 45 days in 30.000 copies. Also this choice is directed to go out of the specialised and anomalous context that I have described until now. Following this direction, we have recently inaugurated Exibart.mobile, an informative platform by cellular phones of new generation, and a weekly radio transmission in cooperation with Radio 24. It is obvious: a single product that models itself according to the medium that "uses".

The philosophy and the editorial line don't change: we don't want to create misunderstandings and competition with glossy papers, but our aim is to offer a more articulated product to a different audience and approach public to the contemporary art also through design, fashion, architecture, new media etc.

Within reason we try to not confuse the roles, which I was talking to you about, making of the irreverence a tool in order to exorcise the embedded journalism. Finally, if the result is interesting, testifying it it's obviously readers' business. And for the moment, I can assure you, the answer is very encouraging.

I would like to end quoting Marco Senaldi, a brave curator and finally an authentic intellectual. In few lines, he summarises what I have tried to explain: "The intellectual cannot be only the one who comes there from the height of his studies to say us something decisive [...] These are

yes wonderful intuitions, but of which we cannot do anything if the same individual, from his own singularity, doesn't think also on the conditions within they are expressed" (2).

1. Pier Luigi Sacco, "La giovane arte italiana nel contesto internazionale: opportunità, vincoli e incentivi", in AA.VV., "Creazione contemporanea. Arte, società e territorio tra pubblico e privato", Luca Sossella Editore, Roma 2004, pp. 55-71.

2 Marco Senaldi, "Che cos'è un intellettuale?", in "Exibart.onpaper", 22/2005, p. 78.

## Irina Grabovan

Autonomous zone. Strategies and tactics on the margins of (European) art

First of all I would like to thank the organizers of this event for the possibilities to meet colleagues and to take part in an open discussion about contemporary art.

Before I start I would like to discuss Janka Vukmir's note that there is no difference between East and West Europe. I don't want to use the bubblegum of complaints about the art situation in the East of Europe. The only thing I would like to mention is a problem that should not need too much investment: visa regulations. For a forum of two days I had to spend three days for visa arrangements and to make trips to the Italian Embassy in another country, Romania, a distance of 1000 km, not once but twice. That



is the difference between the artists and curators from the East and West Europe. Visa regulations (next to access to information, lack of art publications, art magazines) – now seems to be the main difference, which divides us. So the question of lobbying a change in the visa procedures in Europe at least for art and culture actors is still an urgent task to be solved.

Being the founder and director of AoRTa Art Center in Moldova I would like to tell you the history of AoRTa and AoRTa publications. It could be a case study for somebody who is curious about the ways how contemporary art does exist and functions in a Eastern European society. The story could be entitled “How, under the pressure of the circumstances of life, we turn from dreamers into doers.” AoRTa was founded in 1999 when Moldova at that period, like all post-Communist countries, has turned from a highly ideologized space into a consumers’ space. People were disorientated, many of them left the country, and many others were looking for possibilities to do it. The catastrophic economic situation, the absence of an art infrastructure, lack of information and possibilities to communicate with the outer world, ultimately sealed the artist’s feet in concrete and stuffed his head with worries about where to find food; only the hands remained free. The most undemanding of them were occupied quite soon. Except for a handful, artists were either engaged by the local market—these produced horrible kitsch—or imitated a tempestuous (or weak, depending on the financial weather) “contemporary” activity. The power of the American dollar plus the Sorosization of the entire culture became the formula of the new, post-Soviet power, which one had to accept at least respectfully if not enthusiastically (Soros Foundation for a long period was

the only active philanthropic organization in Moldova). Thus, the situation around art in Moldova, statistically the poorest country in Europe, demonstrated recognizable features of relationships that appeared in Eastern Europe in the system of artistic production and representation, but just in their extreme form. So the art landscape was very inspiring for activity. AoRTa was made as a space for representation of a program in opposition to the commercial and traditional art forms to create another frame of reference. It started with building new relations between people and works of art. Its name AORTA was meant to underline the centre's main function—to pump energy in order to support the life of the public organism of which we are all part, to invest energy into the elaboration of the contemporary art scene. The projects intended to show that reality is more diverse than the accepted blueprints, manners and prejudices. The center became a channel of communication between East and West. As a curator I became a moderator between artists and audience, and a host for visiting artists. One of them, Dutch audio-visual artist Ron Sluik moved to live in Chisinau and now we live and work together. AoRTa is a noncommercial nongovernmental organization. The program consists of art exhibitions and screenings; AoRTa organizes artist's talks, and makes publications. Photography and video art are chosen as the focus media as actual and powerful way of expression. (Besides, the works in photography and video are often easy and cheaper to transport). The program on contemporary art photography and video shows that art is not only about "oil on canvas," that photography as technology and photography as art is one of the substantial component of the contemporary cultural landscape. In a series of

exhibitions we showed photography in different genres, techniques, countries: stereo photography, night shots, fictional historical photography, pop photography, ethnic photography, and photography in combination with video and performance. The Hotel Aorta project, carried out together with Ron Sluik, was prepared in such a way as to show how many instrumental uses for the photo camera an artist could find. AoRTa's policy based on the need to fill in the cultural vacuum broke the inertia of the social environment and created a platform for a dialogue between local and global technology in the art production. In the circulation of different images, experiences, practices, it was an important step to understand, that we should not only realize art import-export operations in order to modernize the local art scene and to show that Moldova is becoming a part of the "big" world, but that Moldova is a world by itself. So the task focused from using extensive resources for the program, into strengthening the idea of fruitfulness of this unique territory. East divided from the West not so much by geographical borders as by different experiences defined by attempts in the past to follow a different political, economic and cultural model of development. This is an unique experience. It constructs our consciousness, and hence the reality we create. The recognition of different historical experiences of various regions, which build collective memories and are updated in the contemporary consciousness as Identity, helps us to set a conventional perspective for understanding the meaning of the relationships Regional/Universal, Global/Local. AoRTa activity turned from attempts to present finished artworks towards efforts to support the artist in creating something new in Moldova. Today AoRTa

is functioning as an art space, a laboratory, an artist-in-residency. Its guests become part of a network and can experience new inspiration for their work. Artists come as a private guest of AoRTa. They come being motivated by the idea that contemporary art of good quality should be accessible not only in big centers like New York or Berlin and they are curious about possibility of realizing a new work in Moldova. Everything in AoRTa is made on a horizontal level. AoRTa is an open space for experiments, discussion, and communication rather than an organization for the manipulation of financial flows and status provision. There is no strong financial system behind it. The strength is in its independency. No time, money, and energy are spent on useless things and bureaucratic games. Because AoRTa wants to stay independent from international funds or commercial sponsors, we started to publish a series of photo books on art and photography, which contributes to the continuity of the center. Through mailings and advertisement we ask to sign in for the series. A subscription supports the expenses which monthly bring our activities. In 2003 together with Ron Sluik we made the first book "This is my house/ The cruel paradise" The book was a result of living and working together for 2 years. It was a search of self and local identity in a genre of photography and essays, kneaded by the necessity of identification of space, where we and some of our readers live and work. The book was made for the so called "West", where photography and essayism moved from marginal supplied genres to the niche that could be (also relatively) called contemporary art. For the West, in which Moldova remains 'terra incognita', the most unknown European country. This book was the start of a series of art projects,

realized by international artists in AoRTa, initiating an investigation of cultural and social identity of Moldova, the source being contemporary visual art. AoRTa invites artist to realize the projects archiving the contemporaneity. AoRTa book series includes photo works by Ulay, Bertien van Manen, Toto Frima, Alexander Tinei. In cooperation with CBK Dordrecht Art Centre this summer AoRTa releases a book of Dutch artists who visited us through the years. The reactions on the published books were more than supportive and are strengthening us in the idea that new series should become as successful. The world distribution in the beginning was taken over by IDEAbooks Amsterdam, but now the books are ordered directly. Generating money for publications from foreign private readers and institutions through subscriptions allows us to focus on our goals and interests of our audience, rather than the goals within grant making policies.

