

Art and Crisis | Art in Crisis?

Notes to the topic – explication on the example of Slovakia

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Slovak National Gallery, Bratislava

Danube Dialogs, Novi Sad, 2011

UMETNOST I KRIZA ART AND CRISIS

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OKRUGLI STO: UMETNOST I KRIZA

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INSTITUTE FOR CULTURE OF VOJVODINA, NOVI SAD

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NEKOLIKO UVODNIH NAPOMENA. ILI: ZBOG ČEGA TEMA „UMETNOST I KRIZA“?

Organizatorima Festivala savremene umetnosti *Dunavski dijalozi* geografija je nametnula veoma interesantnu izložbenu strukturu: obuhvaćene su umetnosti zemalja koje se rasprostiru u širokom evropskom arealu – od Crne šume u centralnoj Evropi, preko zapadnog Balkana, sve do uzbudljivog razgranatog dunavskog meandra u ukrajinskom priobalju Crnog mora. U skoro istom redosledu (s nevelikim varijacijama) moguće je određivati stepen ekonomske razvijenosti. Svaka od tih zemalja poseduje specifične političke sudbine. Od stabilnih demokratskih sistema pa sve do iritirajućih kriznih manifestacija tranzicijskih prestrojavanja. No svaka od tih zemalja je, ma koliko to izgledalo absurdno, dodirnuta i uzdrmana križnim manifestacijama! Jer naš svet je ispunjen brojnim smenjujućim krizama. Setimo se samo velike jugoslovenske dezintegracione ratne krize koja je kulminirala NATO-bombardovanjem 1999., u koje je bilo „uvučeno“ čak 19 zemalja sveta. Iz tih devedesetih su i brojne krize jačeg ili slabijeg intenziteta, proistekle iz tada aktualnih geopolitičkih preraspoređivanja. Druge vrste su krize ekonomskog karaktera, poput nedavne „bankarsko-berzanske krize“, koje su se manifestovale ili se još uvek manifestuju u nekim sve donedavno odista stabilnim sistemima. Svet je pun brojnih politički fabrikovanih kriza, poput iranskih ili afričkih zbivanja – koje su takvog intenziteta da se mahinalno reflektuju na najšira politička i ekomska zbivanja u svetu... Na samoj periferiji našeg podunavskog regiona bukti ukrajinska križna koja se sve vidljivije pretvara u novu, za sada još uvek hladnoratovsku, konfrontaciju Zapada sa Rusijom...



Sava Stepanov

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Uz to, našem vremenu pripadaju i krize sasvim drugačijeg, ekološkog karaktera. Još se osećaju černobiljske posledice i postfukušimske traume. Svet je sve češće uznemiren raznim pandemijskim pretnjama. Zapravo, svakim danom postaje sve očiglednije da je svojim ponašanjem čovek uznemirio prirodu, a fenomen „staklene bašt“ preti novim, već predviđenim, elementarnim nepogodama, poput onih sa porastom nivoa mora uz severnu norvešku obalu, sa koje su već napuštena pojedina naselja, poput vulkanske prašine sa Islanda koja je odložila na hiljade međunarodnih avionskih letova, poput japanskog ili indonežanskog cunamija, poput snažnih uraganskih katastrofa ili poput velikih poplava koje se, već skoro redovno, ponavljaju širom Evrope, ali i na drugim stranama sveta...

Kada je reč o fenomenu krize, čini se da je ona sama po sebi – najmanje tema. Pre bi se moglo govoriti o shvatanju krize kao nametnutog konteksta u kojem se sve dešava, a u kojem umetnici kritički deluju. Pojam „ikonosfere“, koji Porempski uvodi u umetničko-teorijski diskurs još 1972. godine, tek je u aktuelnom trenutku dobio svoj puni smisao. Kao i o svim drugim vestima, i o križama (velikim i malim, internim i opštim, lokalnim i globalnim) smo danas slikom obavešteni u trenutku njihovih dešavanja na bilo kojoj

SOME INTRODUCTORY REMARKS, OR: WHY ART AND CRISIS?

Local geography imposes an interesting configuration of exhibitions for the organisers of the Danube Dialogues. This Festival of Contemporary Art brings together a broad sweep of countries, ranging from Central Europe's Black Forest to the Western Balkans and onward, following the course of the Danube as it divides and meanders through the spellbinding Ukrainian littoral to the Black Sea. It would be possible to grade the level of economic development in almost the same order, with some minor variations. Each of these countries carries its own political lot, from systems rooted in a stable democracy to the irritating, crisis-ridden manifestations of transitional realignment. And however absurd it may seem, each country is affected and shaken by manifestations of crisis, living as we do in a world where one crisis follows hard on the heels of another. Let us just recall the enormous disintegration brought about by the war in Yugoslavia that culminated in the NATO bombing of 1999, embroiling 19 other countries in the process. The 1990s saw other crises of varying intensity arising from the geopolitical realignment of the time. Economic crises are a different thing, such as the recent "banker-stock-market crisis", still resounding throughout some countries whose systems were, up to that point, indisputably stable. The world is full of politically manufactured crises such as those of Iran or Africa, which are, however, of such intensity that they automatically reflect on global politics and economics. Now the crisis in Ukraine has flared up on the fringes of our own Danube basin, threatening ever more visibly to turn into a new – for the moment still cold-war – confrontation of the West with Russia.

Ecological crisis in our time is quite a different matter. The aftermath of Chernobyl, the trauma of Fukushima, continue to make themselves felt. With increasing frequency, the world is troubled by the menace of pandemics. Indeed, with every passing day it becomes clearer how far human behaviour has upset the balance of nature; the greenhouse effect threatens the onset of new but predictable natural disasters, such as rising sea levels on the northern coast of Norway which has led to the abandonment of some inhabited areas, volcanic dust from Greenland which grounded thousands of international flights, the tsunamis of Japan or Indonesia, the devastation wreaked by hurricanes or the extensive flooding which is now a regular occurrence throughout Europe and other parts of the world.

As for crisis itself as a phenomenon – this seems to be of least interest. Better to speak of understanding crisis as a context forced on us, within which everything happens and within which artists act critically. The idea of the iconosphere, introduced into art theory discourse by Poremski back in 1972, is only now coming into its own. As with all other news, we are informed through images about crises (large and small, internal and general, local and global) the moment they occur at whatever point of the compass. This, of course, obviously raises a frustrating tension about the world as a crisis area. Simul-

tački sveta. To, dakako, eklatantno povećava frustrirajuću tenziju o svetu kao kriznom mestu. Istovremeno, elektronska umreženost menja strukturalnu formu krize. Istorija svetskih kriza, pogotovo od kraja XIX pa tokom celokupnog proteklog XX veka i potom, ukazuje na to da su one uglavnom bile inicirane špekulacijskim delovanjem velikih korporacija i krupnog kapitala. Uglavnom se radilo o velikim proizvođačima koji su se služili svim i svačim da bi prodali svoj proizvod. Danas su najbogatiji ljudi iz tzv. IT sektora. Njihov kapital potiče od visokorazvijenih informativnih sistema i društvenih mreža. Tako se danas krizne situacije proizvode i distribuiraju – sasvim direktno, *in personam* – do potpuno nezaštićenog pojedinca zaslepljenog monitorom ispunjenim brojnim slikama, koje su danas, zasigurno, najefikasnije sredstvo manipulacije.

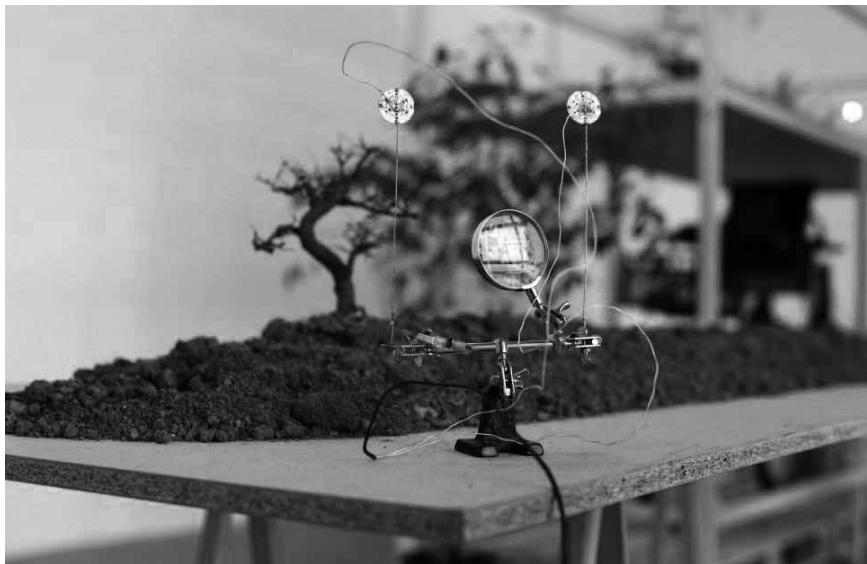
U takvom okružju brojni umetnici su shvatili da se „klin klinom izbjiga“. Zbog toga deluju na isti način i istim sredstvima – bave se kompjuterskim artom, zalaze u prostor *net-worka* i tu promovišu svoje ideje,

prikazuju vlastite umetničke reakcije, nastojeći da tako utiču na svest posmatrača. Naravno, ta nova medijska mogućnost menja umetničku formu, a najuočljivija promena je komunikacijska funkcionalizacija umetnosti.

Za razliku od ranijeg avangardističkog aktivizma, recimo dadaističkog tipa, koji je insistirao na cerebralnosti i slojevitosti izraza, ekranska umetnost nam nudi pojednostavljene vizuelne situacije koje istovremeno manifestuju i kritikuju stanje krize. Možda su najinteresantniji rezultati oni kojima umetnici uspevaju da unutar samog elektronskog medija iznađu vizuelizovane prizore (slike) te ih „udržuju“ sa stvarnim (prirodnim) situacijama. Pominjem koncept *Samoodrživog sistema apsurda* novosadskog umetnika Stevana Kojića,

čiji je rad živa tvorevina ostvarena sadejstvom internog digitalizovanog sistema i autentičnih prirodnih (biljnih) procesa. Sintezom te dve krajne zasebnosti Kojić definiše sistem koji – crta na zidu. Proces fotosinteze „kućne biljke“ pokreće rad internog elektronskog sistema. Takva veštačko-prirodna instalacija nije tek ponuđač Kojićevih reakcija na odnose u savremenom tehnologiziranom društvu. Zapravo, takva instalacija je kritika po sebi, kritika iznutra, kritika kakva je moguća samo u vremenu u kojem se sve više smanjuje razlika između stvarnog i virtualnog.

Jedno od važnijih pitanja svakako je i pitanje adekvatnosti umetničkih kritičkih napomena. Kritika na način apriorne angažovane umetnosti bez dublje povezanosti ontoloških karakterističnosti i protestne



Stevan Kojić

taneously, the electronic network changes the structural form of the crisis. The history of world crises, since the late 19th century in particular, then throughout the 20th and onward, shows that they were chiefly initiated by speculation on the part of major corporations and capital. These were mainly large manufacturers who made use of any means possible in order to sell their products. The wealthiest people around today are from the IT sector. Their capital comes from highly developed information systems and social networks. Thus today, crisis situations are produced and distributed directly, *in personam*, to the unprotected individual blinded by a monitor filled with multiple images – surely today's most effective means of manipulation.

In this sort of environment, many artists have grasped that the cure is to use "a hair of the dog", and so react in the same way and using the same means: computer art and entry into the network area, there to promote their ideas and demonstrate their own artistic reactions in an endeavour to influence the mind of the onlooker. Obviously, the new media possibilities change artistic form, and one of the most evident is to have made art communicatively functional.

In contrast to earlier avant-garde activism of, let us say, the dadaist type which was cerebral and multi-layered, screen art offers us simplified visual situations that at once manifest and criticise the state of crisis. Perhaps the most interesting results are when artists manage to pluck visualised scenes (images) from inside the electronic media and associate them with real (natural) situations. Here I would mention a work called "Self-Sustaining System of Absurdity" by the Novi Sad artist Stevan Kojić, a living artefact sprung from coordinating an internal digitalised system with authentic, natural plant processes. Through the synthesis of these two discrete extremes, Kojić defines a system which – draws on a wall. An internal electronic system is set off by the photosynthesis of house plants. This installation, both artificial and natural, is not merely tendered by Kojić as his reaction to the on-going technologicalisation of society, it is a critique in itself, from the inside, possible only at a point when the difference between real and virtual is rapidly decreasing.

One of the more pressing questions is certainly the question of the adequacy of critical artistic comment. Critique by an art that is committed *a priori*, without any profound cohesion among ontologically distinctive features or ideas of protest, is no longer effective. Artistic experiences from the epoch-making Yugoslav crisis of the 1990s are indicative. In Yugoslavia and Serbia, this was a time of record inflation on a world scale, a disastrous economic crisis; a time that saw the total moral collapse of a specific



Stevan Kojić

ideje – više nije delotvorna. Umetnička iskustva iz doba epohalne jugoslovenske krize tokom devedesetih godina XX stoleća su indikativna. U tadašnjoj Jugoslaviji i Srbiji to je vreme svetski rekordne inflacije i katastrofalne ekonomске krize; vreme potpunog moralnog pada jednog specifičnog političkog režima; vreme brojnih ratova na nevelikoj teritoriji tadašnje Jugoslavije; period nepojmljivog „embarga“ i višegodišnje izopštenosti okrnjenog dela jugoslovenskog društva (Srbija, Crna Gora) iz međunarodne zajednice. U vreme tadašnje „umetnosti u zatvorenom društvu“ krizom su iznevereni svi do tada validni kriterijumi, te se svaki gest tadašnjih aktera „novog, drugog ili obnovljenog modernizma“ dočekivao „na nož“, dok je režim podržavao svaki oblik vulgarnog nacionalizma ili svojevrsnog propagandizma... No danas je u ovdašnjoj istoriji umetnosti o „umetnosti devedesetih“ odista moguće govoriti sa puno ponosa. Jer tadašnji umetnici su insistirali na autentičnosti umetničkog delovanja, na modernističkoj zaštitnosti koja nije pretendovala da se izdvoji iz društva nego je nastojala da bude uzor drugim znanjima i drugim praksama. Pogotovo se to odnosilo na umetnike koji su u ovdašnjoj umetnosti, inače većito ispunjenoj ekspresionističkim, ekspresivnim i intimističkim mitologijama, opštoj destrukciji suprotstavili – geometriju, disciplinovani minimalizam, racionalizam i konstrukciju. Takva umetnost je u opštem haosu insistirala na smanjenju prenaglašenih tenzija, naglašavala racionalniji pristup svakodnevlu, insistirala na ideji i principima gradnje, konstrukcije, demijurgije, na arganovskoj ideji projekta u umetnosti. Danas je sasvim moguće reći da su određene izložbe i akcije imale određeno dejstvo na tadašnje javno mnjenje, da su doprinele jačanju demokratske opcije...