- Farewell to illusions

As Anda Rottenberg has already mentioned, you could learn a lot through practice. My experience taught me to leave behind my illusions. In soviet time we thought that without ideological censorship and without the iron curtain, everything in the art system would be different and easy. Then with new times, when capitalist conditions started to be established, we thought that the problem was the lack of money. Soros gave money for contemporary art centers and we found out that the problem was lying in unprofessional management. A new generation of young professionals grew up with trainings and contacts with a Western art system but it became clear that there is a lack of ideas. And the problems are

not even the problems of art itself! Everything in arts is about the essence of human life and the language to express it. The difference between past and present times in this sense is that the world today is characterized by a growing number of contacts resulting in communication between people with different linguistic and cultural backgrounds. It has become our task to present the similarities and differences and to make it possible that they could play a positive role in the construction of a dynamic picture of the world in a non-banal and non-stereotype way.

- Make it small

One of the main characteristics of our time is the formation of the global information society. This dynamic process is presented in a fundamental change of all aspects of our lives, including knowledge dissemination, social interaction, economic and business practices, political engagement, media, education, health, leisure and entertainment. This is a new experience and we are free (or forced?) to find our own position in this revolutionary process. The key opportunity to contribute and be part of the European art system is to actively participate in the building of a constructive network, stimulating multi-actor cooperation, organizing meetings. We could see today a number of cultural operators doing it with great enthusiasm. What do we see as a result?

Of course we could say that partners from different countries and regions are getting closer to each other and surpassing the whole range of misunderstandings provoked by different cultural backgrounds, by different ideological and political reasons from the past. In the same time we see with naked eyes a problem resulting

from this intensive activity: an enormous hyper production. Everything becomes bigger and bigger, art events trying to be like Hollywood blockbusters in order to present themselves in a convincing way for grant makers and to be visible in the cultural landscape. Art became inaccessible. The artist and the viewer are lost in the stream of information. They are locked in a trap. What could be the artist's response to that problem?

Dutch artist Joost Conijn made a project "Hout auto"(Joost Conijn, 'WOOD CAR', 2001, video). Joost is an artist, in the same time he is a traveler and a good mechanic. To make a long trip possible without too much financing and to be free on the way, he built a wooden car running on wood. Joost made a whole trip to Chisinau from Amsterdam with that car and made a presentation in AoRTa. On his way he collected material for the video film. The artist created a tool to expand his body (a car) and found a tool to expand his eyes (video).

I use this concrete artistic project (next to the story about AoRTa) as an example of an independent act that comes from a personal need. It illustrates the optimistic idea that even within limits and boundaries, there are always possibilities to be found.

It also illustrates the fact that a free, autonomous project doesn't need a lot of money – it could be described as an independent movie, as a low budget project, that is not commercially orientated (but could be commercially successful).

What is interesting is that the personal trip becomes an artistic project. The independent act constructs the alternative values towards stereotypes of the mainstream and broadens the space for freedom. It shows in a democratic manner one of the ways to escape the

established model in art consumption, regulated by the framework of bourgeois institutions.

Dealing with such questions as limits, choices, freedom and responsibilities in a conflict between individuals or a group within a given situation, we would definitely end up with the idea of autonomy, if we want to stay honest with ourselves and in the same time to reach our goals.

I think we could expect new energy from those individuals and groups who are ready to recognize these facts and can create autonomous zones for themselves and for others. Those, who realize that they should make their world smaller, small like they are. That helps to grow.

- Enough space for fish and butterflies.

To finish my speech I would like to mention a graduation project on Rietveld Academy a few years ago. The idea of the installation was just great. The artist made a square set of aquariums with fish in them. Looking at it, you could see butterflies next to fish flying free (between the aquariums the artist left a space without water). This project metaphorically describes what many of us are trying to do: to create an illusion of sharing spaces - autonomous zones - where different forms of life are cultivated in all possible ways. So asking myself what I should do, I may answer in imperatives:

Be yourself!

Stay small!

Enjoy!

People involved in art seem to be taking up a hopeless cause. But as the cult film director from my youth, Andrey Tarkovsky said, "The vanity of art gives meaning to life".



# Ivan Mečl

## The German Issue

### Or How We Once Again Didn't Conquer the West

This story is a composition of short extracts from the novel "The Fiery Valley of Culture in the Rays of the Dawn Sunlight". The excerpts are linked with the history of this 'German issue' of Umelec magazine, which the Divus publishing house began preparing at the start of 2004. At the Luxembourg book fair in March 2005 the publication was evaluated as the stupidest publishers' act in the history of memoirs. It is for this reason that we are presenting this to our readers.

- A Politically Correct Introduction to How it All Began

As I am now realizing, our German tale is also a story of one of my loves. Around the same time as the preparation for the edition of Umelec in German came to a close, my love had ended as well. We had met at the opening of the German pavilion at the Venice Biennale shortly before I attempted to attract attention to our magazine. It worked out in the end. After six months of my ranting on about how great it would be to publish Umelec in German I managed to get money from the German embassy in Prague to get started. At that time I felt like that guy in the ancient Roman senate who ended every speech with the sentence: "Carthage must be destroyed." I understand that it must have been unbearable. That was the beginning of a period of Germanic optimism.

This feeling was reinforced by a grand German outing. A tour took twenty selected people from the contemporary art scene from all over the world around the most

important cities of German culture. Locally represented by the Goethe Institute, which selected the candidates, a masterstroke was delivered – creating the most picturesque group of intellectuals in the world: a morose professor from Ankara, the only one who spoke German; a jolly manager of a contemporary art museum in Albania; two confused Korean journalists; a journalist from Taiwan, who had to be on the internet every day because they let her go from work only under the condition that she write an article for the morning edition every day. A curator from an American museum of photography who had probably never been in a bad mood in his life; a director of a Canadian museum, who was really annoyed by this Eastern get-together and seemed to have been asking whether Germans don't consider Canada a developing country. Artists from Africa, Vietnam and Cambodia; a forever young coordinator of culture from New Zealand. But there was also Lara Boubnova, who I saw for the first time in a photo in the catalog at the first biennale in Tirana, and I was really looking forward to seeing her. When I met her, I immediately muddled her name. For me she was Lara Croft.

What I enjoyed most was chaperoning Georgina, a Bombay lesbian activist and journalist. I sat at the table and drank cocktails; she was coming on to girls. When, a few hours later, she had enough or was annoyed that "these German girls are too tall and don't notice at all how she is dancing," we staggered homewards.

It was all very hasty, all these museums of contemporary art, fairs and galleries. But by covering just a few hundred kilometers of the distance by plane, we managed it all. In the Czech Republic we would have been bumped about on a bus and we wouldn't have managed to see anything.

There were all sorts of hotels with large amounts of food, and once we even had champagne at a buffet. It was clear that it was only a symbolic gesture; everyone was afraid to touch it. But I did, so our whole class got sloshed first thing in the morning. Slowly I found out that most people wouldn't mind having a drink in the morning, but they didn't feel free to do so. Maybe they lacked the courage.

Surprisingly, I hadn't learned – after all this – how not to be afraid on the airplane. I can't understand how so many people manage to look so content a few thousand meters above the ground.

I managed to get around Frankfurt with the map of Munich. I would have never realized it, if Steffi hadn't told me. The final night she was driving me round in the car and I was navigating with that map. We found everything. She noticed it only the next day in a cafe. I found out that the museum of modern art in Frankfurt is the best, and I must say I had seen many of them by then. I also fell prey to the illusion that everything in the world is okay because I was being taken good care of. The only solution to the problems of the world is to take good care of everybody.

- In the Ruins of the Future.

My girl promised to show me Germany. After the forced emigration of her parents, she lived in Frankfurt for a long time. But then she ran away from home and joined a punk community in Hamburg. As a person who has run no further than to the parsonage in the next village, the stories she told me had the flavor of a coming-of-age film. At the time we were both over thirty but neither of us has come of age. This gave me the opportunity to investigate the Germany of the remnants of her wild youth among

the hard-core avant-garde, and at the same time infiltrate the movers of contemporary German art, while I played adult.

We had a very old Volvo at Divus, borrowed from DJ-BLN. I promised I'd take good care of the car. She had given birth to a second child and the auto didn't fit into her budget. A disadvantage was that it got poor mileage. But it was so big that one could sleep in it, and so we saved money on accommodation. We heated it with candles.

In Hannover, I saw the ruins of Expo 2000. I hadn't expected that next to the most orderly German city—one which has recently dissolved its police force—I would find a post-war Sarajevo. I strolled among half-ruined skeletons of the one-time miracles of design, peered into the pavilions occupied by Gastarbeiters or by strange companies. A company dealing with hair dye samples occupies the Czech pavilion; in the Polish one, "Vietnamese pavilion" is written in pen, and inside is the most obscure Vietnamese restaurant in the world; in the Hungarian pavilion, a desperate group of managers is residing, having tried without success to sell it; in the Yemeni pavilion is a European subdivision of Al-Kaida; and the Chinese pavilion is well-occupied.

We were guided through this metaphor of civilization's futility by Christian Riebe, an artist and a painting teacher from a nearby university that is also succumbing to decay. The school resides in the former shared Expo pavilion and nowadays is giving way to an expanding company that deals with rapid building and demolishing. Christian is following the trend of artistic use of the ruins of the future. We met in the Expo twice over the course of one year. At the second meeting we were afraid of him. He contradicted reality, claiming that some of the scenes

happening in the Expo were being staged specially for us. That's the way it appeared to me, but I had better not speak about that openly.

We managed to obtain a lengthy interview with the Vietnamese owner of the Polish pavilion. She explained that this is just a part of her multi-cultural project. Another one is to build German villages in Vietnam. She brought very elaborate projects and visual representations to show us. The huge Polish pavilion was filled with the remnants of other Asian pavilions and supported by background swing music. It was a film backdrop of Asia built in a station hall. It reminded me of the once luxurious streets of some Parisian quarters that are slowly being engulfed by elements of Arab bazaar and foreign cuisine. I was standing astonished in front of a shop with a design re-created into a Chinese restaurant. Inside, on the huge window screen, water dripped down from the condensing steam coming from huge pots. The name of a now forgotten designer of the first half of 90s was still written on the plaster in cool script. In the place where a few years ago upper-class ladies purchased pricey accessories, today crowds of immigrants eat boiled rice with MSG. It was high time. They look much nicer than any well dressed German.

After ten o'clock everyone in Hannover is asleep. Only the main streets are lit up, other streets are dark. The police were discharged from this city because of its long-time upstanding and passive inhabitants. Except for the Vietnamese vaudeville, the only other place open is a Jewish restaurant in the center. The owner is a Jew left behind by the Israeli representation. He thinks that every foreigner is a Jew and might come to do an inspection in his kitchen. I was taken for a Polish Jew. I'm not even fully red-headed.

- Horror in Hamburg

For young people, Hamburg is the most beautiful and freest of German cities. My girlfriend told me that as we were headed there. It's true. I saw some of the best exhibitions there, because of their casual cosmopolitan feel. Casual is an important word. In other places people think that casualness is necessary. In Hamburg it is mainly thanks to the sea, which has always had a considerable influence on the people's mindset. Nations living in lowlands far from the sea suffer from negativity and lack any sense for the infinite, the sublime. Today, when there are no migrations of peoples, this staying inland is a kind of ethnic suicide. It is still not clear why some people settled in such places like the Czech basin, the Slovak plain, the Hungarian puszta or the Belorussian marshland. It is for sure that these populations are already exhausted in their life in such places and refuse to have children.

In the evening my girlfriend showed me the squats she lived in fifteen years ago. Later we sat down in a dark taproom with wildly spray painted walls in one of them. I liked the scary space very much so I didn't pay any attention to a woman who was approaching us from the corner. She was going through an unpleasant withdrawal, but in these places it was nothing unusual. She started to gibber something to my girlfriend. Only after a while I noticed that my girlfriend was turning pale. But I thought it was just that kind of a bar inconvenience, and I tried to ease the situation with some funny remark. The skinny woman went back to her corner and my girlfriend only stared blankly and was as silent as the grave. How close I was with this simile.

Suddenly she announced that we should be leaving. I hadn't finished my beer so I didn't want to go. But she

took my hand and dragged me out of the bar. I, confused, dashed behind her between the parked cars. It started drizzling. Suddenly there was complete darkness. We ran to the prostitutes' square. Everywhere there were the neon lights of brothels, gambling rooms and other entertainment places. I didn't understand anything. She was totally destroyed.

I asked her what was going on but she was pale, and she looked around and didn't say anything. Then she told me that when she was leaving this place she took with her the supply of heroin for the whole squat. That woman recognized her in the darkness and threatened her, saying that today they would finally cut her throat. My adventurous mood evaporated. Suddenly everything seemed so dumb.

That night I slept with a car jack in my hand. We were parked in a derelict port, probably in the worst place. Nothing happened. In the morning, we washed up in the Kunstverein café restroom, and I proceeded to behave like a magazine publisher. We walked up one flight of stairs and met with the director, Yilmaz Dziewor. He showed me a great exhibition of the painter Lukas Duwenhögger, a Turkish German. The next evening, we spent a lot of time trying to find the director of the most famous alternative theater in the area; we missed him. It was raining the whole time. When it rains, everything seems worse somehow; it rains a lot in Germany.

- Eastern Alliance

In Western countries there are always trends towards particular regions and cultures for a limited time. They say that something is hype at that time. Hype can come about naturally or be brought about artificially—through some

subsidized international exchange, hype has the same effect on some individuals and groups as the hero of Huysmans novel "Against the Grain" on his poor protégé. A rich man takes a liking to a nice pauper, leads him through a higher class of society and surrounds him with wealth for a while. Then he finds another pastime. The pauper falls prey to the illusion that he must be able to manage it himself, but doesn't understand that the hype is already gone. It all ends up in a suicide or deep disillusion. Here in the East, hype is much more stable and it is not so much bound to regions. Slavs don't like their neighbors, not to mention the non-residents. We have a mistrust of them and like to let them know it. At least it is made clear. Slavs don't believe in their own history and in their fabricated common origin. Their history is full of lost battles, subjection and other maltreatment. Heroes are often unreliable rebels and cruel robbers. They believe that Hungarians landed in the middle of Europe with a meteorite. If they don't understand a foreigner, they take it to be a speech disability. It's no accident that the Slavic name for Germans, "Nemec" translates to mute and dumb. With Slavs you will quickly make friends and quickly get caught up in a conflict. That's why there are so many wars.

Germans don't like Slavs because they always arrive late and are unable to express themselves clearly. This is the same in art. Central and Eastern Europe is full of 'conceptual' art. The Germans are not moved by broken sticks, heaps of sand or pictures from garbage. They prefer America and Russia.

- The Great Germany

To write about German art is like writing about European



art. We apologize for this idea. The German media itself has problems in managing this problem, so why should we be able to do that? Germany is too big and some people in Munich think that Dresden is in Poland. We recommend dividing Germany according to the worst prejudices. Maybe then we would be able to grasp its culture, somehow.

- Troubles with Good Ideas

At the beginning of 2004 I was already skilled in writing project proposals. It went so well that I cut down on self-censorship. I started writing anything that came to my mind—even things bordering on the criminal. Surprisingly, even this passed through. One successful application included, along with other horrors, a description of a planned action entitled “Serbian passports.”

“Selected artists and adventurers, who react to the appeal to take part in the ‘Adventure Östlich Künstler Team’ on the pages of ‘Östlich Künstler’ or in the broadcast by ‘Östlich Allianz TV und Rundfunk,’ would have all their papers, mobile phones and other signifiers of the Western form of EU confiscated. All of them will be given Serbian passports and other papers. It is possible that these changes could be done secretly, but in full awareness of the potential consequences of the ‘adventure game.’ Participants will be taken to a Czech border crossing and left at an unknown location; the organizers will inform the police about the existence of suspicious people. The whole action will be watched by ‘Östlich Allianz TV und Rundfunk’ and will be broadcast with commentary to the viewers. It is expected that after a few days of arrest everyone will be deported to Serbia. The return trip to the EU, and Germany, and the re-gaining of human

rights will surely be an interesting and adventurous story." Upon the "success" of the first Eastern Alliance, we asked for support from our befriended organizations for two more projects. From an economic perspective, applications for support of contemporary art have a thirty percent success rate. In some years one could reach fifty percent, but that's a record today. To be able to organize any project you have to ask for three times more than the actual budget. If you can get more than that, it is a success and you can pay the artists what they really deserve. If not, the event will take place but with tears and teeth-grinding on the part of all the participants.

It's the same in most European countries. Exceptions really are exceptions. For this reason similar actions are no longer a joy for the organizers nor for the participants. Most European curators that I meet on my trips are stressed and cheerless people. Artists put up with it better. They suffer with humor. I laugh as well, but somehow strangely. In spite of all this an unknown force compels us again and again to make up new projects on the verge of feasibility and with a still smaller public interest, whose realization costs us our physical and mental health. This force surely is not love for art. It is a desire which you can also find in science or in technical studies. We investigate how much more art can stand. So many times we felt that this threshold has long been crossed. We bend it, mix it with the impossible, destroy it, go over the top with it, and so forth. We are technologists of art.