U aktuelnom trenutku sasvim je moguće reći da se, u ovom podneblju od ranih devedesetih do danas, kriza konstantno transformisala, menjala obliče, primereno uvek novim povodima i uzrocima. Zapravo, kriza se pretvorila u stanje, u okružje u kojem živi oko osam miliona stanovnika. Dakle, u današnjoj „umetnosti u društvu krize“ najznačajnija ostvarenja nastaju u onim slučajevima gde umetnici uspevaju da svoju „poruku“ iskažu sadejstvenom sintezom jezičke strukture dela i njegovog angažovanog sadržinskog značenja. Nimalo ne treba zanemariti ni značaj estetsko-etičkih potencijala umetnosti. Jer etika je danas moralna potreba, kako ističe ugledni Edgar Moren. A već samo postojanje dela takvih osobenosti deluje kritički u odnosu prema društvu nekonistentnog društvenog, ekonomskog, kulturološkog i etatističkog koncepta, društvu poremećenih moralnih vrednosti.

Na kraju, dozvolite mi da iskoristim poziciju umetničkog direktora Festivala savremene umetnosti *Dunavski dijalozi* i da konstatujem: u izložbenim postavkama ovogodišnje izložbe vidim tu suptilnu kritiku društva – bez obzira na domicilno poreklo umetnika (na izložbama koje su do sada otvorene i koje će to biti večeras). Jednostavni, odmereni, uglavnom racionalistički formirani stavovi umetnika iz Nemačke, Austrije, Slovačke, Hrvatske, Srbije, Rumunije i Bugarske, pokazuju tihi ali autentično umetnički angažman autorâ koji nastoje da budu specijalisti u svojoj oblasti, da autentičnim umetničkim jezikom iskažu stavove kojima bi da sačuvaju autonomiju umetnosti, autonomost umetnika i dignitet posmatrača.

A nije li to i najefikasniji oblik umetničkog kritičkog delovanja danas?

political regime; a time of numerous wars within the far from spacious confines of the then Yugoslavia; a period of inconceivable “embargoes” and years of exclusion from the international community for what was left of a truncated Yugoslav society: Serbia and Montenegro. In the “art in a closed society” of the time, all criteria that had been valid up to that point were set aside by the crisis; every gesture by those who favoured a “new, other or rekindled modernism” was pounced on, while the regime backed every form of vulgar, trumpet-blowing nationalism. From today’s vantage point, however, we can look back with no little pride on the art of the 1990s, when artists insisted on the authenticity of their actions, on a modernist individuality which did not see itself as apart from society, but rather strove to be an example to other fields of knowledge and other practices. In the local art, forever fraught with expressionist, expressive and intimist mythologies, this pride particularly reflects on those who proffered geometry and construction, a disciplined minimalism and rationalism in resistance to the all-prevailing destruction. Amid the general chaos, this art persisted in reducing heightened tension, pointed to a more rational approach to the quotidian, maintaining the ideas and principles of building, construction, demurgy and Argan’s idea of the project in art. Nowadays, it is quite possible to say that individual exhibitions and projects had a certain effect on public opinion at the time and contributed to bolstering the democratic option.

At the moment we could say that from the early 1990s to the present time, crisis in this part of the world has been in a continual state of flux, constantly changing form in keeping with whatever the new causes and inducements happen to be. It has in fact become a state of being, inhabited by a population approximately eight million strong. In today’s “art in a crisis society”, then, the most significant works emerge when artists manage to communicate their “message” through a coordinated synthesis of the linguistic structure of the piece and the meaning of its committed content. Nor should we dismiss for a moment the importance of its aesthetic and ethical potential, since ethics today is a moral necessity, as the distinguished Edgar Morin tells us. The very existence of works of such particularity redounds critically on a socially, economically and culturally botched society, an etatist society of disrupted moral values.

Ultimately, allow me to take advantage of my position as artistic director of the Danube Dialogues Festival of Contemporary Art to say this: everywhere in this year’s exhibitions (those which have opened so far and which will be this evening), regardless of the artist’s place of origin, I see evidence of this subtle critique of society. The straightforward, restrained, mostly rationalist attitudes of participants from Germany, Austria, Slovakia, Croatia, Serbia, Romania and Bulgaria demonstrate a quiet but authentic artistic commitment by artists seeking to be specialists in their own fields, a desire to give voice in authentic artistic language to the ideas through which they would preserve the autonomy of art, the autonomy of the artist and the dignity of the on-looker.

And if that is not the most effective form of artistic criticism today, what is?

UMETNOST I KRIZA / UMETNOST U KRIZI?

(Beleške na temu – objašnjenje na primeru Slovačke)

Danas, kada koristimo izraz kriza, uglavnom mislimo na odnos umetnosti prema globalnoj krizi – ekonomskoj krizi (sa kojom se već duže vreme borimo), krizi društva, njenim duhovnim vrednostima i orientacijama... lako se neću koncentrisati na odnos ekonomske krize i umetnosti *ad hoc*, započeću sa nekoliko činjenica o savremenim umetničkim aktivnostima u Slovačkoj. Čak i u vremenu označenom kao „ekonomski napredak“ (misleći, naravno, na situaciju posle 1989. godine) nikada nismo u izobilju imali novca za kulturu; kulturni segment je uvek primao manji procenat u odnosu na okolne zemlje. Pa i danas se podrška države kulturi (naročito za vizuelnu umetnost) stalno smanjuje. Činjenica da se savremena vizuelna umetnost nalazi negde „na repu“ društvenog interesovanja nije samo pitanje novca. Radi se u velikoj meri i o opštoj svesnosti, rasponu vrednosti; to je rezultat mišljenja da je kultura, i savremena umetnost kao njen deo, zapravo beskorisna, nepotrebna; samo neka vrsta čudnog „luksuza“. Ipak, ne mogu a da na samom početku ne iznesem svoj lični stav: stanje u kom je Nacionalna galerija Slovačke (gde savremena umetnost čini veliki deo kolekcije – galerija nastoji da takvih dela pribavi što više, jer to sebi može priuštiti) je prva posledica krize, s obzirom na to da prostorije u Bratislavi čekaju na rekonstrukciju već 13 godina! Kriza je najpre odložila renoviranje, a zatim ga usporila: uprkos ponavljanim obećanjima vladajućih struktura, izgledi za početak renoviranja, a da ne spominjemo završetak, su i dalje izuzetno neizvesni... Uprkos tome, neke dobre vesti su se pojavile u našem umetničkom delovanju: nakon dugih godina borbe i napora, *Kunsthalle* je najzad konstituisan u Slovačkoj, čiji je direktni opis rada promovisanje i popularizacija savremene umetnosti. Preciznije, biće tri *Kunsthalle* ogranka u isto vreme: u Bratislavi, Žilini i Košicama. Najviše strasti i problema koncentrisalo se oko ogranka u Bratislavi, čija je misija u interesu cele države, i koji će zvanično početi sa radom za nekoliko nedelja, ovog septembra.

U Slovačkoj se savremenom umetnošću uglavnom bave nedržavne inicijative (Tranzit, Fondacija – Centar za savremenu umetnost, BANSKÁ ST A NICA u Banskoj Štjavnici, Stanica Zarječe u Žilini), privatne galerije, od kojih nekoliko više ne postoji (Prjestor / Prostor za savremenu umetnost FAICA), dok se druge bore za opstanak, kao što su Ciprijan Majerník galerija u Bratislavi, HIT, Krokus, Amt, Fotoport itd. Zvanične institucije daju doprinos istraživanju, stručnoj obradi, tumačenju, postavkama izložbi i popularizaciji savremene umetnosti, koliko to dozvoljavaju specifičnosti njihovih aktivnosti i fokusa, npr. za Nacionalnu galeriju Slovačke to je samo deo njenih mnogobrojnih aktivnosti. Trenutno, neobičan primer parodoka u umetničkom delovanju je slučaj *Danubiana / Meulensteen* muzej umetnosti u Čunovu blizu



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ART AND CRISIS / ART IN CRISIS?

(Notes to the topic – explication on the example of Slovakia)

Today, when we use the term crisis, we usually mean the relationship of art to the global crisis – the economic crisis (we have been struggling with for longer time now), the crisis of society, its spiritual values and orientations... Although I will not concentrate on the relation of the economic crisis and art ad hoc, I will start with several facts about the contemporary artistic operation in Slovakia. Even in times labelled as “economic growth” (by which I mean the situation after 1989, of course), we have never had abundance of money for culture; the segment of culture has always received a smaller percentage compared to the neighbouring countries. Even today, the state support for culture (the visual art, in particular) is constantly being reduced. The fact that the contemporary visual art stands somewhere “at the tail” of the social interest is not only the issue of money. It has also a lot to do with general awareness, the range of values; it is a result of the opinion that culture, and contemporary art as a part thereof, is actually useless, unnecessary; only some sort of weird “luxury”. However, I cannot forbear to be personal at the beginning: condition of the Slovak National Gallery (where contemporary art comprises a considerable part of its acquisition interests and collections – also due to being the most affordable), is the first consequence of the crisis, having waited for reconstruction of its Bratislava facilities for 13 years(!) now. The crisis has first postponed it, and then slowed it down: despite the recurring promises of the governing structures, outlooks for the actual start of the reconstruction, let alone its completion, are still extremely uncertain... In spite of that, several positive news appeared in our artistic operation: after long years of fights and struggles, the Kunsthalle has finally constituted in Slovakia, having promotion and popularization of contemporary art directly in its job description. To be specific, there will be three “Kunsthalle” branches at once: in Bratislava, Žilina and Košice. The greatest amount of passions and problems concentrated around the Bratislava Kunsthalle, with a nationwide mission, which shall officially start its activity in a few weeks time, this September.

In Slovakia, contemporary art is dealt with mostly by non-state initiatives (Tranzit, Foundation – Centre for Contemporary Art, BANSKÁ ST A NICA in Banská Štiavnica, Stanica Záriečie in Žilina), private galleries, several of which already ceased to exist (Priestor / Space for Contemporary Art, FAICA), others are struggling for survival such as Cyprian Majerník Gallery in Bratislava, HIT, Krokus, Amt, Photoport etc.). The official institutions contribute to the research, specialized treatment, interpretation, exhibition presentations and popularization of contemporary art to the extent as is allowed by the specifics of their activity and focus, e.g. for the Slovak National Gallery it is only a part of its abundant activity. Currently, a quaint example of paradox in artistic operation is the case of Danubiana / Meulensteen Art Museum in

Bratislave, koji je nastao inicijativom holandskog privatnog kolezionara. Nakon neobičnog spajanja privatnog vlasnika i države (koja ulaže velike sume državnog novca da se muzej završi, dok se Nacionalna galerija raspada...) došlo je do drugog, još čudnijeg, spajanja na novoj izložbi – u vidu „pomirenja“ nekada beskompromisnog Rudija Fuhsa (Rudi Fuchs) i prijatelja holanskog kolezionara – ovog puta spajanja prvakasnog svetskog i slovačkog umetnika i domaćeg „trećerazrednog“ mejnstrima smeća, koje je bila prvobitna sfera interesovanja muzeja. Renesansa se još uvek ne dešava...



Július Koller

odnedavno nalazi u zamku Bratislava (2010), i koju je napravio Jan Kulih (Ján Kulich), čuveni skulptor komunističkog režima, koga je prisvojila i sadašnja vlada.

U sklopu takve stvarnosti bar je zanimljivo videti koji su slovački umetnici uspeli da se ostvare u Zapadnoj Evropi (na „bivšem Zapadu“, kako danas kažemo) nakon 1989. godine. Prvi je (pokojni) Julijus Koller (Július Koller), jedan od najpoznatijih, najizlaganijih, ali i „najkolonizovanijih“ predstavnika „bivšeg Istoka“, sa odličnim kritikama. Drugi je Roman Ondak (Ondák), čiji je sadašnji uspeh u inostranstvu besprimoran, ali je kod kuće poznat, manje-više, samo unutar profesionalne i umetničke zajednice... Oba ta umetnika konceptualne genealogije napali su zanatski oblik umetnosti, doveli u pitanje tradicionalni koncept umetnosti i „pomerili“ transformaciju i proširenje definicije umetnosti i njenog „operativnog“ polja. Ipak,

Što se tiče sakupljanja dela savremene umetnosti, ono je još uvek u ranoj fazi; u sakupljanju dominira klasični modernizam, ali se stidljivo kreće ka kupovini radova neoavangarde 1960-ih i 1970-ih, sa sve većim interesovanjem za takozvano „mlado slikarstvo“. Savremeno slikarstvo zapravo doživljava još jednu „renesansu“: organizuju se konkursi, aukcije, izložbe, nagrade itd. Možda jer se najbolje uklapa u dekorisanje skupih interijera „novih“ Slovaka.

Da zaključim ovaj segment o „delovanju“: dozvolite da pomenem još jedan tipičan primer koji potvrđuje nisku svest o kvalitetu – vrednosti umetničkog dela, našu borbu da pobegнемo od postsocijalističkih kompleksa, kao i izvitopereni i truli ukus mejnstrima („pop kulture“), često pod okriljem države. To se može videti u „neuspeloj ili čak izvitoperenoj“ statui Svato-pluka, kralja fiktivnih „starih“ Slovaka, koja se

Čunovo near Bratislava, which originated by initiative of a Dutch private collector. After a strange fusion between the private owner and state has taken place (investing large amount of state money into the museum completion, while the National Gallery is falling into pieces...), another fusion, even stranger, took place in the new exhibition – under a “reconciliatory” hand of once uncompromising Rudi Fuchs and a friend of the Dutch collector – this time a fusion between first-class global and Slovak artists and domestic “third-class” mainstream trash, which used to be the museum's original sphere of interest. There is no renaissance taking place as yet...

As far as the contemporary art collecting is concerned, it is still in its early days; collecting activity is dominated by classic modernism, only timidly moving towards purchasing works of neo-avant-garde of the 1960's and 1970's), however, with increasing interest in the so called “young painting”. It is the contemporary painting which is currently experiencing another “renaissance”: contests, awards, auctions, exhibitions, etc. are taking place. Perhaps because it fits best for decorating costly interiors of the “new” Slovaks.

To conclude this “operational” section, let me mention one more example representative for all, documenting the low awareness of quality – value of an artwork, our struggle to escape the post-socialist complexes and the perversion and decay of the main-stream (“pop-culture”) taste, often under the auspices of the state. This is evidenced by the “failed, or even perverted” statue of Svatopluk, the king of fictitious “old” Slovaks, recently located at the Bratislava castle (2010), made by Ján Kulich, the prominent sculptor of the Communist regime, who has been appropriated also by the current government.

On the background of this reality, it is at least interesting to see which Slovak artists managed to succeed in the Western Europe (in the “former West”, as we say today) after 1989. First one is the (late) Július Koller; one of the best known, most exhibited and critically acclaimed as well as “most colonized” representatives of the “former East”. The other one is Roman Ondák, whose current unprecedented foreign success are known more or less only to the professional and artistic community at home... Both



Roman Ondák

mora se reći da postoji razlika između njihovih koncepata: Kolera Zapad doživljava (možda malo i zato što je tako zgodno) kao slikovit primer „siromašnog“ socijalističkog umetnika (bez detaljnog ispitivanja nezvanične scene, koja je zaista bila bogata po drugim zanimljivim konceptima); sa druge strane, Ondak je iskovao svoj položaj kroz čvrsto „profesionalni“ pristup, kao i pametno „društveno“ kretanje u „pravim“ strukturama... Ipak, zanimljivo je videti da rade u međusobnoj „trampi“, čemu je doprinela dovitljiva *gb agencija* (*gb agency*) u Parizu, u čijem se portfelju nalaze oba umetnika.