- Psycho in Dresden

I borrowed this title from my favorite video of the German artist Max Mayer. The whole title is "Transarchitecture or Psycho in Dresden" (Transarchitektur oder Psycho in

Dresden). It is one of the best art videos, capturing the dark soul of this Saxon metropolis under the hills. Dresden for me became the place of the biggest tragedies and various failures.

In Dresden, I twice blew tires of the car that was this time borrowed from my mother. The gilded youth going home from clubs watched with interest how we tried to pump up each tire with foam supposed to plug the holes. The stuff cost 10 Euros; we had carried it everywhere and it didn't stop up anything. And we bought two bottles of this useless stuff. The second one was used up by local yuppies who interpreted this as street theater. My friends went to Berlin by train and I waited for the first garage to open. As I was leaving the service station, the spare tire in the trunk exploded.

Asked to organize a second Eastern Alliance, in Dresden, we drew up a plan for a thirty-day cabaret with several dozen actors and artists. All were exhilarated about the program, although it was all merely based on political provocation and annoying the locals. A few months later a host organization put me up in a hostel for the night. I got a room to sleep ten people. It was full summer and the city was full of partying youth from all over the world. Soon they found out that there were other ways into the hotel than through the reception area. The clever guests paid for the night and snuck their friends in the back way. In the end the room hosted about sixteen people. I had my girlfriend's thirteen-year-old son with me, who was so afraid of the snoring and straggling drunkards that when his blanket fell down from the bunk bed he didn't dare to go down to get it till the morning.

The next day I asked at reception about another hotel, but they offered me a room for two right away. That night we

slept four there. I put up my girlfriend and her brother as well. I was learning quickly.

As I was investigating the possibilities of performing under Dresden bridges, Mariana from our Divus studio called me. She had just crashed the car borrowed from DJ BLN when distributing the magazine, and so yet another car was wrecked. Since then, we have had no car at Divus, and we don't want any. The hotel next to our studio and editorial office took up all the parking places anyway, so what for anyway. We bought big shopping bags on wheels.

After we had finished the details of the Dresden action, the financing began to collapse, mainly from the side of the German funds which had originally promised to support us. Two months before the scheduled start we were down to one third of the budget. One month later we had only a quarter. The unhappy hosts started to insinuate that we should cancel the event. But I still tried it and maybe I will be reproaching myself for this till the day of my death. The action had just started and everyone was frothing at the mouth. As for me, as Nietzsche would say: "That which does not kill me strengthens me."

- A Hole in My Pocket

Through all the changing political systems my father repeated to me one quotation: "It was a small village. Its inhabitants lived by preying on each other." I realized that it is in fact the vision of the European Union.

The Swiss are proud that everything is so expensive in their country. They like to watch foreigners having to restrain themselves. A meal in a dirty pub in Zurich costs more than a dinner in a luxury restaurant in the rest of Europe. At home they grind their teeth about never going

out for dinner, have problems paying their mortgages and their personal banker keeps calling about their low credit. The white race is dying out because members of the community like to rob each other. Pricing is a strange thing. It never considers the real price of the thing but how much you are able to pay for it at the moment.

Try to buy the same thing in Berlin and in Kiev. The same product of the same make. The experiment looks childish and every economist will find many logical sounding reasons why there must be such a huge difference between the prices. But the fact that you are reading Umelec, is possible thanks to its being published in the Czech Republic, where the expenses for production, and intellectual resources are half the prices in West Europe. When we in the Czech Republic reach the standard of living in Germany which we often hold up as an example, Umilec will cease to exist, or will move to Albania. At that time the situation there will not be much worse than in the Czech Republic of the 90s. It will still be better than to close shop because of the supermarket craze.

The willingness to bend to the price dictate is surprising in Western Europe especially in the middle classes. It is often hidden under the notions of quality products and professional service. A good school for me was the organizing of exhibitions on the grounds of some institution or corporation. If you need to borrow a ladder, first they offer you a mobile platform for 500 Euros, if you need a mop and a bucket they send you a cleaning crew which wants another 500, and then you find out that the German colleague who is giving you this advice hasn't got the money to pay for the coffee. Many interesting projects in the institutional or business sectors never happen only because they are used to using extremely over-expensive

services which you cannot afford. Lately, public life in Germany has managed to tie itself up in an unbelievable amount of laws, regulations, limits, property entanglements and administrative relations. As a citizen of a country that has entered the European Union and which is starting to introduce similar order, I must say that many of them must have been made up by an enemy of humanity and cultural development. But we all are starting to follow them and we are resigning to the fact that we can do less and less.

For example, in Germany you have to pay for distribution beforehand. There are no distributors who have their own transportation, but instead a company that brings the magazines to the sellers. In this way only the publisher takes a risk, because they pay for it all. If you are a German then the fact that you are holding this volume in your hand cost us 3,000 Euros. This is much more than you would imagine in the Czech Republic. For that money, we can pay six editors of Umelec for a month's work. Believe me, in other countries you don't pay for distribution; the companies take only a percentage from the copies sold. If the situation doesn't change, interesting but poorer magazines will never find their German reader. But what could also happen is that the monopoly of Eastern distributors could get hold of this clever strategy and make publishers' lives hell.

- Confession of Crimes and Mistakes

The story about what we had managed and what we had been lucky in is not a nice read and that is why I won't talk about it here. On the other hand, it is true that our effort complicated many people's lives, but culture has always been here to mislead, confuse and befuddle humankind.

The world is being cleaned up and rationalized by wars, and we are miserable soldiers.

Some good materials won't be available in this magazine, although they were planned. An interview with a taxi-driver about culture and present-day Berlin culture couldn't be realized because he tried to take our editor to some isolated place and have sex with her.

We didn't manage to get some articles out of people. There are many reasons but those who have worked in culture for some time will know what I am speaking about.

Some of our enthusiastic ideas proved to be stupid, some unrealizable. But these ideas are still sleeping in us. For example Spejbl and Hurvínkem fighting Nazism, new German Sudeten comics or Ferda the Ant as a victim of present day German animation.

I have to confess that I don't have a driver's license, and that instead of that, I took advantage of the kindness of the German embassy, which gave me a piece of paper saying, "Be of help to the holder of this paper." The fact is that I don't want to drive and I would prefer going by train or by plane, but we had to save money. Sometimes we would drive with a paper registration number. I owe 80 Euros to the German police for speeding, but I really wanted to make it to some exhibition. 80 Euros is a lot of money, and I still didn't manage to save that much from my salary, because it hardly pays our Berlin office.

And that's not all. Suddenly I got scared from enumerating all this. I have a feeling that they might ban me from Germany for at least five years. But they say admission of guilt lessens the penalty.

# Darka Radosavljević Vasiljević

## Position of art publishing in Serbia today

During the 1990's (Milosevic period) several art magazines were published in Serbia. Today, only REMONT Art Magazine is published regularly

REMONT – independent artists' association was founded at the beginning of 2000, with the primary task to gather internationally-oriented artists from Belgrade. The idea was to re-establish the communication between the local and international visual art scenes, which was broken during the period of Serbian isolation in the 1990's.

Launching an art magazine seemed to be a perfect means of popularisation of modern visual arts in Serbia. The first issue of REMONT magazine was published by the end of 2000, and it was a fanzine-like 16-page publication. The content was based on information on local and international happenings, since this kind of information was most lacking. In years to follow, the REMONT magazine grew along with REMONT association... Internal evaluations were done after every release, and we made efforts in improving each issue in terms of the concept, the number of associates and the magazine identity in general. Finally, release No.8 brought a radical change in concept. A newly established editorial team (consisting of young art historians) came up with an idea of broadening the focus of the magazine towards the social phenomena connected to visual culture in a wider sense (theatre, film, clubbing, mass-media, etc.) while preserving the initial topic – contemporary artistic production.

However, the present day has brought the necessity of



re-questioning the concept of the magazine. Maybe the magazine has evolved, but the environment we live in is still considering culture and art (especially the contemporary ones) a sort of luxury, thus quite insignificant for the future of the society in general. The local scene is lacking in publications that deal exclusively with visual culture, so we consider the possibility of narrowing the focus back to the original topic – contemporary visual arts production.

Being the only magazine of this kind in Serbia and Montenegro, there are numerous dilemmas we are facing:

- What should be our priority: popularisation of local scene or information on international happenings?
- How to find own identity juxtaposed to the international scene?
- How to present the contemporary visual art (which has mainly become multimedial) in printed form to the audience that has no possibilities of live experience?
- How to pay attention and raise interest to a possible audience having in mind the previous question?
- How to draw the line between education and information?
- How to internationalise the magazine (translation of texts, which are all exclusive) and to organise the international distribution?

These are the questions we try to answer during preparation of each issue of the magazine...

It is hard to talk about the modern visual art publishing in our country while there is a single magazine that is issued regularly. The question is: do we talk about “publishing” or “a magazine”? And the problems that this magazine faces are:

- absolute absence of the system of distribution dedicated especially to small publishers;

- problems with distribution and collecting the money earned through selling the copies;
- the lack of interest among possible advertisers, considering a relatively small target group.

Again and again we question the meaning of this magazine and we still have a dilemma whether to persist or not.

Personally, I doubt that the answer can be achieved in short time and this is the main reason for my trust in such discussions. At least, they can help us correct our navigation course.

## Hedwig Saxenhuber

### “Don’t be Such a Fetish-East!” (1)

In every issue of Springerin magazine there is one key theme. Last year we sent an outline to the correspondents for the upcoming issue about “Diadochic Culture”. It was about a new cultural selfawareness in the postsocialist countries of Eastern and Southeastern Europe. This situation was not to compare to a postcolonial. The text we sent out with a question mark did read follows: “in the now independent arts of the former power blocs, a new cultural self awareness has cristallised, largely unnoticed by the art industry which is too busy rushing from one art fair to the other. This is particularly the case in geographical spheres that had long been under the influence of the Soviet Union. Here a new kind of cultural sensibility has developed that can no longer be described within categories of the postcolonial. Springerin collects

voices from a postcommunist neo-diadochic culture.”

Nebojsa Jovanovic, our correspondent from Sarajevo (definitely not having been ever under Soviet influence) responded to this. And I think this controversy is symptomatic for that what we want to talk today. I am glad to take part in this conference but I have the position to come from “the West”, having some experiences and knowledge of the East by our correspondents from the East, so I want to introduce Jovanovic’s text. As we have here not the time to read the whole text, I quote passages, you can find the whole version in English and German in the web [www.springerin.at](http://www.springerin.at).

“Does ‘Diadochic Culture’ as the topic of this issue of Springerin really introduce a genuine perspective in the never-ending correspondence between the Euro-West and the Euro-East in the field of contemporary art, or even more generally (and more pretentiously) speaking, in their cultural spheres? The short announcement about the spring issue of Springerin that also functioned as an invitation to the magazine’s contributors to write on this topic outlines several curious notions that make the concept of ‘a new diadochic culture’ highly problematic...”

“...The rich and diverse variety of political experiences after the fall of socialism in the European East quashes the possibility of introducing any far-fetched idea of one unified post-socialist experience. Given the myriad of different and often mutually contradictory political and economic phenomena in the Euro-East, it is impossible to expect the emergence of ‘a new cultural self-awareness’ or ‘a post-communist (sic!), neo-diadochic culture’. The very invention of this alleged new cultural mode says little, if anything, about the post-socialist realities of Europe;

above all, it shows that the Euro-West is still quite prone to devising new conceptualizations of the Euro-East. It seems that the story of a new cultural sensibility is likely to replace the previous predominant narrative describing the relationship between the Euro-East and the Euro-West: namely, the narrative of transition.

According to this conceptualization, which reached its culmination in the quasi-scientific discourse of transitology and consolidology, the Euro-East has to undergo the process of transition, receiving the pre-packaged shot of Western democracy and capitalist ideology. Needless to say, the main problem with transitology lies precisely in the dogmatic notion that liberal democracy and capitalism are the only cure for post-socialist maladies. The usual complaint aimed at transitology can thus be formulated as follows: is not transitology a re-working of the old prejudice of the supremacy of the West over the East/Orient/Third World etc.; or, in psychoanalytical terms, a mere phantasmal framework introducing a gap between itself and the Other – a gap which can never be traversed? The Other is supposed to begin a movement to reach the West, but perfect harmony can never be attained – some asymptotic distance will always remain. A more radical reading should point out that the distance from the East matters only as a phantasmal cover – up for the distances, barriers and delays that characterize the West itself, thus revealing the West not as coherent and deprived of all antagonisms, but as a heterogeneous and inconsistent system...”

“...The most crucial part of this re-examination would be answering the following question: can Euro-Western artists and theoreticians conceive Western artistic plurality in any other way than the ‘art industry’ or the ‘art

market'? In other words, can art today exist outside of the realm of capital? My premise is that the answer to this question is 'no', and that this is why Euro-Western art has to be analyzed and criticized, not as belonging to some celestial world of pure culture or art, but as an integral element of the dirty, earthly campaigns of the capitalist economy. Thus, if the Euro-West is still deluded about there being forms of new cultural sensibility in the Euro-East, it is because the Euro-West is utterly misguided by a naïve belief that the Euro-East is unspoiled by capital and commodification, an almost Rousseauian notion of a sensitive post-socialist savage uncastrated by capital, a model from which the Euro-West itself could learn how to avoid the kismet ushered in by the market of self-absorbed art fairs.

The Euro-West can hardly learn anything radical from the Euro-East in the sphere of culture these days that could not be found amongst other existing sensibilities and initiatives in the Western art scene. It is our modest proposal, however, that it is high time the West learned something about itself from its own misconceptions. It is a bit idle to expect any of the current inter-changing phantasmal notions of the East to be 'the right one', the Hegelian detour through the error after which the subject of knowledge (for instance, a benevolent art theoretician from some Western metropolis) will eventually grasp the truth of its own position. A Lacanian lesson about fantasy says that fantasy is there not to be interpreted but traversed: traversing the fantasy of a new post-socialist cultural sensibility will have to take the form of the artistic Euro-West facing its own internal antagonisms, the majority of which are propelled by the fact that the logic of Western 'art industry' is nothing but the logic of

capital. And there is no new 'diadochic' or any other "–chic", fanciful spectre that can rescue us from that."

I suppose that Jovanovic marks very precisely that the gap we are talking these days is not just constructed by the artmarket or the economical and political imbalance, that still exists between East and West, but as well in our constructions and discursive practices. One important aim of this conference can be to be aware of these blind spots, then we are a step further to recognize the different developments in the cultural spheres.

1. The title is borrowed from an article by Nebojsa Jovanovic "Don't be Such a Fetish-East! Against the notion of a postsocialist culture". See the whole article [www.springerin.at/eng](http://www.springerin.at/eng), springerin issue 1/04

## Nebojša Vilić

### Information Exchange!?

Among the several specifics of publishing contemporary art magazine in the region of Central Eastern [CEE] and South Eastern Europe [SEE] (like the problems of financing, distribution, technical issues, etc.) the basic doubt of the publisher [and the initial idea in general] is the starting question: to whom the magazine is addressed? Or in other words: to whom this information exchange is most beneficial?

This question at the first glance looks not even worth mentioning, since the answer is known: to the art public,

professionals (artists, curators), art institutions and art market. Yes, but is it so?

The doubtedness of this 'known' answer raises out of several circumstances. First of all, the 'known' public is self-understandable for the developed art-magazine markets where the market of publications is so much developed that there is almost one magazine per each particular interest, i.e. specific art product. This differentiation is not common for the Region. The main problem of the 'addressed' audience derives from the condition of publishing mostly one magazine (about the art that we are interested in, at least). In the case where one can publish one or two art magazines (limited not only from the financing aspects, lack of funds, sponsorship or commercials, but rather from the number of art critics and art writers and qualitative art production/art-works) the one is stacked into the problem of the content.

To define the content (what to publish) is bigger problem than how to publish, even bigger than how to distribute it (which is, from the other side, the essential problem). And above all of this comes the issue of the context (why to publish)! From here on it ends with the conclusion that the content is depended on the context. In other words: why we are publishing magazines? The answer is also known: to exchange the information. Hence: for what purpose is this exchange?, one may ask her/him self.