Takva podvojena svest, menjanje vrednosti u vezi sa svim onim što se smatra dobrom i savremenom umetnošću u Slovačkoj danas (i koja je javno prihvaćena), može se bukvalno nazvati stanjem krize. Sa druge strane, mora se reći da savremena umetnost nije od velike pomoći u menjanju ovakve nesrećne situacije. Nažalost, još uvek se smatra (u „većini“ društva) za nešto ekskluzivno, introvertno, elitno – privilegovano, suviše sofisticirano, malo komunikativno, nerazumljivo... što često potvrđuju i same umetničke aktivnosti.

Ako govorimo o izrazu KRIZA kao takvom, mislimo na odlučujući preokret, nagli napredak, trenutak očiglednog disbalansa, situaciju na ivici, na raskršću, fazu tranzicije; uglavnom mislimo na neku vrstu promene koja vodi ka odluci, koja, doduše, tek treba da se doneše. To je, na svoj način, odlučujući momenat, teška situacija, stanje sigurnih muka, haos koji treba da prati tačka preokreta koja za cilj ima pojavu novog kvaliteta. Očevidno, neću izneti ništa novo ako kažem da je kriza trajna osnova razvoja umetnosti i njenog kontinuiranog pokreta, čiji je sastavni deo. Štaviše, u savremenoj umetnosti postaje i interna odlika – sa stanovišta karaktera procesa krize, koji sadrži i neku vrstu diskursa o krizi.

Kao što je napisao Oskar (Oskár) Čepan, značajni književnik i teoretičar umetnosti: *Razvoj umetnosti, kao i njenih teoretskih disciplina, uvek se dešava u pozadini stalne očevideće ili skrivene krize. Priroda krize je proces koji je produktivno „uznemirujući“ i kreativno „nasilnički destruktivan“.* Ipak, ako se direktno zasniva na umetničkoj praksi, onda je skoro uvek prirođen. Njegovo shvatanje izraza kriza (u umetnosti) formulisano je 1960-ih, kada je govorio o takozvanoj „organskoj“ krizi. Po njemu, bilo koja kriza (uključujući i krizu u umetnosti) uvek sadrži kreativan momenat, budući da je to prepostavka i sastavni deo svakog kreativnog stanja – on je shvatao krizu kao element, proces, koji zapravo „pomaže“ umetnosti, gura je napred, i kao takva ima pozitivnu vrednost za umetnost i umetnika. „Stanje kreativne krize“ je osnova neophodnog „inspirativnog nemira“.

Da bismo izbegli nesporazum, ja zapravo ne želim da kažem kako je sve što su današnji kustosi označili kao savremenu umetnost (u odnosu na međistrim) dobro, otkrovenje, inovativno itd. itd. Naravno, čak i u živoj umetnosti ima puno buke, praznine, ponavljanja, trenda, bespomoćnosti, često čak i plagijata itd. Krizni momenti vezani za aktivnosti, prihvatanje i shvatanje savremene umetnosti takođe su interno prisutni: u njima samima, u pojedinačnim konceptima, programima, umetničkim delima učesnika našeg

of these artists of conceptual genealogy attacked the artifact form of artwork, questioned the traditional idea of Art and shifted the transformation and extension of the definition of art and its "operative" field. However, it has to be said that there is a difference between their concepts: Koller was perceived by the West (maybe a bit due to convenience) as an illustrative example of a "poor" socialist artist (without having more specifically examined the then unofficial scene, which was definitely rich in other interesting concepts); on the other hand, Ondák has hammered out his position through solidly "professional" approach as well as clever "sociable" movement in the "right" structures... However, it is interesting to see that they work in a mutually "barter-like" way, which was also contributed to by the agile gb agency in Paris, in the portfolio of which they are both included.

This ambivalent awareness, value fluctuations regarding everything that is perceived as both good art and contemporary art nowadays in Slovakia (and which is publicly accepted), can be literally called a state of crisis. On the other hand, it has to be said that the contemporary art is not very helpful in changing this sad situation. Unfortunately, it is still perceived (by the "majority" society) as something exclusive, introvert, elitist – privileged, too sophisticated, little communicative, incomprehensible... which is often being confirmed by the artistic actions themselves.

If we talk about the term CRISIS as such, we mean the decisive turnover, the breakthrough, the moment of apparent imbalance, situation at the edge, at the crossroad, the transitional stage; we usually think about some sort of transformation leading to a decision, however which has yet to be decided. In its own way, it is a decisive moment, a difficult situation, state of certain distress, chaos which should be followed by a point of turnover aimed at the emergence of a new quality. Apparently, I will not say anything new if I am to state that crisis is a permanent basis of art development and its continuous movement, being permanently incorporated in it. Moreover, in contemporary art, it is also becoming an internal attribute – with the aspect of process crisis character also containing a crisis discourse of sort.

As was written by Oskár Čepan, significant literary scholar and art theorist: "*development of art as well as its theoretical disciplines always takes place on the background of constant apparent or hidden crisis. The nature of crisis is a process fruitfully "disturbing" and creatively "violently destructive". However, if it is based on the artistic practice directly, it is almost always natural.*" His understanding of the term crisis (in art) was formulated in the 1960's: speaking about the so called "organic" crisis. According to him, any crisis (including the crisis in art) contains an immanent creative aspect, being an assumption and integral part of any creative state – he perceived crisis as an element, process, which is actually "helping" art, propelling it onwards, therefore having a positive value for the art and artist as such. It is the "state of creative crisis" which is the basis of necessary "inspirational restlessness".

To avoid misunderstandings, I don't really want to say that everything that has been labelled as contemporary art by curators nowadays (in opposition to mainstream) is good, revelatory, innovative, etc. etc.

otvorenog i pluralističkog „sveta umetnosti“. Ako bismo se zapitali šta donosi budućnost savremene umetnosti, koji od njenih elemenata i tendencija već sadrže znakove promena koje će novi „stil“ ere dovesti do više faze, odgovori bi se smatrali fikcijom. U svojoj suštini, savremena umetnost (pa i sa svojim post-, neo-, neopost- i post-post- „strategijama“) je i dalje zaokupljena pitanjima umetnosti 20-og veka. Možda će to biti upravo kriza koja će nam pokazati šta nam budućnost donosi...

Of course, even in the live art, there is a lot of noise, emptiness, repeating, trend, helplessness, often even plagiarism, etc. The crisis moments regarding operation, acceptance and perception of contemporary art, are also present internally, in itself, in individual concepts, programs, artworks of participants of our open and pluralist "art-world". If we ask the question what the future of contemporary art will bring, which of its elements and tendencies already contain the signs of change that will lead to the higher stage of the new "style" of the era, the answers would be considered as fiction. In its substance, the contemporary art (even with all of its post-, neo-, neo-post- and post-post- "strategies"), it is still caught up in the artistic issues of the 20th century. Maybe it is the crisis that will show us what the future could bring...

UMETNOST I KRIZA: BORBA ZA ČOVEČNOST KROZ UMETNOST

„Borba za čovečnost kroz umetnost“ reči su Ljubomira Micića, jednog od osnivača avangardnog pokreta zenitizam, koje, čini se, upravo označavaju ono za šta se može reći da predstavlja suštinu umetnosti u bilo kom vremenu njenog nastanka, a posebno nose težinu u turbulentnim vremenima, odnosno u različitim kriznim periodima. Jer svaka umetnost je kao „dete svoga vremena“ (Kandinski) indikator realnosti



koja dovodi u vezu različite kulturno-istorijske i društveno-političke veze, otvara različita pitanja, stvara nove kontekste i pruža uvide u nešto što nam promiče u „običnom“ životu. Tokom čitave istorije različiti elementi prisutni u društvu, političke, ekonomski ili neke druge prirode, želja za moći, bogatstvom, vladanjem, stvaraju različite krizne momente, ratove, sukobe, naorušavaju stabilnost i red jednog društva da bi se pojedinci domogli određenih interesa.

Krizna vremena dovode u pitanje opstanak umetnosti, a umetnost je uvek prinuđena da pronađe mogućnost delovanja u novonastalim kriznim uslovima, sve više ističući svoju etičku dimenziju i njen suštinski značaj u utemeljivanju i istrajanju na humanističkom karakteru kulture epohe u kojoj deluje. I sami avangardni pokreti između dva svetska rata, čiji su nosioci bili isključivo umetnici i mislioci na margini – izvan društvene matice, reagujući na kriju vrednosti u društvu nastalu usled ekonomskih promena često su se nalazili na prevratničkoj, društvenoj i političkoj ivici jer su delovali u suprotnosti prema veštački stvorenoj masovnoj kulturi nastaloj kao posledica industrijalizacije. Proizvodima čak i sa prefiksom umetnički, a koji su nastali kao direktni produkt kapitalizma, cilj je isključivo profit a ne umetnost. Veliki ispit za umetnost kod nas u prošlom veku, ali u drugačijem kontekstu, dešavao se tokom socijalističkog perioda naše istorije u drugoj polovini 20. veka, u kome je težnja vlasti bila da sve podredi izgradnji nekog „novog društva“ i da umetnosti dodeli navodno „ispravnu“ društvenu ulogu.

U naizgled politički stabilnom društvu, u kojem je realnost zamjenjena ideologijom (Bodrijar smatra da je svaka ideologija lažna predstava stvarnog), svako preispitivanje njenih postulata i načina delovanja od strane umetnosti tumačilo se kao izazivanje krize, odnosno pobune, suprotstavljanje vladajućem sistemu i vladajućoj ideologiji. Država je na te „ispade“ uglavnom reagovala nasiljem, represijom, gušenjem slobodne misli kod umetnika. Danas se postavljaju pitanja šta je od kreativnih i kritičkih potencijala u kulturi i umetnosti preživelo represiju i koliko ti događaji utiču na okretanje neutralnim delima i nacionalnom repertoaru. „Koliko je gomilanje trauma bez katarze opteretilo našu kulturu i sposobnost da se suprotstavimo nasilju? Kako se može obnoviti kritička i stvaralačka moć kulture?“^[1] I ako se realno upi-

[1] Uredništvo, „Kultura i nasilje“, *Republika* br. 279 (Beograd, 2002); <http://www.europe.com/zines/republika/arhiva/2002/279/>.

ART AND CRISIS: THE STRUGGLE FOR HUMANITY THROUGH ART

The struggle for humanity through art“ is a quote from Ljubomir Micić, one of the founders of the Yugoslav avant-garde movement, *Zenitizam*. It encapsulates what might be termed the quintessence of art at any epoch, particularly in times of turbulence and crisis. Each art is the “child of its time” (Kandinsky), a gauge of reality which draws together the cultural, historical, social and political strands, poses questions, generates new contexts and provides insights into things that slip by unnoticed in day-to-day living. Throughout history, the various elements present in society (political, economic or other), the craving for power, wealth and rulership have given rise to crisis, wars and conflicts, disrupting order and stability so that certain individuals might achieve their interests. Times of crisis threaten the very survival of art, constantly forcing it to discover new ways in which to act under changing conditions, highlighting its ethical dimension and vital importance in establishing and embracing the humanist character of the prevailing culture. The inter-war avant-garde, brainchild of marginal artists and thinkers outside the cultural mainstream and reacting to a value crisis caused by economic change, often found themselves on the subversive social and political edge, acting in contradiction to an artificially contrived mass culture born of industrialisation; they opposed products – even with the prefix “artistic” – that were the outcome of capitalism, whose objective was exclusively profit, not art. Albeit in a different context, the great test of art in our own country came with the socialist period in the second half of the 20th century, where everything was subjugated to building “a new society”, in which art must be assigned its “proper” role. In what seemed in political terms to be a stable society, where reality had been replaced by ideology (Baudrillard thought that every ideology was a false representation of reality), any artistic testing of its postulates or the way in which it acted was seen as an invitation to crisis or revolt against the ruling system and ruling ideology. As a rule, the state responded with violence and repression, stifling the artist’s freedom to think. Today we wonder which creative and critical impulses in culture and art managed to survive that repression, and how far past events have influenced the present turn towards neutral works and a national repertoire. “How much has an accumulation of trauma without catharsis oppressed our culture and our ability to oppose violence? How to revive the critical and creative power of culture?”^[1] We may soberly ask ourselves: have those times really gone or is there always some lingering state of hidden repression? One of the modalities in which artists could act at the period was through their work, a sort of activism on the margins, generally extremely radical in concept, frequently banned and its

[1] Editorial, „Kultura i nasilje“ [Culture and Violence], Republika no. 279, (Belgrade, 2002) <http://www.yurope.com/zines/republika/archiva/2002/279/>

tamo, da li su ta vremena prošla ili je na snazi uvek neka vrsta prikrivenog represivnog stanja? Jedan od modela delovanja umetnika u tom periodu bio je rad, ili ako bi se tako moglo reći aktivizam, na margini, ali uglavnom veoma radikalnih shvatanja – ta delatnost često je bila zabranjivana, a njeni protagonisti proganjani. Primeri su Titov govor protiv apstraktne umetnosti 1963, crni talas u umetnosti šezdesetih i rаниh sedamdesetih, konceptualna umetnost sedamdesetih godina prošlog veka itd. Neki umetnici su nalazili načine za rad u umerenim i za vlast prihvatljivim umetničkim temama i formama kroz koje su polako oslobođali umetnost ideoloških stega, kao npr. delovanje *Decembarske grupe* ili rad umetničkih kolonija u Vojvodini...



Igor Antić

sebi, svojoj umetničkoj individui i svoju ličnost umetnika postavljali kao centar univerzuma (npr. autonomisti), pa su se na taj način suprotstavljali situaciji u kojoj su se našli.