The very history of publishing art magazines has two basic and starting points: the first one is the exchange of knowledge (which is based upon the ideas of the Enlightenment) and the second one is the exchange of goods (i.e. art works) (which is idea based on the market oriented economy/society). Both of the starting points

were generated from the reason (that generates another cause): the exchange of capital. By that, the pre-modern idea of the art as exchange of the symbolic values turned into an exchange of the market values. And from here on, if we accept this interpretation, speaking of publishing art magazine in the societies that are lacking developed system of exchange of the market values means that the only starting point which lefts is the first one, the one of the Enlightenment. Or, at least, our belief that the exchange of knowledge is still worth spending what the creative and intellectual capacities have to and can do – what they only believe in.

To make it clearer, in the societies of the Region one can say that there is certain art system. I do not want to go deeper in this analysis, but still, some art system still exists, inherited from the previous times [at least speaking for SFR Yugoslavia, i.e. Skopje Museum of Contemporary Art is the second established contemporary art museum at the whole Balkan with an important collection of art works from the 60s and 70s). The infrastructural system is good enough developed (museums, galleries, cultural centres, high education level of studying for artists and art historians, Ministry of Culture with the Low for Culture and National Programme for Culture, NGOs in the field of culture) and one can say that there is art system. But, what is incomparable with the western societies is that this system was/is built upon the ideas of the Enlightenment, as an exchange of knowledge, only. This system never thought on market driving forces, elements, and processes. Art or intellectual 'production' was never treated by a mean of exchangeable good, even that they were still labelled as 'labour' (according to the leftist theories).

Finally, what was once in our understanding advantage



turns now a day into a problem: such an enlightened art system never generated market oriented art system. And, in my understanding, this is the crucial source for the problems of the today's art magazines: they were never designed and produced as the other side of the one and the very same coin - the exchange of the capital. One does now understand and even more experience that the exchange of knowledge is designed for the needs and purposes of the exchange of the goods.

And back to the title, the information exchange (does not matter does it have Guttenbergian or McLuhanian origin) is a tool for an enlargement of the knowledge as a tool driven for the purposes of the capital exchange (exchange of the capital). And this is the context in which the art magazine from CEE and SEE has to exist (does not matter whether I agree or not). And this context drives the content of it. And this is the starting point to find the answer to the question: to whom is the art magazine from CEE and SEE addressed?

## Janka Vukmir

### Content Contents

The City of Zagreb is financing 74 magazines of 62 (1) publishers in the field of culture, with the total amount of about half a million Euro, with the average support ranging from 666 to 44.000 Euro, with 70% of all supports not reaching over 4.000 Euro.

The Ministry for Culture additionally finances 73 titles (2) with about 1million Euro. They are almost the same titles,

with a few exceptions mostly from outside of Zagreb. These are the facts.

And we regularly say - we have nothing to read, and almost nobody ever refers to anything published in Croatian magazines. The majority of all quotations are from the foreign publications. These are the truths.

So, the problem obviously is not of the primarily financial nature, but in the contents of the supported magazines and how we refer to them.

I am absolutely not going to discuss the distribution of public money in Croatian culture, which is a problem *per se*, and would mislead us today from more important things. I can only comment how those 70% of all support which goes up to 4.000 Euro, sometimes seems obviously wasted money, and sometimes it really pays and doubles its full amount. This of course is what our magazine Radionica does.

We have gathered here to trace general needs, based upon general symptoms and general problems.

It is to be assumed that there is a lot of suspicion about the possibility to collaborate, to exchange, to trace the common, but I am absolutely certain that it is in fact what happens, but we are not always aware of it.

We usually say and wonder about how the world is small. It proves here, more or less we all already know each other, here in this room, coming from different, close or distant places.

But is not that the world is small, but that the social circles we are involved in are narrow. This is why we can easily follow and trace what goes on in various places. If the world were three times bigger, we would probably know three times more.

This fact should apply to our work as the editors or critics

or writers about contemporary art. Do we write only about what we know, and how much do we search for unknown? And what would be the task of an editor. How the content of a publication should be decided about?

Dilemmas between - do we have to promote our local art / artists / writers / institutions etc., or introduce foreign art to our audience are most probably omnipresent. And, do we have to decide between one or the other; is this alternative the only possibility, or there is more complex choice? And not only what we should write about is the question, but also how we should do it.

I deeply believe that nothing is black and white, neither is the answer to this question. But there always are some facts to lean on.

As the physicians say that we can not be at two places at the same time, it means that we are blackmailed by the territory, and as one of the classic art historians in Croatia said many years ago: Territory is the destiny. So the above mentioned dilemma remains – local or global art is to be written about?

Even the famous globalisation through revolution of accessibility to information together with electronic publishing didn't entirely resolve this problem. Homepages, not only that are called home pages as denominators of the electronic territory, usually ruled by the monopoly of local telecom operators, but most often they really depicts the national territory where we do belong with their .it; .at; .hr; .ba; .ua; .ae; .py; .cu; but also .orgs; .nets; gov; and other domains are mostly registered clearly by the national keys. There are theories about it. I just wish to stress the territorial belonging as inevitable component to our discussion. And this is because I don't see it as an obstacle, however influential

to our destiny it might be. To illustrate this absurdity, I will cite a commonly used example: A refugee lady from Sarajevo, after years of her life under the bombardment of her city, finally leaves and comes to Zagreb to start a new life. Then, in the centre of the city, she gets killed during one of the last bombardments of Zagreb.

And what territory was more influential on her life, this one where she got killed, or the other one which made her leave?

Then of course, devoted to contemporary art as we are, not only that there is a limit of what we consider contemporary, but also often discussed problem of, if a contemporary work of art really shows elements of contemporaneity. The same is with if it is old-fashioned in the moment of its birth or first time being showed. The time plays the key role to our perception of art and society, so it should reflect in our magazines. Here we face the first problem. There is more than one kind of time, and here occur some of our misunderstandings. There is a well-known thesis of Paul Virilio, now already so old-fashioned even to mention, which says that there are two kinds of time: "The production of real time by the new technologies, like it or not, is the implementation of a time that has no relationship to historical time. Real time is world time. All of History happened in local time..."

And as we live in a local times, this is why we rarely meet. Other things are important in other moments in other places. There are only few moments of our lives where local, individual time meets the world time: like everybody in ex-Yugoslavia remembers where one was when Tito died, or more recently, everyone remembers where one was on September 11.

And what Virilio here calls implementation of real time by

new technologies refers directly to the Gulf War, the first to be broadcast live on TV. The above quotation comes from the book "Vision Machine", devoted to this topic. But to illustrate our media, art magazines, I can use other two examples – in May of 1980 when Tito died, the most modern technology was still TV. There are lots of speculation about when Tito really died, a few days or hours earlier, and how TV has manipulated the time when to broadcast the news. The Sept. 11 has happened over 20 years later, and it was in our e-space in seconds. I use the daily news as examples with the wish to bring closer task of an art magazine to the regular tasks of journalists and papers, which is often neglected in an artistic way.

Why am I stressing this? It is because after space and time, we have to deal with knowledge. We need to have some knowledge in order to understand and be able to explain. Transfer of know-how is not only trendy topic of cultural policies in Europe and elsewhere but a sheer need and one of the purposes of publishing. In order to have audience, and in order to have readers, under the market blackmail of being able to produce the next issue by selling the old one, we also have to share our knowledge. Here we really enter the necessity of collaboration. As we are blackmailed by profit, we have to spare money on production costs, but also the costs of getting the information, transferring it into knowledge, in order to educate. If this full circle is uninterrupted, we will be successful magazines.

I guess, the audience, all of you sitting here in the room right now, with what all of you think at the moment, you know so much more about the knowledge than me here talking now. This is what I mean as collaboration. So, in order to let you talk, ask and complain, let me finish soon.

I have sorted out space, time and knowledge as spatial, temporal and cognitive criteria necessary for our work.

But in order to be able to complete mutual relationships among those elements and let them reach their tensions and balances, we need to be aware that it is possible only within certain context.

We can say that all of our magazines give the context or is the context, but we cannot deny that the external, social, political, artistic, financial, scientific and other contexts are equally important for the content contents of our magazines.

So do we have the new problem now or do we have the solution?

Neither. We have a composition which is called identity.

According to the book of a frightening title "Murderous Identities" of Amin Maalouf: our identity is not formed by compartments, it cannot be divided in halves nor in thirds or in close zones. And that does not mean that we have several identities: we have only one, a product of all the elements that have built it up by a singular "dosage" which is never the same in two [people].

The unique product of our multi-folded and un-dividable identity is titled "Radionica". And it is just a small constitutive part of the contemporary art magazines identity.