Pitanje aktivnog eskapizma prisutnog u umetnosti tog vremena bitno je zbog nekih generalnih zaključaka o prirodi umetnosti i o ponašanju umetnika u različitim kriznim vremenima. Kada se spominje fenomen „umetnosti u zatvorenom društvu“, Ješa Denegri smatra da od stanja „zatvorenosti“ na različite načine trpi ne samo umetnost u represivnim nego i u savremenim demokratskim društвima. Umetnost je, po Denegriju, „zapravo, danas posvuda podvrgnuta (ili izvrgnuta) zahvatima omeđivanja ili kanalizacije njenе potencijalne više nego zaista emancipatorske moći posredstvom mehanizama kontrolisane difuzije umetnosti u masovnom medijskom društvu. No čini se da drugačije više ne može ni da bude u postutopijском dobu kakvo je savremeno, umetnosti lišenoj svake optimalne budućnosne projekcije još jedino

Suštinski, i kapitalistička i socijalistička ideo- logija udaljavaju, svaka na svoj način, čoveka od stvarnosti, a umetnost podređuju određenim namenama, bilo da je to profit ili ideal. Ako se vratimo u blisku prošlost, tokom devedesetih godina prošlog veka u srpskoj umetnosti se takođe postavljalo pitanje opstanka umetnosti u vremenu tada postojeće krize. Ratovi, sankcije, društveno-političke promene stvarali su (ne) podnošljive izazove za umetnost i umetnike. Dolazilo je do problema suočavanja sa stvarnošću i stvaranja različitih strategija otpora kod umetnika. Mnogi umetnici su se u svojim delima vratili principima umerenog modernizma, geometriji i redu, izražavajući tako na neki način svoj stav prema haosu koji ih je okruživao. Neki umetnici su se u tom periodu posvetili isključivo

protagonists persecuted. Some instances of this atmosphere are: Tito's 1963 speech against abstract art, the Yugoslav film black wave of the sixties and early seventies, and the conceptual art of the 1970s. Some artists managed to find moderate themes and forms that were acceptable to the authorities and through which they gradually cast off ideological restraints. Among them were the December Group and the Vojvodina artist colonies. Both capitalist and socialist ideologies, each in its own way, estrange man from reality while subordinating art to particular objectives, which may be profit or beliefs. To return to our own not-so-distant past, the survival of art in Serbia was also in doubt during the crisis-ridden 1990s. War, sanctions and social and political change flung down challenges, both tolerable and intolerable, to art and artists. The problems were confrontation with reality and the development of various strategies of resistance by the artists. Many reverted to a temperate modernism, to the principles of geometry and order, indicating in their own way their reaction to the chaos surrounding them. Some, such as the Autonomists, turned inward on themselves, concentrating on individualism and placing their artistic personality at the centre of the universe – one way of resisting the situation in which they found themselves. The question of active escapism present in the art of the time is important because of some general conclusions on the nature of art and the conduct of artists in various times of crisis. As for the phenomenon of "art in a closed society", Ješa Denegri thinks that not only in repressive regimes but also in modern democratic societies art suffers in different ways from being "boxed in". Today, he says, "due to the mechanisms of controlled broadcasting of art in a mass-media society, [art] is everywhere subjected (or exposed) more to the strangle-hold of restriction and channelling of its potential than to any real emancipating power". It seems that it cannot be otherwise in a post-utopian age such as ours; all that is left to an art deprived of all optimum future projections is to share in the spectacle of a mass-media culture, nevertheless taking care to safeguard its right to sufficient freedom, communicativeness, effectiveness and ubiquitous global presence^[2]. This idea relies up to a point on Argan's views on crisis in art, although Argan thinks principally in terms of a crisis of "the artistry of art", that is, the dying off of



Nora Mesaros

[2] Ješa Denegri, Opstanak umetnosti u vremenu krize [The Survival of Art in Time of Crisis], (Belgrade: Cicero, 2004), 11

što preostaje jeste učešće u spektaklu masmedijske kulture, s tim da prethodno ona ipak sebi obezbedi pravo da to njen učešće bude dovoljno slobodno, komunikativno, efikasno, globalno sveprisutno“^[2].

Taj stav se do izvesnog momenta naslanja na Arganova razmišljanja o krizi umetnosti, s tim što Argan uglavnom razmišlja u smislu krize „umetničkosti umetnosti“, odnosno o opadanju zanata, a time i umetnosti zasnovane na zanatskim tehnikama u zamenu za nove tehnološke načine proizvodnje estetskih predmeta i predstava gde, po njemu, „umetnost postaje marginalni fenomen u odnosu na vladajuće fenomene politike i ekonomije, živeći egzistenciju ogranka vrhunske kulture ograničenog komunikacionog dometa“^[3]. Po Arganu, u svetu neistorije, svetu ratova, političkih i vojnih diktatura, rasnih i religioznih netrpeljivosti, masovne nezaposlenosti, dakle svetu permanentne krize, u kojem, čini se, kao da danas živimo, gde su dijalog i konstruktivni razgovori ustupili mesto „urlikavoj propagandi, prepariranju lobanja i ispiranju mozgova“, tehnološka civilizacija koja inicira masovnu proizvodnju, pa time i masovnu potrošnju, ne proizvodi više predmete, već „do u beskraj slike. U novoj lestvici vrednosti objekt postaje slikom a subjekt, prelazeći s prvog na poslednje mesto, postaje stvar“. U tom smislu se i izazivaju različite krize, ratovi, sukobi, ali, po Arganu, ne iz jednostavne ekonomске nužde već „mutna rušiteljska težnja postoji u industriji otkad je razbila predmet i njegovu vrednost počinjući proizvoditi slike koje idu za tim da se ponavljaju i umnožavaju unedogled“^[4].

O krizi stvarnosti i vrednosti govori i Bodrijar, koji vidi da je „ulog ... u svemu tome bila ubitačna moć slika, ubica stvarnog, ubica sopstvenog modela, kao što su vizantijske ikone mogле biti ubice božanskog identiteta“^[5]. Bodrijar smatra da se tu ne radi više ni o imitaciji, ni o dupliraju, pa čak ni o parodiji, već o zamjenjivanju stvarnog njegovim znacima, odnosno o „operaciji odvraćanja od stvarnog procesa njegovim operatornim dvojnikom, metastabilnom, programatskom, nepogrešivom, označavajućom mašinom, koja nudi sve oznake stvarnog (...). U nadstvarnoj društvenosti stvarno se poistovećuje sa modelom, kao u statističkoj operaciji (...). Takav je potonji stadijum društvenog odnosa, našeg, koji nije više stadijum ubedjivanja (klasična era propagande, ideologije, reklame) nego stadijum razuveravanja ‘vi ste informacija, vi ste socijalno, vi ste događaj, o vama se radi, vi imate reč...’“ Po Bodrijaru, danas jedino postoji još „informacija, tajna virtualnost, lančana reakcija, spora implozija i prividni prostori u kojima još treperi efekat stvarnog“^[6].

Danas se uveliko postavljaju pitanja na različitim stručnim skupovima posvećenim savremenoj umetnosti da li će ona uspeti da u novim okolnostima pronađe načine za svoje delovanje a da ne upadne u zamku koju joj predviđaju pomenuti mislioci. Savremena umetnost pruža nove načine komunikacije i percepcije, koristi metode novih digitalnih tehnologija, informacija, mas-medija, koristi se upravo onim sredstvima

[2] Ješa Denegri, *Opstanak umetnosti u vremenu krize* (Beograd: Cicero, 2004), 11.

[3] Ješa Denegri, Predgovor, :u Giulio Carlo Argan, *Studije o modernoj umetnosti* (Beograd: Nolit, 1982), 15.

[4] Giulio Carlo Argan, *Studije o modernoj umetnosti* (Beograd: Nolit, 1982), 45.

[5] Žan Bodrijar, *Simulakrumi i simulacija* (Novi Sad, Svetovi, 1991).

[6] Isto.

the craft aspect and with it, art based on artisan techniques, in exchange for new technical ways of producing aesthetic objects and performances where he finds that "art becomes a marginal phenomenon in relation to the dominant phenomenon of politics and economics, living out its existence as a branch of an over-ruling culture of limited communicative reach".^[3] According to Argan, in a world of non-history, a world of wars, political and military dictatorships, racial and religious intolerance, mass unemployment - in other words, the world of permanent crisis in which we seem to live today - where dialogue and constructive exchange have yielded to "bellowing propaganda, head-stuffing and brainwashing", a technological civilisation of mass production and consumption no longer manufactures objects, but "images to the point of infinity. In the new scale of values, the object comes into being through the image, and the subject, moving from first to last place, becomes a thing." In this sense, various crises, wars and conflicts are triggered but, says Argan, not out of simple economic necessity but "a murky, destructive tendency existing in industry ever since it smashed the object and its value by beginning to produce images which tend to repeat and proliferate indefinitely."^[4]

Baudrillard also speaks of the crisis of reality and values. He sees that "at stake has always been the murderous capacity of images, murderers of the real; murderers of their own model as the Byzantine icons could murder the divine identity".^[5] It is, he goes on, no longer a question of imitation, or of reduplication, or even of parody. It is rather a question of substituting signs of the real for the real itself; that is, "...an operation to deter every real process by its operational double, a metastable, programmatic, perfect descriptive machine which provides all the signs of the real (...) a hyperreal sociality, in which the real is confused with the model, as in the statistical operation (...) Such is the last stage of the social relation, ours, which is no longer one of persuasion (the classical age of propaganda, of ideology, of publicity etc.) but one of deterrence: 'You are information, you are the social, you are the event, you are involved, you have the word'..." Today, says Baudrillard, all that is left is "'information', secret virulence, chain reaction, slow implosion and simulacra of spaces in which the effect of the real again comes into play".^[6]

The great question being asked these days at professional gatherings on modern art is whether it will succeed in finding ways to operate in the new circumstances without falling into the trap prophesied by these thinkers. Contemporary art offers novel ways of communication and perception, makes use of new digital technologies, information and the mass media, employing the very means which many consider are the greatest danger to reality and our civilisation in order to create new relations, new ways of understanding the situation in which we find ourselves. Contemporary art maps the various kinds of

[3] Ješa Denegri, Predgovor, u Giulio Carlo Argan, *Studije o modernoj umetnosti*, [Foreword to Giulio Carlo Argan, *Essays on Modern Art*] (Belgrade: Nolit, 1982), 15

[4] Giulio Carlo Argan, *Studije o modernoj umetnosti*, (Belgrade: Nolit, 1982), 45

[5] Jean Baudrillard, *Simulakrumi i simulacija* [Simulacra and Simulations], (Novi Sad, Svetovi, 1991)

[6] *Ibid.*

koja, po mnogim misliocima, predstavljaju za našu civilizaciju i realnost najveću opasnost, da bi stvorila neke nove odnose, nove mogućnosti shvatanja stanja u kojem se nalazimo.

Svojim delovanjem savremena umetnost mapira različite vrste kriza u društvu. Kriza identiteta prisutna je u radovima mnogih svetskih umetnika. Između ostalih, kanadska umetnica srpskog porekla Vesna Perunović se u svojim radovima bavi tom problematikom kroz pitanja granica, egzila, doma, porodice, tranzicije i prolaznosti, koja su po svojoj prirodi primarno humanistička i sociopolitička. Kroz svoj umetnički proces umetnica prvenstveno prenosi svoje lično iskustvo koje povezuje sa univerzalnim političkim i socijalnim kontekstom. Krizu moralnih vrednosti i ljudskog digniteta razmatraju, između ostalih, umetnice poput Andree Ivanović Jakšić i Nore Mesaroš. Andrea Ivanović Jakšić u svojim slikama, crtežima i objektima sa eksplicitnim nazivima poput *Biti čovek* ili *Usavršavanje veštine postojanja* preispituje i sopstvena unutrašnja stanja, ali istovremeno njeni radovi predstavljaju trag, svedočanstvo opežanja i osluškivanja čoveka, sveta, pojava i vremena u kojem živimo. Slično tome, osnovni predmet umetničkog istraživanja Nore Mesaroš je čovek koji u njenim delima postaje simbol prepun različitih emotivnih značenja kroz koja iščitavamo nagoveštaje različitih poremećenih moralnih i društvenih vrednosti današnjice. Obe umetnice, kao i većina savremenih umetnika danas, u svojim radovima postavljaju pitanje šta to znači biti čovek u današnjim uslovima. Umetnica Marina Marković razmatra krizu tela u današnjim okolnostima, kada se telo posmatra kao kulturni artefakt koji reflektuje društvene stavove odgovarajućeg ponašanja, izgleda, društvenih i ekonomskih uloga. Ona istražuje kontrolu tela putem medija, industrije, tržišta, njegovu uslovljenu lepotu, seksualnost, društveni status. Telo je danas važan izvor informacija o globalnom društvu konzumerizma. Stevan Kojić, razmatrajući krizu koju nam donosi nova tehnološka era, spaja prirodu sa novim tehnologijama i na principima eko-tehnologije bazira svoje umetničke eksperimente kritikujući industriju, ekonomiju, nauku i tehnologiju, koje su suštinski konstitutivan faktor savremene društvene strukture, a sve više pokušavaju da u potpunosti ovlađaju i upravljaju prirodnim procesima. Proizvodeći nove proekte, stvarajući nove živote, artifijelne ili sintetičke, potpuno redefinišu tržište i beskrupulozno transformišu čovekov identitet i njegov dignitet. Igor Antić razmatra, na prvom mestu, krizu vrednosti uzrokovanu političko-ekonomskim razlozima. Beskrupulozna eksploracija rada obezvredila je, kako sam rad tako i slobodno vreme, i u takvim odnosima sve postaje sistematski devalorizovano. Kao i avangardni umetnici ranije u istoriji, i većina savremenih umetnika danas, pa i Igor Antić, odbija da posmatra umetnost kao ekonomski kapital. Radoš Antonijević svojim skulpturama-šatorima (Dečani, Aja Sofija, MSUB) takođe razmatra gubljenje vrednosti u našem društvu, poremećene odnose, zamene teza, obezvređivanja i podleganja zakonima tržišta, konzumerstva i dokolice. Skulpture tehnološki imaju sve elemente kao najobičniji šatori osim što ih kontroverzni oblici dovode u vezu sa kolektivnom memorijom i trenutnim okolnostima u društvu.

Savremena umetnost prepoznaje novu vrstu društvenog aktivizma, između ostalog, u novom kolektivizmu koji se suprotstavlja globalnom kapitalizmu, odnosno preduzetničkoj kulturi koja predstavlja totalnu privatizaciju svega, pa i onoga što se nekada nalazilo izvan domašaja kapitalizma i protivno njemu, kao što su

crisis in society. An identity crisis is present in the works of many world artists, including the Serbian-born Canadian artist Vesna Perunović, who addresses this problem through questions of borders, exile, home, family, transition and transitoriness, which are by their nature predominantly humanist, social and political. Through her artistic process, the artist primarily conveys her personal experience, linked into a universal political and social context. Artists such as Andrea Ivanović Jakšić and Nora Mesoš address the crisis in moral values and human dignity. In paintings, drawings and objects with explicit titles such as *Being Man* or *Perfecting the Skill of Existing*, Andrea Ivanović Jakšić re-examines her own internal condition. At the same time, her works are a trail, a testimony of harkening to and observing Man, the world, phenomena and the times we live in. Similarly, the subject of Nora Mesoš's investigations is also Man, who becomes a symbol in her works, packed with various emotional meanings from which we may read the advance signs of today's dislocated moral and social values. The works of both, as with the majority of their contemporaries, pose the question of what it means to be Man under present circumstances. Marina Marković contemplates the crisis of the body, now considered to be a cultural artefact reflecting attitudes on appropriate behaviour, appearance, social and economic roles. She examines how the body is controlled via the media, industry and the market, its dependence on beauty, sexuality and social status. Nowadays, the body is an important source of information on the global consumer society. Stevan Kojić, looking at the crisis ushered in by the new age, harnesses nature to the new technologies and bases his artistic experiments on principles of eco-technology, criticising the industry, economy, science and technology as essential constituents of the modern social structure that increasingly attempt to overpower and direct the natural processes. Releasing new products, creating new lives – artificial or synthetic – they completely redefine the market and unscrupulously alter Man's identity and dignity. Igor Antić first of all takes on the value crisis, which is rooted in reasons of political economy. The unscrupulous exploitation of labour has degraded both work itself and free time and in this state of relations, everything is systematically devalued. Like the avant-garde artists in recent history and most artists nowadays, Igor Antić refuses to regard art as economic capital. With his tent sculptures (Dečani, Hagia Sophia, the Belgrade Museum of Contemporary Art), Radoš Antonijević also addresses the loss of values in our society, the disruption of relationships, the advancing of spurious arguments, degradation and submitting to the laws of the market, consumerism and leisure. Technically speaking, his tents have all the elements of ordinary tents, except that their controversial shapes relate them to collective memory and the present state of affairs in society.