1. [http://www.zagreb.hr/DOKUMENT.nsf/52e5cbe929e7b66fc125696500452b27/00a1eca1f63940dfc1256f8900415b85/\\$FILE/Program%20javnih%20potreba%20u%20kulturi%20za%202005-razrada.pdf](http://www.zagreb.hr/DOKUMENT.nsf/52e5cbe929e7b66fc125696500452b27/00a1eca1f63940dfc1256f8900415b85/$FILE/Program%20javnih%20potreba%20u%20kulturi%20za%202005-razrada.pdf)

2. [http://www.min-kulture.hr/projekti/pdf\\_odobreni05/svi\\_banj\\_05\\_2/casopisi-160505.pdf](http://www.min-kulture.hr/projekti/pdf_odobreni05/svi_banj_05_2/casopisi-160505.pdf)

## THE AUTHORS





**Konstantin Akinsha** Education:1990 - Candidate of Art History (Ph. D.); Research Institute of Art History, Moscow, Russia. Professional activities: 2001- present: Senior Adviser, Research Project for Art and Archives, New York; 1996-present: Contributing Editor, ARTnews, New York. Awards: National Headliner Award 1996; George Polk Memorial Award for reporting on culture, Long Island University 1991; Overseas Press Club of America Citation of Excellence 1991.

**Aleksandra Estela Bjelica Mladenović** (1967, Belgrade, Serbia) graduated from the Faculty of Philosophy of Belgrade (Department of History of Art). Since 1986 writes and publishes articles about contemporary visual arts and photography in exhibition catalogues, art magazines and daily newspapers. Member of AICA, Association of Art Historians of Serbia and National Center of Photography (Belgrade).

**Alena Boika** (1976, Soligorsk, Belarus) Curator and journalist, graduated at Belarusian State University (History Department) in 2001. Organizer of independent Belarus artists at home and abroad. Coordinator of cultural and educational programs. She lives in Minsk.

**Giuliana Carbi** (1959, Trieste, Italy) art historian and curator. Education: Ph.D. (History of art, Rome, 1989), other studies in philosophy and art criticism at the Universities of Venice and Bologna. Professional activities: Professor of History of contemporary art, University of Trieste (1993-95); founder (1995) and president in charge of the Trieste Contemporanea Committee

([www.tscont.ts.it](http://www.tscont.ts.it)); editor of the "Trieste Contemporanea" magazine.

**Irina Cios** is art critic and curator, director of the International Center for Contemporary Arts, Bucharest, and also guest lecturer at the Bucharest University. Initiator and curator of the SPACE Gallery of ICCA (2000 – 2003) promoting experimental art and new media she organized important events in partnership with international art institutions. Editor of contemporary art catalogues, she is Co-author of the Art Dictionary; techniques and artistic styles (1998). Contributes with articles and interviews in catalogues, journals and magazines like: Observator Cultural, Artelier, Balkon, Secolul 21, Praesens, Idea etc.

**Branko Franceschi**, (1959, Zadar, Croatia) art historian, since 2004 executive director of the Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art in Rijeka, Croatia ([www.mmsu.hr](http://www.mmsu.hr)). During his career he has curated numerous exhibitions, written numerous contributions to daily press, art reviews and periodicals, TV and radio broadcasts, etc and has initiated and coordinated residencies and cultural exchanges between Croatia and USA and Great Britain. Member of AICA (Board of AICA Croatia), ICOM, CIMAM, DPUH, Advisory Committee of ArtsLink.

**Marco Enrico Giacomelli** (1976, Torino, Italy) studied Philosophy at the University of Turin and in Paris, he graduated from the University of Bologna, where he is preparing his Ph.D. in Aesthetics. His current interests are focused on contemporary art, "historical avant-garde" movements, and Marxism. He's co-editor of the journal

Swif and assistant editor of the magazine *Exibart*. Among his recent publications: contributions in *Leclercq* (ed.), *Abécédaire de Michel Foucault* (Sils Maria, Mons 2004), *Leclercq* (ed.), *Abécédaire de Jacques Derrida* (Sils Maria, Mons 2005), and journals *Actuel Marx*, *Arte & Critica*, *Diogene*, *Rivista di Estetica*, *Sugo*.

**Irina Grabovan** is founder and director of AoRTa Art Centre, the first contemporary art space in Moldova (1999). She has participated as curator and artist in several international exhibitions. She is a writer and debater on Culture and Identity, art, media and society issues. She is a publisher and editor of book series on contemporary photography (AoRTa publications).

**Giancarlo Graziani** antiquarian and dealer – legal expert in the antiques sector. He is a free lance journalist on subjects concerning art as investment goods; he contributes to the major means of communication and participates to national as well as international meetings and congresses. He is among the principal art advisory experts and has taught the subject as well. He collaborates with the Laboratorio sul Commercio dei Beni Artistici - LCBA – (laboratory on commerce of artistic goods) of Nomisma. He has drafted rules for the professional certification of antiquarians, which is awaiting acceptance by the standardization body. He is an advisor for the FIMA (national federation for art dealers)-and is also the president of the Associazione degli Antiquari di Siena e Provincia (association of the antiquarians of Siena and its province).

**Anders Härm** is a curator at the Kunsthalle Tallinn (Tallinna Kunstihoone). He was the curator of Estonian Pavillion at the Venice Biennale in 2003 and at the Architecture biennale in 2000. He is a lecturer at the Estonian Academy of Arts and one half of the collective troubleproductions (formed in 2001).

**Anna Jagiello** (1975, Warsaw, Poland), curator at the Polish Institute of Rome, graduated from the Institute of Art History of Warsaw University in 2001. From 2000 to 2003 assistant curator and curator at the Zacheta National Gallery of Art in Warsaw.

**Beral Madra** (1942, Istanbul, Turkey) Art Critic and Curator, Director of BM Contemporary Art Centre. Graduated from the Department of Archaeology, University of Istanbul, in 1967. Since 1980, she works as free-lance art-critic and curator. She is a founding member of the Foundation for Future Culture and Art. She was lecturer at the Department of Art and Design, Yildiz Technical University, Istanbul. (1998-2001). Currently she is the president of AICA Turkey.

**About the Divus and Ivan Mečl** Divus was established by Ivan Mečl in 1992 as an art publishing house. Over time the project grew and now has broad influence with cultural production. In 1997, Divus put out the first edition of Umělec, a magazine devoted to contemporary art and culture. In 2000, the magazine began to come out in both Czech and English, and in 2002 one issue was produced in French. Lenka Lindaurová and Vladan Šír were its first editors.

From 2000, Umělec magazine and its guests participated

with international presentations, festivals and exhibitions, like Manifesta in Ljubljana, Art Forum in Berlin, Armory Show in New York, Art Basel and others.

In 2003 Jiří Ptáček, art theoretician and curator, took over as editor-in-chief of Umělec magazine. It was under his aegis that the magazine participated at the biennials at Tirana and Istanbul.

At the end of the year Divus is expected to publish a Czech-German edition of the magazine. An editorial team has been set up in Berlin with the journalist Henny Pagels. Divus plans to publish a Czech German and Czech Spanish edition of Umělec in 2005.

Throughout the publishing house's existence, Divus has printed many other books about contemporary culture. Divus also produces video animation works, medium-length films and provides broadcasting, publishes comic works and unclassifiable authors. A complete list of publications is available at [www.divus.cz](http://www.divus.cz)

**Dragana Palavestra**, graduated from the Faculty of Philosophy of Belgrade (Department of the Art History). Specialized in exhibitions of contemporary visual arts, applied arts and design. Works as Visual arts coordinator in the Secretariat of Culture of the City of Belgrade–City Government.

**Alfredo Pirri** (1957, Cosenza, Italy) lives and works in Rome. Education: Academy of Fine Arts, Rome. Selected one-man and group selected exhibitions in public spaces: Venice Biennale (1988 and 1993); Minimalia, PS1, New York (1999); VOLUME! Roma (1998); Contemporary Art Biennial, L'Havane (2001); Palazzo delle Papesse, Siena (2000, 2001). For the gardens of Villa Medici in Roma, he

realised *Via d'ombra* (2000). Selected exhibitions in private spaces: Tucci Russo, Torino and Torre Pellice; Studio Casoli, Milano; *Ore D'aria*, Rome; Benet Costa, Barcellona; Michel Rein, Paris; Lia Rumma, Napoli; Planita, Rome. His work has been reviewed by the most important art magazines (Flash Art, Artforum, Art in America, Art News, ArtScribe etc.). On his work Skira Milano published a double monographic book, "Dove sbatte la luce. Mostre e opere. 2003-1986".