Contemporary art recognises a new kind of social activism: the new collectivism which sets itself up in opposition to global capitalism and an entrepreneurial culture representing the total privatisation of everything, even what used to be beyond the reach of capitalism and was in fact against it, such as avant-garde and radical art. Contemporary art is also active on the virtual plane, through social networking sites and other aspects of digital technology. However, Argan does not see the crisis as a state of

avangardna i radikalna umetnost, što se uočava i na virtuelnom planu, kroz delovanje društvenih mreža i drugih aspekata digitalnih tehnologija. Ipak, Argan križu ne vidi kao stanje slabosti već kao neko potencijalno plodonosno stanje, koje je maksimalno napregnuto u suočenju sa samom realnošću zbivanja i sa perspektivom prevazilaženja svakog nagoveštaja etičkog i egzistencijalnog poraza: „Ne verujem u križu vrednosti, ali verujem u njihovu stalnu transformaciju i konstatujem da se ta transformacija danas vrši sve bržim procesom. Biti prisutan u realnosti znači brzo i radikalno transformisati tradicionalne procese umetnosti“.^[7] Ješa Denegri izvodi suštinski zaključak, da je „danас u području kulture moguće misliti i delovati jedino krajnjom otvorenosti kritičke svesti, ne mimoilazeći protivrečnosti konkretnih zbivanja i ne izbegavajući izazove stalne samorefleksije i samopreispitivanja“.^[8]

[7] Ješa Denegri, Predgovor, u: Giulio Carlo Argan, *Studije o modernoj umetnosti* (Beograd: Nolit, 1982), 18.

[8] Isto, 19.

weakness, but as a potentially fruitful one, a highly tense confrontation with the reality of what is happening, and with prospects for overcoming any hint of ethical and existential defeat: "I do not believe in a crisis of values, but I do believe in their constant transformation and conclude that this transformation is taking place today in a rapidly accelerating process. To be present in reality means quickly and radically to transform the traditional art processes".^[7]

The vital conclusion is drawn by Ješa Denegri: "In the field of culture today, it is only possible to think and act with the extreme openness of a critical mind, avoiding neither the contradictions of individual developments nor the challenges of constant self-reflection and self-examination".^[8]

[7] Ješa Denegri, Predgovor, u Giulio Carlo Argan, *Studije o modernoj umetnosti*, (Beograd: Nolit, 1982), 18

[8] Ibid., 19

UMETNOST I KRIZA IDENTITETA

Za opstanak i oblikovanje ličnog ili kolektivnog identiteta neophodni su stabilni socijalni, ekonomski i kulturni uslovi koji obezbeđuju rešavanje konfliktata, kako na ličnom tako i na opštem društvenom nivou, ali i postepen razvoj usklađen sa promenama koje su neminovne. Kriza identiteta nastaje usled brzih i nenadanih promena koje izazivaju nesigurnost i otpor prema promenama.^[1] Neizvesnost i nepredvidivi preokreti, lažno uljuljkavanje i sve drastičnije promene koje su se na ovim prostorima odomaćeile uslovjavaju stanje krize identiteta kao naše prirodno stanje već više decenija.



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Srpsku umetnost pedesetih godina 20. veka obeležili su konstantni napori i borba umetnika za slobodnim umetničkim izražavanjem. To je period koji je u istoriji na globalnom nivou obeležen početkom hladnog rata i kriza koje je on izazvao, a u Srbiji nizom uspona i padova u odnosima sa Istokom i Zapadom. Razlaz sa Staljinom 1948. godine ubrzao je napredovanje boljih odnosa sa Zapadom, međutim uticaj Komunističke partije je i dalje ostao prisutan u kulturnom i umetničkom razvoju zemlje u vidu dominantnog socijalističkog realizma. Ovaj period je obeležio raskorak između ideologije, odnosno teorije i kritike sa jedne i umetničke prakse sa druge strane. Umetnost se suočila sa dilemom „kako odoleti opakoj ideologiji monizma i sačuvati, koliko je to u smutnim vremenima moguće, stvaralačko dostojanstvo i umetnički integritet? Čutanjem ili ketmanom?“^[2] Na sreću, tokom šeste decenije okolnosti su se kretale u pozitivnom smeru što je između ostalog uslovilo pojavu umetničkih grupa u Beogradu (Zadarska, Šestorica, Samostalni, Jedanaestorica, Decembarska) i kolonija u Vojvodini koje su ponudile različite koncepte savremenog stvaralaštva. Usledila je rehabilitacija međuratnog slikarstva i vajarstva, koje je bilo potisnuto u vreme socijalističkog realizma, a do preloma ka savremenim umetničkim tokovima došlo je 1951. godine izložbom Petra Lubarde. U ovim novim konceptima umetnici i vlast su pronašli zajednički interes. Omogućeno je otvaranje srpske umetnosti prema tokovima internacionalnog modernizma, socijalistički modernizam šeste decenije je nametnut kao norma ali i kao elemenat samopromocije naše države u strategiji povezivanja sa Zapadom. Zahvaljujući brojnim međunarodnim izložbama održаниh tokom šeste decenije 20. veka apstraktna umetnost je bila prihvaćena kako od strane umetnika, tako i od strane vlasti. Prijem ovih izložbi kod publike ali i medija direktno je zavisio od političkih odnosa naše zemlje sa Zapadom.^[3] Na podvojenost odnosa prema Istoku i Zapadu ukazuje i činjenica da su izložbe savremene jugoslovenske umetnosti predstavljane isključivo

[1] Zagorka Golubović, „Kriza identiteta“ u JA i DRUGI, antropološka istraživanja individualnog i kolektivnog identiteta, Republika, 1999, <http://www.youpage.com/zines/republika/arhiva/99/jaidrugi/>

[2] Срђан Марковић, Децембарска група, (Београд: Филозофски факултет, Интерпринт, 2009), 13

[3] Radina Vučetić, Velike američke izložbe u Koka-kola socijalizam, (Београд: službeni glasnik, 2012), 240-250.

ART AND IDENTITY CRISIS

A stable social, economic and cultural environment, possessed of the mechanisms for conflict resolution and coupled with steady development in step with unavoidable change, is required if personal and collective identity is to survive and take shape. Identity crises occur in the wake of rapid and unexpected change which causes insecurity and resistance to it.^[1] Uncertainty, sudden and unpredictable veering from one direction to another, a false sense of security and increasingly drastic change, all of which are endemic to this part of the world, have resulted in a situation where an identity crisis has been our natural state for several decades.

Serbian art of the 1950s was characterised by the artists' constant striving for freedom of expression. It was a period which also marked the beginning of the cold war and the crisis it entailed, leading to a series of ups and downs in Yugoslavia's relations with East and West. The break with Stalin in 1948 accelerated an improvement in relations with the West; however, the influence of the Communist Party in the shape of the prevailing socialist realism was still present in the cultural and artistic development of the country. There was a widening gap between ideology with its theory and criticism on the one hand and artistic practice on the other. Art confronted the dilemma of "how to hold out against a vicious monistic ideology while preserving – as far as was feasible in those confusing times – creative dignity and artistic integrity, through silence or Kitman?"^[2] Fortunately, things took a positive turn in the 1960s, resulting in the emergence of art groups in Belgrade such as the Zadar, Šestorica (Six), Samostalni (Independent), Jedanaestorica (Eleven) and Decembar groups and a colony in Vojvodina, all of which offered various models for contemporary creativity. Next came the rehabilitation of interwar painting and sculpture which had been suppressed by socialist realism, but the breakthrough into the modern scene came in 1951 with an exhibition by Petar Lubarda and the finding of common ground between artists and the authorities in these new ideas. Serbian art was able to open up towards international modernism; a socialist modernism of the sixties was imposed as the norm and as a way of promoting the country in its strategy of reconnecting with the West.^[3] The dichotomy in attitude towards East and West is obvious from the fact that exhibitions of contemporary Yugoslav art went only to the West, while

[1] Zagorka Golubović, „Kriza identiteta“ u JA i DRUGI, antropološka istraživanja individualnog i kolektivnog identiteta, [„Identity Crisis“ in / AND OTHERS, an anthropological exploration of individual and collective identity], Republika, 1999, <http://www.yurope.com/zines/republika/archiva/99/jaidrugi/>

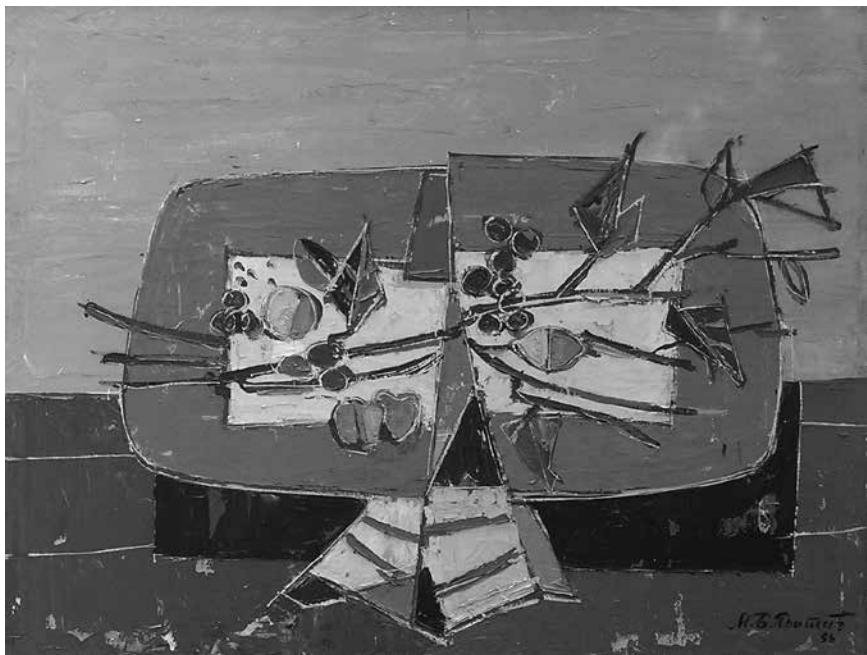
[2] Срђан Марковић, Децембарска група, (Београд: Филозофски факултет, Интерпринт, 2009), 13 [Srđan Marković, *The December Group*, (Belgrade, Department of Philosophy, Interprint, 2009), 13]. Kitman (Arabio): secrecy, concealment. Czeslaw Milosz in "The Captive Mind" uses the variation "Ketman" as a metaphor for how intellectuals behaved under the totalitarian regimes of Communist Eastern Europe.

[3] Nikola Dedić, *Kritika socijalističkog modernizma u Ka radikalnoj kritici ideologije: Od socijalizma ka postsocijalizmu*, [A critique of socialist modernism in Towards a radical critique of ideology: From socialism towards postsocialism] (Beograd: Prodajna galerija Beograd, Novi Sad: Muzej savremene umetnosti Vojvodine, 2009 [Belgrade: Prodajna galerija Beograd. Novi Sad: Vojvodina Museum of Contemporary Art, 2009]), 63-77

na Zapadu dok su na Istok išle Izložba naivnih umetnika Jugoslavije, Izložba kopija fresaka Bogorodice Ljeviške, Izložba stare srpske grafike 16. i 18. veka.^[4]

Zahvaljujući slobodi koje su likovne umetnosti, za razliku od literature i filma, imale jer se smatralo da ne mogu predstavljati direktnu opasnost po vlast, umetnici su bez obzira na polemike i konfrontacije zajedno težili da se ti osvojeni prostori slobode što bolje iskoriste.^[5] Kao jedan od modela delovanja umetnosti u uslovima stalne destabilizacije pokazao se rad umentičkih kolonija u Vojvodini. Nakon po-kušaja osnivanja kolonije na Paliću (1950) nižu se kolonije u Senti (1952), Bačkoj Topoli (1953), Bečeju (1954), Kikindi (1955) i konačno u Ečki odnosno Zrenjaninu (1956). Za umetnike boravak i rad u koloni-

jama omogućavao je jedan vid stručnog usavršavanja kroz kontakte sa drugim umetnicima. U kolonijama je stvorena institucija „socijalističkog mecenata“ koji je podrazumevao državno finansiranje likovne umetnosti ali ne pod uslovom ograničavanja umetničke slobode, jer je sama institucija kolonije učestvovala u socijalističkom preporodu zemlje u cilju približavanja umetnika i umetnosti radnom narodu. Često su kao ciljevi vojvođanskih kolonija navođeni bogaćenje umetničkog života grada gde se održava ali i omogućavanje uslova umetnicima za otkrivanje novih tema. Mrtva priroda i pejzaž bile su pogodne teme unutar kojih se razvijalo građenje slike na njenom putu ka sopstvenoj autonomiji. Ove neutralne teme, a naročito pejzaž pogodovale su radu u kolonijama koje su često praktikovale slikanje u pleneru. Takođe je predmetno slikarstvo bila i osnovna karakteristi-



Miodrag B. Protić

stika članova Decembarske grupe, osnovane u Beogradu 1955. godine koju su činili umetnici Miloš Bajić, Dragutin Cigarić, Stojan Ćelić, Aleksandar Luković, Zoran Petrović, Miodrag B. Protić, Mladen Srbinović, Aleksandar Tomašević, Lazar Vozarević, Lazar Vujaklija. Grupa je tokom svog petogodišnjeg delovanja uticala na preobražaj od međuratne moderne umetnosti, nasilno prekinute socijalističkim realizmom, ka aktuelnim tokovima na svetskoj likovnoj sceni. Član Decembarske grupe, ugledni slikar

[4] Ibid. 247

[5] Ješa Denegri, *Pedesete: teme srpske umetnosti*, (Novi Sad: Svetovi, 1993).

those featuring naïve artists, copies of frescoes from the church of the Virgin of Ljevisa (Kosovo) and 16th and 18th century Serbian graphics were sent Eastward.^[4]

The fine arts enjoyed greater liberty than literature or film, as they were not regarded as representing a direct threat to the authorities; the artists, despite arguments and confrontation, strove together to make the best possible use of their hard-won areas of freedom.^[5] One model of action in circumstances of constant destabilisation was the work of the artists' colony in Vojvodina. After an attempt at Palić (1950), colonies sprang up at Senta (1952), Bačka Topola (1953), Bečeј (1954), Kikinda (1955) and finally at Ečka near Zrenjanin (1956). These enabled further professional training for residents and contact with other artists. The colonies saw the institution of a concept known as "socialist patron of the arts", meaning state financing for fine arts without placing curbs on freedom, since the colonies themselves were part of the socialist renaissance, intended to bring art and artists closer to the working people. The frequently stated objectives of the Vojvodina colonies were to enrich artistic life in the towns where they were held and to facilitate artists in discovering new subjects. Still life and landscape provided convenient backdrops before which the construction of the picture could develop on its way towards its own autonomy. These neutral genres, particularly landscape, were appropriate for work in the colonies, which favoured *plein air* painting. Figurative painting was the main characteristic of the Decembar Group, founded in Belgrade in 1955. Its members were Miloš Bajić, Dragutin Cigarčić, Stojan Ćelić, Aleksandar Luković, Zoran Petrović, Miodrag B. Protić, Mladen Srbinović, Aleksandar Tomašević, Lazar Vozarević and Lazar Vučaklija.

In the five years of its existence, the group was influential in effecting a change-over from the modern art of the inter-war period, forcibly cut short by socialist realism, to current trends and movements on the international scene. The distinguished



Stojan Ćelić

[4] Ibid. 247

[5] Ješa Denegri, *Pedesete: teme srpske umetnosti*, [The Fifties: Themes in Serbian Art] (Novi Sad: Svetovi, 1993).

i profesor na Akademiji likovnih umetnosti u Beogradu, Zoran Petrović aktivno je učestvovao u radu vojvođanskih kolonija a naročito u radu Umetničke kolonije Ečka. U radu ove kolonije učestvovali su svi članovi grupe, sem Aleksandra Tomaševića, i time pokazali puno poverenje u pokret umetničkih kolonija. Pored drugih značajnih umetnika članovi Decembarske grupe su svojim učešćem dali kredibilitet ovoj koloniji koja je jedina od vojvođanskih kolonija uspela da se institucionalizuje. Formiranjem muzeja pod nazivom Savremena galerija umetničke kolonije Ečka-Zrenjanin 1962. godine u tom momentu jedine ustanove u Srbiji gde se na jednom mestu mogla videti reprezentativna produkcija savremene likovne umetnosti uspostavljen je čvrst odnos između umetnosti i lokalnih vlasti, odnosno neku vrstu stabilnosti koja je trebalo da stvori povoljne uslove za rad umetnika. U kriznim vremenima umetnost je uspela da se izbori za neke svoje pozicije.

Nestabilnost kao i politika „srcu drage rublje a džepu nužnih dolara“ prisutna je i danas u Srbiji. Nedavno sprovedeno istraživanje Kancelarije za evropske integracije pokazuje da i danas građani Srbije smatraju da najveću bespovratnu pomoć u poslednjih 13 godina dobijamo od Rusije, dok ona u stvarnosti nije ni na spisku deset najvećih donatora.^[6] Ova večita kriza ili potraga za identitetom, između Istoka i Zapada, postavlja nužnost za konstantno pronalaženje novih modela delovanja umetnika u sistemima umetnosti čiji se pojedini elementi konstantno i ubrzano menjaju shodno turbulentnim okolnostima.

[6] Биљана Чпајак, Европа даје, Русији захваљујемо, Политика, Догађаји дана, 18.08.2014.

painter, professor of the Belgrade Fine Arts Academy and member of the Decembar Group, Zoran Petrović, participated in the work of the Vojvodina colonies, particularly Ečka. All the group members except Aleksandar Tomašević were residents there, thus demonstrating full confidence in the colony movement. In addition to other important artists, the Decembar Group lent credibility to this colony – the only one that succeeded in becoming institutionalised. A museum entitled the Contemporary Gallery of the Ečka-Zrenjanin Artist Colony was set up in 1962, (the only place in Serbia at the time showing good contemporary art works), and this formed a firm bond with the local authorities, providing a kind of stability that, it was hoped, would improve conditions for artists. In times of crisis, art nonetheless succeeded in carving out a position for itself.

Instability and a policy of “the rouble being dear to the heart, but the pocket needing dollars” are still present in today’s Serbia. A recent study by the Office for European Integration shows that Serbs think that the greatest amount of non-returnable aid in the past 13 years comes from Russia, while Russia is actually not even on the list of the ten biggest donors.^[6] This eternal crisis in the search for an identity between East and West means that artists are constantly forced to seek new models for their work within a system whose elements are in a constant state of flux, in keeping with their turbulent surroundings.

[6] Биљана Чпјак, Европа даје, Русији захваљујемо, Политика, Догађаји дана, 18.08.2014. [Biljana Čpjak, Europe Gives, We Thank Russia, *Politika*, Events of the Day, 18 August 2014].

UMJETNOST I KRIZA ILI KOJU ULOGU IGRA UMJETNOST U DANAŠNJEM VREMENU?

Koju ulogu igra umjetnost u vremenu u kojem je veliki dio mladih ljudi nezaposleno i gleda u mračnu budućnost? Koju moć ima umjetnost u društvu koje je stalno konfrontirano raznoličitim slikama kroz internet i socijalne mreže? Koju god riječ da se ubaci u tražilicu, internet izbaci tisuće slika koje imaju veze s traženom riječi, ili ne.



Ana Petrović

kustoskinja/istoričarka umjetnosti, Beč
curator/art historian, Vienna

Od početka civiliziranog svijeta postoje i društvene i socijalne krize, ali kroz nastajanje globalnih medija kao novine, kasnije radio i televizija a danas pogotovo kroz internet se čini da krizama nema kraja. Dok su se ljudi ranije suočavali sa krizama u neposrednoj blizini, gledamo i čujemo danas o krizama u cijelom svijetu, zbog čega imamo osjećaj da krizi nema kraja svejedno da li utječe na naš život ili ne.

Umjetnici su oduvijek svojim djelima reagirali na događaje oko njih, a u 60im godinama prošlog stoljeća su premjestili svoje reakcije u javni prostor.

Jedan način, na koji je to bilo moguće je bila Performance Art, koja je u to vrijeme nastajala. Primjera ima dovoljno, počimajući od Josepha Beuysa, oca Performance Arta u Njemačkoj, feminističkoj umjetnici Valie Export u Austriji, Tomislava Gotovca u Hrvatskoj, sve do Marine Abramović, najpoznatije umjetnice sa područja jugoistočne Europe u Srbiji.

Bitni medij Performance Arta postalo je umjetnikovo tijelo, koje su različiti autori znali koristiti na raznovrsne načine. Tomislav Gotovac je u performansu *Zagrebe volim te* hodao gol zagrebačkom ulicom Ilica, legao na pod i ljubio ga. Ubrzo je priveden u zatvor zbog remećenja javnog reda i mira, iz istog razloga je uhičen i Austrijski umjetnik Günter Brus kada je izveo performans *Wiener Spaziergang*, u kojom je hodao centrom Beča obojen bijelom bojom i crnom linijom uzduž tijela.

U tim slučajevima bi se moglo reći kako ljudi u to vrijeme nisu bili toliko otvoreni prema umjetnosti, kako se moglo brže i lakše šokirati nego sada, kada smo okruženi slikama golih tijela na reklamama u javnom prostoru ili na televiziji. Ali opet se postavlja pitanje da li je stvarno tako ili da li mi samo mislimo ili želimo da se naš pogled na umjetnost promijeni i da takve akcije zaista prihvaćamo kao umjetnost?

„Create – while it's still legal“, sarkastična rečenica na razglednici se od jednom čini kao realni scenario u budućnosti. Gledajući zadnje događaje na Zagrebačkom cvjetnom trgu, kada je policija privela švicarske umjetnike koji su izveli performans goli, čini se da je golo tijelo u javnom prostoru postao još veći tabu nego što je bio u 60im ili 70im godinama. Takva vrsta kriminalizirana umjetnosti se ne odnosi

ART AND CRISIS, OR: WHAT ROLE DOES ART PLAY THESE DAYS?

What is the role of art at a time when so many young people are unemployed and facing a grim future? What power does it wield in a society constantly challenged by the images pouring out of the Internet and social networks? Whatever word you type into the search engine, the Internet will throw up a thousand pictures related to it – or not, as the case may be.

Social crisis has been around from the dawn of civilisation, but since the emergence of the global reach of newspapers, radio, television and, above all, the Internet, there appears to be no end to them. Whereas before people faced up to crises in their immediate vicinity, today we watch and listen to them as they happen all over the world, which makes us feel that they are unending, whether they affect our lives or not. Artists have always reacted to events around them, and in the 1960s, they moved their reactions into the public arena.

One of the ways open to them at the time was Performance Art, then making its first appearance. There are plenty of examples, beginning with the father of Performance Art, Joseph Beuys in Germany, feminist Valie Export in Austria, Tomislav Gotovac in Croatia and Marina Abramović in Serbia, the best-known performance artist to come out of southeast Europe.

The artist's body became the essential medium and the artists used theirs in various ways. In "Zagreb, I love you", Tomislav Gotovac walked naked down the city's central street, lay down on the ground and kissed it. He was quickly arrested for disturbing the peace, as was Austrian artist Günter Brus for his performance of „Wiener Spaziergang“, when he strode through the centre of Vienna, his body painted in vertical black and white lines.

In these cases it might be said that the public at large was not so open to art and was more likely to be shocked than it would be today, surrounded as we are by the naked body in advertising, in the public domain and on TV. However, the question again arises: is it really so or do we just think so? Or do we want to change our view of art and actually accept such acts as art?

A sarcastic sentence from a postcard: „Create – while it's still legal“, all at once seems a likely scenario for the future. Watching recent scenes from a public square in Zagreb when police arrested Swiss artists performing in the nude, it seems that the naked body in public has become more taboo than in the 1960s or 1970s. This type of criminalisation of art is not restricted to Performance but also applies to Street Art, which develops in urban settings throughout the world. Expressed through various media, including video projections in the public domain, it should not be confused with graffiti, which uses

samo na Performance Art, već i na takozvanu Street Art, koja se razvija u urbanim sredinama na cijelome svijetu. Street Art, koja se izražava u različitim medijima, čak i video projekcijama u javnom prostoru, se ne smije zamjeniti sa grafitima, čiji je medij sprej sa lakom i koji je uglavnom specijaliziran na kreativno ispisivanje riječi ili imena umjetnika na javnim mjestima.

Umjetnost je od početka čovječanstva bila način izražaja kako netko, odnosno umjetnik, vidi svijet oko sebe. Najbolji primjeri su naravno najstariji ikada pronađeni ljudski crteži u špiljama francuskog Lasca-

uxa, kojim su ljudi oslikavali sve što se zbivalo oko njih. Trebamo se dakle pitati zašto je nešto toliko prirodno i ljudsko kao umjetnost postala elitarna i prihvatljiva samo za mali dio čovječanstva i kada je prestala biti dio života? I kako to promijeniti?

Na ovom mjestu se vraćam opet Street Art-u, koji djeluje upravo na području ulice i koji predstavlja jednostavnu i shvatljivu umjetnost za „obične“ ljudi u njihovo svakodnevici.

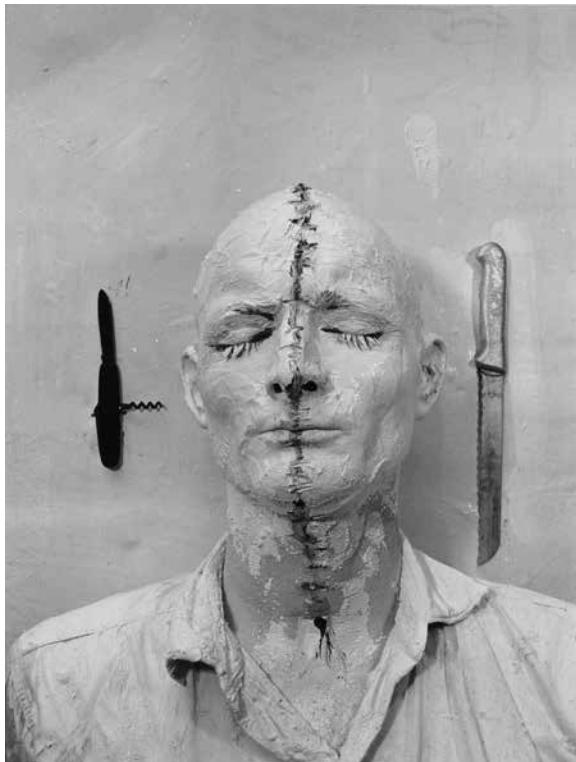
Street Art djela se često bave aktualnim svjetskim temama, protive se potrošačkom društvu i besmislenosti života, koji se više odvija preko društvenih mreža na internetu nego u realnom životu.

Druga namjera, koja stoji iza te pojave je i želja, da se uljepšaju ružni i sivi gradski prostori, i da se razbije monotonija gradskog prizora. Dio umjetnika Street Arta prilagođavaju djela okolišu i interagiraju sa prostorom, i koriste ga onako kako ga nalaze, da bi u njega mogli ugraditi svoja djela.

Važnost umjetnosti u javnom prostoru su svjesni i razni gradovi poput Beča, koji potiču umjetnike i daju im prostor i otkupljuju radeove koje se nalaze na fasadama i u dvorištima stambenih zgrada grada Beča. Sličan način poticaja se razvija i u pravcu Street Arta. Time da gradovi poput Beča ili Münchena akviraju gradske prostore i umjetnike, koje dobiju mogućnost popuniti taj prostor svojim idejama i vizijama. Na taj način se legitimizira

smjer umjetnosti koji je počeo na ilegalan način, korištenja zidova i prostora gradova bez dopuštenja.

Razlog za prihvatanje te umjetnosti, koja je počela ilegalnim djelima je sigurno i taj, da se radi o globalnoj pojavi koja se brzo širi zahvaljujući internetu i društvenim mrežama. Naravno i zbog zanimljive estetike koju pruža.



Günter Brus

enamel spray as its medium and generally specialises in the creative writing of words or artists' names in public places.

Since the birth of mankind, art has been the expression of how someone, i.e. the artist, sees the world around him or her. The best examples are, of course, the oldest human drawings ever found in the caves of Lascaux in France, in which people drew and painted all that was happening around them. We should ask ourselves, therefore, how it came about that something so natural and human has become so elite, acceptable only to a small part of mankind. When did it cease to be part of life? And how do we change this?

Here I come back again to Street Art, which acts right there, in the street, simple and understandable to "ordinary" people going about their daily lives.

Its works address current international topics, oppose the consumer society and speak out against the pointlessness of a life lived more through social networks on the Internet than in reality.

The other idea animating these works is the desire to embellish the unattractive greyness of city spaces and break up the monotony of the urban landscape. Some artists adapt their works to the environment and integrate with the space, using it as they find it in order to build their work into it.



Tomislav Gotovac

Cities such as Vienna are aware of the importance of art in the public areas; they encourage artists by giving them space and purchasing works painted on house fronts and in the courtyards of residential buildings. This sort of stimulation develops Street Art. Cities like Vienna or Munich acquire urban premises and give artists the opportunity to fill them with their ideas and vision. In this way, a trend begun by using walls and other surfaces without permission has become lawful.

Another reason for accepting this art, born out of the illegal, is surely because it is now a global phenomenon, rapidly spreading via the Internet and social networks, not to mention the fascinating aesthetic it affords.

Zahvaljujući Street Artu umjetnost postaje opet dio ljudskih života i otvara oči za estetiku i ljepotu u monotoniji svakodnevice. A šta to znači u odnosu na krizu, da se vratimo početnoj temi, i šta to znači za umjetnost?

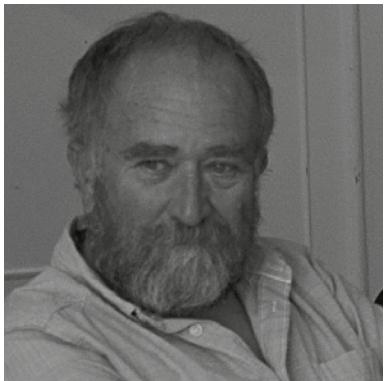
Približavanje ljudi izvornoj ljudskoj potrebi, kao što je umjetnost, je zadatak, kojem su se posvetili razni umjetnici sa željom da približe ljudi umjetnosti koja se izmaknula iz njihovih života i koja je postala nešvatljiva i neprihvatljiva za „običnog“ čovjeka. I upravo tu se mora i nastaviti, da bi se umjetnost mogla opet približiti i ući u živote svih nas, kako bi mogla slijediti jedan od svojih najbitnijih zadataka, koji je obradovati gledatelja i obogatiti njegov život.