**Darka Radosavljević Vasiljević** (1960, Belgrade, Serbia) art historian, journalist (Radio B92 / editor of culture programme), curator (several exhibitions), executive manager of REMONT independent artistic association.

**Domenico Ronconi**, Italian, has been working at the Council of Europe, in Strasbourg, for more than twenty years. His educational background being Humanities and European Civilisations (he studied in Milan and graduated from Paris and Trieste Universities), he soon took over responsibility for cultural and educational cooperation between the now 46 member States of the Organisation. The wide cultural spectrum of his and his colleagues' missions has provided him with a taste for multicultural and intercultural experiences and approaches, and deep interest for different cultural backgrounds in Europe and in the world.

He teaches "European questions" at the Central African University, in Yaoundé, Cameroon, and at the Lyon University, France.

**Hedwig Saxenhuber** is a freelance curator and co-editor of "Springerin" magazine. From 1992 to 1996 she was a

curator at Kunstverein Munich. She teaches at the Universität für visuelle und experimentelle Gestaltung of Linz. She lives in Vienna.

**Gabriela Świtek**, lecturer at the Institute of Art History, Warsaw University. Ph.D. from the Department of Art History and Architecture, Cambridge University (1999). Curator and chief of documentation department in the Zacheta National Gallery of Art in Warsaw. Recently curated the exhibition of Daniel Libeskind, "Memory Foundations" (2004). Editor and author of the book "Zacheta 1860-2000 (2003)".

**Vittorio Urbani** (1954, Ferrara, Italy), still being a doctor professionally, he started in 1993 to be a contemporary art curator. He runs the Venetian Association "Nuova Icona" that exchanges relationship with international art centres through Venice residences for artists and theoreticians and networking internationally mainly with operators from the East Mediterranean.

**Maria Vassileva** is a founding member of the Institute of Contemporary Art – Sofia (<http://ica.cult.bg>) and chief curator at the Sofia Art Gallery (<http://sghg.cult.bg>). Curator of the women's group "The 8th of March", (<http://8mart.cult.bg>).

**Nebojša Vilić**, Ph.D. (1962, Veles, Macedonia) Lectures as Associate Professor at the Faculty of Dramatic Arts, University SS. Cyril and Methodius in Skopje, Macedonia. His professional interest varies from art history and criticism, through theory of art, to the theoretical interpretations of digital arts and the subaltern position of

the cultures of the third and fourth world. He has curated over 50 exhibitions in Macedonia and abroad and participated in over 30 international symposia. Since recently he is editor-in-chief of the forthcoming international journal Concrete Reflection. The Journal of Peninsular Topics published in Skopje. Recent research, under the topic Political Art, is related to the position of the "art with relation" with/within/by/in behalf of the societal community.

**Janka Vumkir** is an art historian and ethnologist. She is active in the field of contemporary art since 1990 and has curated, lectured, juried, written and published internationally. She is co-founder and director of the Institute for Contemporary Art in Zagreb ([www.scca.hr](http://www.scca.hr)) since 1998, and president of the CIP, Croatian Independent Publishers, since 2003.



# THE PROGRAMME



# **CONTINENTAL BREAKFAST. THE EXPANDED MAP**

## **Second CEI Venice Forum for Contemporary Art Curators**

Venice, 7 – 8 June 2005

promoted by the Trieste Contemporanea Committee  
in collaboration with UNESCO Office in Venice -  
Regional Bureau for Science in Europe (ROSTE)  
with the patronage of CEI-Central European Initiative  
Regione del Veneto  
Comune di Venezia  
supported by CEI-Central European Initiative  
Regione Autonoma Friuli Venezia Giulia  
BEBA Foundation Venice

### **PROGRAMME**

**Welcome speeches**

**MARIE-PAULE ROUDIL**

Head, Section for Culture, UNESCO-ROSTE, Venice

**GIOVANNI PUGLISI**

President, Italian National Commission for UNESCO, Rome

**HARALD KREID**

Director General, CEI Executive Secretariat, Trieste

**DOMENICO RONCONI**

Head of Cultural Action Division, Directorate General IV, Council of Europe, Strasbourg

**GIULIANA CARBI**

President, Trieste Contemporanea Committee

### **First session - To Trace**

**DOMENICO RONCONI** (Council of Europe), Looking ahead

**KATALIN TIMÁR** (Hungary), En-gendering curating. Some considerations

**GABRIELA ŚWITEK** (Poland), Invisibility. The cultures of collecting data

**ALFREDO PIRRI** (Italy), Tracks of identity outside the white cube

**ANDA ROTTENBERG** (Poland), Confrontation as Recognition

**ANDERS HÄRM** (Estonia), Curating the East. Local tendencies and Western expectations

**ALEKSANDRA ESTELA BJELICA MLADENOVIĆ** (Serbia and Montenegro), Great experience or How to organize an international exhibition in a non EU country

**BERAL MADRA** (Turkey), "Position in East of EU in the expanded map". Micro and macro policies of contemporary art and culture  
**BARBARA NOVAKOVIĆ KOLENC** (Slovenia), Arts on bills

### **Second session - To Trace: Mapping the Gap. Activities of publishing art**

**KONSTANTIN AKINSHA** (Ukraine - USA), Reporting on Tabula Rasa. The mainstream Western art press and coverage of Central and East European contemporary art

**ALENA BOIKA** (Belarus), To Kill a Scarecrow!

**IRINA CIOS** (Romania), Who is the art critic?

**MARCO ENRICO GIACOMELLI** (Italy), Another Italian Anomaly? On Embedded Critics

**IRINA GRABOVAN** (Moldova), Zones of Autonomy. Strategies and tactics

**IVAN MEČL** (Czech Republic), The German Issue Or How We Once Again Didn't Conquer the West

**DARKA RADOSAVLJEVIĆ VASILJEVIĆ** (Serbia and Montenegro), Position of art publication in Serbia now

**HEDWIG SAXENHUBER** (Austria), "Don't be Such a Fetish-East!"

**NEBOJŠA VILIĆ** (Macedonia), Informational Exchange!?

**JANKA VUKMIR** (Croatia), moderator, Content Contents

### **Third session - To Divulge**

**VITTORIO URBANI** (Italy), Reflecting on mistakes

**BRANKO FRANCESCHI** (Croatia), Residency Effect

**MARIA VASSILEVA** (Bulgaria), Visual Seminar

**GIANCARLO GRAZIANI** (Italy), The art advisory for the art market: the Italy case

**DRAGANA PALAVESTRA** (Serbia and Montenegro), Realisation of the programme and the mutual relations of participants in financing of contemporary art (events, institutions, artists)

**ANIA JAGIELLO** (Poland), How to convince to contemporary art? Activity of the Polish Institute of Rome

### **Closing remarks**

**MARIE-PAULE ROUDIL, DOMENICO RONCONI**

**Curator** Giuliana Carbi

**Co-curator (Mapping the Gap)** Janka Vukmir

**CEI coordinator** Giulietta Del Fabbro

**UNESCO-ROSTE coordinator** Rosanna Santesso

**Trieste Contemporanea staff in Venice** Fiora Gandolfi, Franco Jesurum, Silvia Loreti, Emanuela Marassi, Elisabetta Messina Miniussi, Giovanna Montagna, Silvia Pillon

**Press office** Roberta Lombardo Hurstel, Luca Signorini

**Informatics consultant** Carlo Dorio

**Translations and linguistic consultancy** Susan Cassidy, Alessandra Knowles, Giovanna Montagna, Henry Richardson, Liana Roetter

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## CONTINENTAL BREAKFAST PROJECT

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Trieste Contemporanea Committee –Italy

Villa Manin Centre for Contemporary Art, Passariano (Udine) –Italy

Maribor Art Gallery –Slovenia

Muzeum Ljubljana – Slovenia

Tallinn Art Hall –Estonia

Institute for Contemporary Art, Zagreb –Croatia

CB Associated Partners

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Ludwig Museum of Contemporary Art, Budapest –Hungary

Institute Adam Mickiewicz, Warsaw –Poland

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Belgrade City Assembly –Serbia and Montenegro

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Municipality of Trieste –Italy

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