Thanks to Street Art, art is again becoming part of human life, opening our eyes to beauty in the daily monotony. But to return to our initial theme, what has it to do with crisis, and what does it mean for art?

To bring people closer to this primordial human need is a mission taken up by various artists in the desire to close the gap between people and art, which has slipped out of their lives and become incomprehensible and unacceptable to the “ordinary” man or woman. And it is from this point it must continue, so that art may re-enter all our lives in order to carry out one of its most important tasks; to gladden the hearts of the onlookers and enrich our lives.

STRAH OD ČITANJA

„...Svjesna i inteligentna manipulacija organiziranih navika i mišljenja masa važan je element u demokratskom društvu. Oni koji manipuliraju tim nevidljivim mehanizmom društva čine nevidljivu vladu koja čini istinsku vladajuću moć. Nama vladaju, oblikuju naše umove, formiraju naše ukuse, sugeriraju nam ideje većinom ljudi za koje nikad nismo čuli. U svakodnevnom životu nama dominira relativno mala grupa osoba koje razumiju mentalne procese i društvene uzorke masa...“ - Edward Bernays



Mladen Lučić

kustos Muzeja savremene umjetnosti Istre, Pula,

curator, Museum of Contemporary Art of Istria, Pula

Nedavno sam na televiziji gledao reklamu jedne telekomunikacijske tvrtke. Grupa tinejdžera međusobno demonstrira korištenje Interneta putem svojih *lpođa* pokazujući njhove mogućnosti, a završni reklamni slogan otprilike glasi da je zabava koju te sprave nude mnogo bolja od čitanja klasične literature. Očito, po mišljenu velikih korporacija danas moraš biti, da parafraziram jednog od tih književnih klasika, *Idijot* da čitaš klasičnu literaturu uz obilje mogućnosti koje ti nudi Internet.

Priznajem da nisam od korica do korica pročitao Rat i mir, od Ane Karenjine sam odustao nakon par stranica, a niti Joycovog Uliksa, unatoč silnoj volji i trudu, nisam uspio pročitati. Slično je bilo i s mojim vršnjacima, jer lektira ipak nije bila previše popularna, a trebalo je pogledati sve filmove koji igraju u kinima, poslušati nove rock ploče, vidjeti kazališnu predstavu, otići na utakmicu, odigrati koji *hakl*, a i diskardi nisu mogli biti zanemareni. Ipak, čitalo se. Možda više one literature koja nije bila na školskom popisu poput Kerouaca, Salingera, Camusa, Huxleya ili Bukowskog, ali čitali su se i propisani i nepropisani klasici. Danas je drugačije jer, na primjer, Wikipedija je zamjenila enciklopediju i dok smo nekad u enciklopediji tražili određeni pojam, listali smo je i pročitali usput niz drugih natuknica. Sada se ide ciljano, direktno na pojam, a i ne zanima nas previše išta više od onog što u tom trenutku tražimo. Prakticiramo *instant* znanje za koje nije kriv Internet, kojeg bi se samo budala odrekla, već oni koji manipuliraju medijima, a time neposredno i našom svijesti, koja je ipak kod većine vrlo povodljiva. To rezultira gubitkom osobnosti, alarmantnim padom morala i etike, te korumpiranosti u svim porama društva i života. Prevladalo je carstvo supermarketata, jeftini konzumizam ili apsolutna vlast potrošačkog društva, a do konačne provedbe takvog sustava korporativnim moćnicima obrazovani individualac predstavlja najveću smetnju. Reklamna poruka teleoperatorske tvrtke nije toliko sablazna koliko je stravično istinita.

Nakon što sam u zadnjih nekoliko godina priedio tri izložbe koje problematiziraju *Krizu* u djelima suvremenih hrvatskih likovnih umjetnika, poruka ove reklame uslijedila je kao još jedna nadgradnja ranije iznesenih stavova koja me je za ovu izložbu, posebno rađenu za *Dunavske susrete* u Novom Sadu i prateći simpozij pod nazivom *Umjetnost i kriza*, izravno potakla da je posvetim čitanju.

FEAR OF READING

“...The conscious and intelligent manipulation of the organized habits and opinions of the masses is an important element in democratic society. Those who manipulate this unseen mechanism of society constitute an invisible government which is the true ruling power of our country. ...We are governed, our minds are moulded, our tastes formed, our ideas suggested, largely by men we have never heard of... In almost every act of our daily lives, we are dominated by the relatively small number of persons who understand the mental processes and social patterns of the masses...”

- Edward Bernays

I recently saw a TV commercial for a telecommunications company. It featured some teenagers demonstrating to one another how they accessed the Internet on their Ipods and showing off their capacities. The ultimate slogan of the ad, in a nutshell, was that the fun these devices offered was much better than reading classical literature. Obviously, in giant-corporative opinion these days you'd want to be an *Idiot* - to paraphrase one of those literary classics - to read classical literature in the face of all the opportunities afforded by the Internet.

I have to admit that I didn't read *War and Peace* cover to cover and gave up on *Anna Karenina* after the first couple of pages; neither did I manage to read Joyce's *Ulysses* through to the end, despite a great deal of will and effort. It was the same with my schoolmates, as our prescribed reading list was not overly-popular, and then there were all those films to watch at the cinema, rock records to listen to, theatre performances to see, matches to go to, basketball hoops to shoot and, of course, let's not forget the discos. Still, some reading went on, perhaps more of a kind of literature not on the school list: Kerouac, Salinger, Camus, Huxley and Bukowski, but also the classics, prescribed and non-prescribed. Today, things are different because Wikipedia, for instance, has taken the place of the encyclopaedia, and whereas we would sometimes look up a term in an encyclopaedia, as we leafed through it we would read some of the other entries in passing. Now we go in selectively, straight to the target, not much interested in anything over and above what we're actually seeking. We are practitioners of instant knowledge, and it's not the Internet - which we'd be fools to ignore - that is to blame, but those who manipulate the media and therefore our minds, generally a very malleable commodity. The result is a loss of individuality, an alarming decline in morals and ethics with corruption in all pores of life and society. The empire of the supermarket prevails, of cheap consumerism and the absolute power of the consumer society, and it is the educated individual who represents the greatest obstacle to the definitive enthronement of a system of corporate power-wielders.

The message I saw in the TV ad was not so much seductive as it was terrifyingly true.

Prije pet godina, kada sam radio prvu izložbu pod nazivom *Kriza*, bio sam unatoč teškoj općoj situaciji izvjesni optimist jer sam se nadao da će tadašnja ekonomska i moralna represija iznjedriti snažnu umjetnost kao što je to bio čest slučaj u povijesti kulture i civilizacije. Na žalost, ta kriza još uvijek traje, teža je od stvarnosti, a njena eskalacija koja napreduje geometrijskom progresijom dovila je većinu građana Hrvatske, pa tako i umjetnike, do permanentnog letargičnog raspoloženja. Takvo stanje u umjetnika se reflektira stvaralaštvom dokinute životne radosti i kreativne siline koju energija, bila ona pozitivna ili negativna, emanira. Iz dana u dan sve veća, od vlasti pažljivo dozirana represija, dovila je do nezainteresiranosti za zbivanja i događaje, do ravnodušnosti ili, pojednostavljeno, do stanja bliskog apatiji. Pod takvim se pritiskom većina umjetnika povukla u svoja intimna duhovna skloništa, a sveopći zajednički bunt, eksplozija misli i djela izostala je.



Umjetnici zastupljeni na ovoj izložbi u svojim radovima kritički progovaraju o današnjem životnom realitetu potpuno svjesni sumorne društvene zbilje. Zastupljeni radovi umjesto britke kritičke oštice (kao što ih je većina bila na *Krizi I*) bilježe i konstatiraju stanje. Kao i velika većina pripadnika našeg društva, i umjetnici su razočarani i rezignirani, a svoju ogorčenost ne žele, niti mogu u sebi zatomititi, te se svojim oružjem opiru svakodnevnoj intelektualnoj, ideološkoj i materijalnoj torturi. Većina radova odiše teškom atmosferom, izvjesnom melankolijom, sumorne su ikonografije, ali ipak sadrže i potrebnu dozu ironije, sarkazma i duhovitosti što ih čini vitalnim i izdignutim nad realnošću, što u biti i jest poslanstvo umjetnosti. Refleksija svakodnevice očituje se i u sve prisutnijim ironičnim konverzacijama s medijem u kojem se izražavaju, svojevrsnim diskretnim obračunom sa bitkom i smisлом umjetničkog čina, čime jasno ukazuju na uzaludnost posla kojeg obavljaju. Dok ovo pišem nazvao me umjetnik čije djelo čeka na muzejski otkup već četiri godine. Najbolje je, kaže on, da nas sve strijeljaju, sahrane u jednoj velikoj rupi i pospu vapnom. Kome danas umjetnost nešto predstavlja? Tko kupuje umjetnička djela, posebno ona suvremene vokacije?

Od čega danas umjetnik može živjeti? Čemu raditi izložbe?

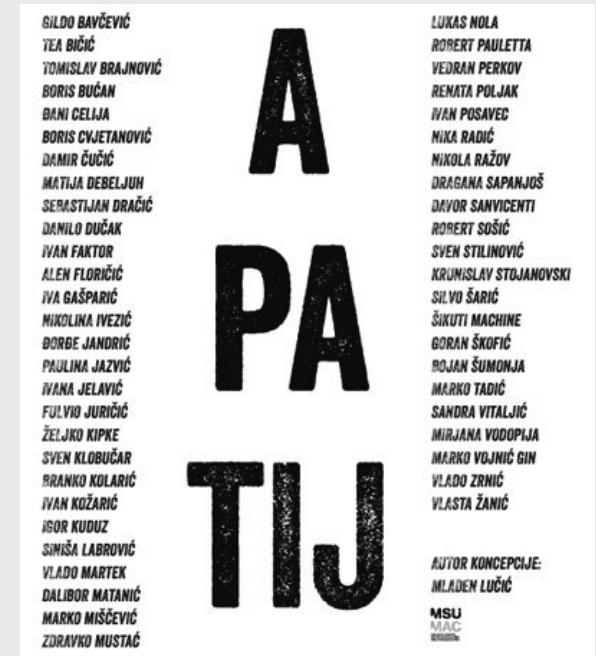
Uostalom zašto i kome uopće danas čitati? Ta pitanja imanentna su umjetnicima prisutnim na ovoj izložbi. Darko Pekica, član grupe *Šikuti machine*, nemajući kome čitati pjesme Walta Whitmana to čini svojim kravama, za vrijeme ispaše. Zlatan Vehabović, na tragu Truffautova filma, odnosno Bradburyeva romana *Fahrenheit 451* impostira glavni lik na svojoj slici koji naftom zaljeva i pali tekovine minulih civilizacija. Đorđe Jandrić likovno intervenira na predlošcima pesimističke i mračne poezije potugalskog pjesnika Fernanda Pessoe, dok Fulvio Juričić slika danas već zaboravljene tiskarske klišeje služeći se

Having in recent years arranged three exhibitions dealing with crisis in the works of contemporary Croatian artists, the message of this commercial came on top of earlier ideas, spurring me to devote this particular exhibition to reading. The show was especially made for the *Danube Dialogues* in Novi Sad and followed on a symposium called *Crisis*.

Five years ago, when I was preparing a first exhibition entitled *Crisis*, I was optimistic despite the unfavourable circumstances; I had hoped that the economic and moral repression would generate a powerful art, as was so often the case in the history of culture and civilization. Unfortunately, the crisis is still escalating, subduing reality itself, and the majority of Croatian citizens, including artists, have been hit hard, resulting in a state of lingering lethargy. This is reflected in artistic production devoid of the joys of life and the creative force emanated by energy, whether positive or negative. Daily increasing repression that the authorities apply in carefully measured doses has brought about a lack of interest, a listlessness close to apathy. Under such pressures most artists have sought shelter in their private spiritual life, while the explosion of thought and action into a general rebellion simply never occurred.

The artists included in this exhibition address the current situation fully aware of the gloomy reality. Instead of a sharp critical dissection, though (as in most of the *Crisis* shows), they seem simply to record the state of things. Like many in our society today, artists are disappointed and resigned but, rather than hiding their bitterness, they are trying to fight the intellectual, ideological and material daily torture with their own weapons. Most works are saturated with a heavy, melancholy atmosphere and dismal iconography, but they do possess much needed traces of irony, humour and sarcasm that elevate them above reality in a true artistic mission. The everyday is reflected in frequent self-ironic conversation with their medium of expression, a confrontation of sorts with the purpose of artistic work as if to point out that what they do is ultimately futile. While I was writing this, I received a phone call from an artist who had been waiting four years for a cheque from the museum that bought one of his works. *They might as well shoot us all*, he said, *bury us in a big hole and pour quicklime over us*. Really, what does art mean to anybody today? Who is going to buy works of art when they cannot scrape together enough for bread? How can an artist make a living? What is the purpose of exhibitions?

And then, why read at all today? These questions are immanent to the artists present in this exhibition. Member of the *Šikuti machine* group Darko Pekica, having no one to whom he can read the poems of



tipografijom tipičnom za tiskarsku eru. Sebastijan Dračić u apokaliptičnom pejsažu pušta vjetru nositi listove odbačenih papira, dok će Iva Gobić, poput knjiga, tvrdo ukoričiti i uvezati reklamne letke koje distribuirane od trgovачkih lanaca svakodnevno nalazimo u svojim poštanskim sandučićima. Video Matije Debeljuha prikazuje knjigu koja se sama lista, odbačena na sofi u hladnom i napuštenom stanu.

Otudeni svijet u kojem živimo u kojem nema mjesta knjizi, tema je radova Alena Floričića i Davora Sanvinčentija, dok će Ivan Posavec snimiti kadar iz umobolnice Vrapče, koji nema izravne, ali meni predstavlja posljedičnu vezu s čitanjem, pošto me atmosfera te veličanstvene fotografije podsjeća na specifični dojam koji je na mene ostavila priča *Wittgensteinov nećak*, austrijskog književnika Thomasa Bernharda.

Svi umjetnici zastupljeni na ovoj izložbi naslućuju ono nadolazeće vrijeme, koje su prorekli na papiru i celuidnoj vrpci Bradbury i Truffaut, vrijeme u kojem će knjige i bilo kakvi drugi pisani tekstovi biti zapaljeni, čime će individualna misao praktički prestati postojati, odnosno postat ćemo poslušni idjoti što je i krajnji cilj velikih korporacija koje sve više preuzimaju apsolutnu vlast.

Ovom izložbom prikazujem stanje, svojevrsnu inventuru postojećeg, jer zbog svega navedenog suvremena umjetnička produkcija naših autora ne daje prostora i materijala za suvislu, kako to danas zovu, *kustomsku* koncepciju. Istina, ne vidim niti u svjetskoj suvremenoj umjetničkoj produkciji jasnú nit vodilju koja bi kao novi trend mogla preuzeti primat. Gruba politička stvarnost preuzela je prvenstvo i u umjetnosti, ali u ovom kontekstu ne želim govoriti o sve većem broju umjetnika aktivista, jer smatram da umjetnost nije poligon za političke agitacije, već joj pripada mjesto nadgradnje dnevnih događaja, pozicija diskretnog komentatora i korektivnog faktora socijalne i političke zbilje. Umjetnički diskurs oduvijek je bio nadgradići, upozoriti i komentirati, a mišljenja sam da izravna agitacija kao i dokumentaristica *po defaultu* ne pripadaju području umjetnosti.

Krizu sam i radio s namjerom da ona doživi svoj nastavak, samo što sam tada vjerovao da će se nešto pokrenuti, da će se desiti pozitivna energija koja će iskristalizirati snažne umjetničke osobnosti, sposobne da predvode i kreiraju neki novi umjetnički senzibilitet. Nije se dogodilo. Nisu za to krivi umjetnici, oni najmanje. Kriva je neuređena država, diktat potrošača, tržišno ponašanje koje postoji svuda osim u umjetnosti, nepodnošljiv diktat korporacija i medija u njihovim rukama što je dovelo do socijalne i duhovne bijede. Ali, mislim da letargija i apatija nikuda ne vode. Treba se trgnuti i konačno adekvatno reagirati u socijalnom i umjetničkom smislu da nam do kraja ne izmaknu tlo pod nogama. Krize su vremena u kojem nastaju velika djela, a u umjetnost još uvijek svi zajedno vjerujemo.

Walt Whitman, reads them to his cows when he takes them out to pasture. Zlatan Vehabović's painting is on the trail of Truffaut's film and Bradbury's book *Fahrenheit 451*, with its main character who pours petrol on the achievements of past civilisations and then sets them alight. Đorđe Jandrić intervenes in the patterns of the dark, pessimistic poetry of the Portuguese poet Fernando Pessoa, while Fulvio Juričić paints already forgotten printing plates, using a typography typical of the bygone age of the printing press. Sebastijan Dračić lets the wind blow sheets of waste paper about an apocalyptic landscape, while Iva Gobić binds in a hard cover, like a book, the flyers distributed by chain stores that we find every day in our letter boxes. Matija Debeljuh's video shows a book ruffling its own pages, abandoned on a sofa in a cold, abandoned apartment.

The alien world we inhabit, where there is no room for books, is the theme of Alen Floričić and Davor Sanvinčenti, while Ivan Posavec photographs a scene from the Vrapče mental hospital that is without equal, but to me has a consequential connection to reading, since the atmosphere of this magnificent photograph reminds me of the impression left on me by the story *Wittgenstein's Nephew* by the Austrian writer Thomas Bernhard.

All artists represented at this exhibition evince a premonition of the times to come, foretold on paper and celluloid by Bradbury and Truffaut, a time that will see the burning of books and all other written matter, when individual thought will practically cease to exist and we become obedient idiots – the end objective of the mighty corporations as they gradually amass absolute power to themselves.

This exhibition is a survey of the state of things, an inventory of sorts, since in the light of all that has been said above, the current output of our artists cannot provide enough material for a consistent curatorial concept, as it is called nowadays. True, I don't discern any major ideas in contemporary art that might evolve into a new trend or a movement; raw political reality has taken over in art. However, I do not want to speak here of the increasing number of artists now turning into activists, because art in my opinion is not a territory for political agitation but rather a subtle commentary, a correction to the social and political reality. The discourse of art has always been to build on the existing, to warn and comment. Direct agitation and documentation, by default, do not belong in it.

I did plan *Crisis* with a sequel in mind, only at that time I believed that something would change for the better, that a positive energy would appear and shape strong artistic personalities, able to lead the way towards a new artistic sensibility. It did not happen. Artists are the least to blame. What must be blamed is the disorganized system of government, the rule of the consumer, a market behaviour that exists everywhere but in art, the intolerable dictates of corporations and the media owned by them, which has led to social and spiritual misery. But lethargy and apathy will get us nowhere. Ultimately we must shake them off and react, society and artists alike, if we are to avoid total collapse. Times of crisis are when great works are created, and all of us together still believe in art.

UMETNOST I KRIZA: UMETNIK–UMETNOST–PUBLIKA

Kriza je uvek bila nuspojava civilizacije i ljudskog bitka. Postojali su razni odgovori na nju. Pojasniču na primeru umetnosti. U prvoj polovini šesnaestog veka, u Evropi, u vreme verskih ratova, filozof Erazmo

Roterdamski je jednom rekao: „U Evropi besni rat, ja odoh da sadim kupus“. On ipak nije ostao indiferentan prema postojećem stanju i napisao je svoje poznato delo *Pohvala ludosti*. Ekspresionisti su osetili buduća previranja u društvu i nadolazeći Veliki rat i svoje impresije pretočili u velika i značajna dela umetnosti; Emiliu Noldeu su nacisti zabranili da slika, pa je bio prinuđen da se skriva i slika na malim formatima, najčešće na kartonima od potrošenih pakli cigareta, stvorivši velika umetnička dela.

Do devedesetih godina prošlog veka u tadašnjoj Jugoslaviji dobro se odvijala prodaja i kupovina slika, ali tih beričetnih godina za umetnike, pored slika, najviše je prodato i zlatne boje. Najčešće su kupovane „konfekcijske“ slike, ali i poneko delo Milana Konjovića, Ljubice Cuce Sokić i drugih umetnika.



Lazar Marković

direktor Galerije likovne umetnosti
poklon zbirke Rajka Mamuzića

director of Fine Art Gallery of
Rajko Mamuzić Memorial Collection

Nisam od onih koji zastupaju mišljenje da najbolja umetnička dela nastaju kada umetnik stvara „praznog stomaka“, ali ni da u zlatnim vremenima umetnost neminovno „cveta“.

Pokušaću da svoja razmišljanja iznesem kroz tri pojma: UMETNIK, UMETNOST i PUBLIKA.

UMETNOST

Umetnost nikada nije bila u krizi, ona je neminovno prolazila kroz razne faze i novine. Te novine su skoro uvek nastajale kao odgovor na prethodni period, kao njegov produžetak ili kao suprotnost. Nekada su te faze i novine bile odmah prihvачene od publike i kritike, a nekad je za to trebalo da prođe neko vreme. Nisu samo ti faktori uticali na nepripremljenost u prihvatanju, nego i sami umetnici (setimo se prve reakcije Vasilija Kandinskog na kubizam).

ART AND CRISIS: ARTIST – ART – THE PUBLIC

Crisis has always been a by-product of civilisation and the human condition. Response to it has been varied. I will explain, using art as an example. In the first half of the 16th century in Europe, at a time of religious wars, the philosopher Erasmus of Rotterdam once said: "War rages in Europe, I'm off to plant cabbage." Still, he was not indifferent to the existing state of affairs and wrote his famous work *In Praise of Folly*.

Expressionists felt the future upheaval in society and the advent of the Great War, translating their impressions into great and important works of art; the Nazis forbade Emil Nolde to paint, so he secretly worked in small format, mostly on discarded cigarette packs, creating major works of art.

Up to the 1990s in the former Yugoslavia, there was a promising trade in the sale and purchase of paintings. In these fruitful years for artists, however, besides paintings, the highest sales were of gold paint. "Ready-to-hang" pictures were most frequently bought, along with some works by Milan Konjović, Ljubica Cuca Sokić and a few others.

I am not one of those who think that the best art comes from artists working on an empty stomach, but neither do I think that art will inevitably flourish in golden times.

I will try to explain my thinking through three concepts: THE ARTIST, ART and THE PUBLIC.

ART

Art has never been in crisis: it inevitably passed through various stages and innovations. The new departures almost always came about in response to a previous period, either as its extension or its opposite. Sometimes the stages and innovations were welcomed immediately by the public and the critics, and sometimes some time was needed. They were not the only factors affecting an unwillingness to accept; sometimes it was the artists themselves (let us just recall Vassily Kandinsky's first reactions to Cubism.)

Možda se za današnju umetnost može reći da je izgubila duhovnu, a da je poprimila „adrenalinsku“ suštinu.

UMETNIK

Zanimanje umetnika je ono koje je u vreme krize egzistencijalno najviše ugroženo. Pitanje je kako treba da reaguje umetnik u takvim okolnostima, razapet između teškog preživljavanja i unutrašnje potrebe za umetničkim stvaranjem. Odgovori su različiti, zavisno od slučaja do slučaja.

PUBLIKA

Koja publika prati umetnost? Da li je to ona koja plaća u turističkom paket-aranžmanu i obilazak nekog muzeja, kao što su Luvr ili Tejt? Dobar deo takve publike ne pogleda izložbu u svom najbližem okruženju, koja je najčešće besplatna. Da li mi, u našoj zemlji, nemamo šta da pokažemo? Moguće je i to. Izložbe su kod nas najčešće posećene samo prilikom otvaranja, a kasnije „zaluta“ tek pokojna osoba.

Zašto insistiram na publici? Ne samo zato što je umetnost namenjena njoj, ona je poslednji stupanj stvaralaštva i verifikator dela. Zašto danas publika dolazi, ili ne dolazi, da pogleda izložbe?

Of today's art, perhaps it could be said that it has lost its spiritual essence and adopted an "adrenaline" one.

THE ARTIST

The artist's livelihood is the one that is in most danger in times of crisis. The question is how he or she should react in these circumstances, torn between trying to survive and the inner need to create. The answers vary from case to case.

THE PUBLIC

Who is this public that follows art? Is it the tourists whose all-in ticket covers a visit to the Louvre or the Tate? A great number of them do not frequent exhibitions in their immediate vicinity, which are usually free. Don't we have anything to show in this country? It's possible. Visits to exhibitions here are usually confined to openings, after which a rare individual may wander in.

Why am I emphasising the public? Not just because it is for them that art is intended, but they are the last stage of creativity, the verifiers of the work. Why is it that the public comes or does not come to see exhibitions today?

KRITIČKI KONTEKST: MLADA LIKOVNA UMETNOST TEMIŠVARA

Da bi se predstavila mlada likovna umetnost Temišvara naših dana moramo se setiti avangardističke tradicije 60-ih i 70-ih godina prošlog veka, odnosno prvih eksperimentalnih grupa (*111* i *Sigma*) kao nezaobilaznog dela u evociranju tradicije grada. *Grupa 111* osnovana je u Temišvaru 1966-e godine,



kad su se Konstantin Flondor i Štefan Bertalan, profesori i drugovi iz Umetničke gimnazije, sprijateljili sa Romanom Kotošmanom koji se tek vratio iz Pariza. Otkrili su zajednički interes za nova pitanja likovnog izraza, vezanim za nove tehnologije, kibernetiku i bioniku. U svojim tadašnjim delima zanemarili su figurativno slikarstvo i posvetili se eksperimentima sa apstraktnim formama. Posle boravka u Parizu, 1963. godine, Roman Kotošman se vratio u zemlju sa željom da promeni sredstva izražavanja pokrenuvši seriju monohromnih monotypova i realizujući prve konstruktivističke kolaže (*Prostorne interferencije*). *Grupa 111* je osnovana iz želje da se konsoliduju avangardne pozicije i da se izlaže zajedno, i pored činjenice da su članovi grupe zadрžali sopstveni identitet i potpisivali se u sopstveno ime. Studirali su tekstove Klea i Kandinskog, kao i filmske eksperimente Vasarelija i Nikolasa Šefera. Prvi put su zajednički organizovali izložbu 1966. u Temišvaru. Dok je Kotošman proširio svoja istraživanja van okvira platna, ostvarujući projekte iz ambijentalne umetnosti uz upotrebu svetlećih projekcija, Flondor i Bertalan su radili striktno geometrijski polazeći od prirode i realizovali su ritmičke podređenosti ambijenta.

Ileana Pintilie

kustoskinja, likovna kritičarka i teoretičarka umetnosti, profesor na Akademiji umetnosti u Temišvaru

curator, art critic and theoretician, professor at the Academy of Arts in Temisoara

Nacionalno priznanje grupe došlo je sa izložbom iz 1968. godine u Bukureštu, koja je u prvi plan istakla taj likovni pokret iz Temišvara, kojem su, u međuvremenu, prišli i drugi umetnici iz grada. Posle te izložbe grupu su naročito isticali likovni kritičari, koji su predložili da se njeni radovi predstave na jednoj međunarodnoj izložbi, i to na *Konstruktivističkom bijenal* u Nürnbergu 1969. Na taj način trojica umetnika su stekla međunarodno priznanje, otvarajući put da se o njima govori i u sintetičkim radovima na tu temu. Sledeći stari princip, trojica temišvarske umetnika izložila su tri rada: Roman Kotošman je izložio delo *Kvaternar 1*, kinetičku monumentalnu konstrukciju, fabrički urađenu i sa inženjerskim ekspertizama. Konstantin Flondor je zaokupljen optičko-dinamičnim strukturama eksperimentujući sa novim materijalima, kao što je ornament-staklo koje je proizvodilo neočekivane optičke efekte (*Pijuni staklenog kralja*), a Štefan Bertalan je izložio ravne i trodimenzionalne strukture od providne mreže koja je proizvodila optičku vibraciju i virtualni pokret (*Poliformija*). Nakon tog značajnog likovnog momenta *Grupa 111* se razila zbog Kotošmanovog odlaska u inostranstvo.

CRITICAL CONTEXT: RECENT ART IN TEMIȘOARA

In presenting recent developments in the arts in Temișoara, we must cast our minds back to the avant-garde tradition of the sixties and seventies and the first experimental groups – *111* and *Sigma* – both so vital to any evocation of tradition in this city. The *111* Group was founded in Temișoara around 1966, when Constantin Flondor and Stefan Bertalan, professors and companions from the School of Fine Arts, struck up a friendship with Roman Cotoșman, not long returned from Paris. Discovering a shared interest in new ways of expressing themselves via modern technology, cybernetics and bionics, they turned their backs on figurative painting in favour of experimentation with abstract forms. Following a period in Paris, Cotoșman returned to Romania in 1963, intent on changing his mode of expression with a series of monochrome monotypes and his first constructivist collages (*Spatial Interference*). Group *111* was founded with the idea of merging its avant-garde views and holding joint exhibitions, although each member retained his own identity and all signed their works individually. They studied the writings of Klee and Kandinsky and the experiments of Vasarely and Nicolas Schöffer, holding their first joint exhibition in Temișoara in 1966. While Cotoșman went on to expand his research beyond the limits of the screen, mounting projects in atmospheric art with light-stage projections, Flondor and Bertalan worked in strictly geometric fashion, taking their cue from nature and imposing rhythmic order on the environment.

The group was nationally acknowledged in 1968 with an exhibition in Bucharest that front-staged the Temișoara movement, in the meantime augmented by other artists from the city. Critics gave them much prominence and proposed that they should exhibit at an international exhibition – the Nuremberg Constructivist Biennale of 1969. Three artists achieved international recognition and became subjects for discussion in synthetic works on this theme. Roman Cotoșman showed *Quaternar 1*, a large-scale kinetic construction, industrially manufactured and demonstrating engineering expertise; Constantin Flondor was occupied with optical dynamics, experimenting with new materials such as a glass that produced unexpected optical effects (*Peons of the Glass King*); Stefan Bertalan's contributions were flat, three-dimensional structures made of transparent mesh that produced an optic vibration and virtual movement (*Polymorphism*). Following this key artistic event, Group *111* disbanded and Cotoșman moved abroad.

In 1969-70, Flondor and Bertalan revived the group, which came to be known as *Sigma*, and were joined by some young artists, notably Doru Tulcan, who was to remain with the group to the end. Interdisciplinary and based on team work, its defining characteristic was its set programme, which took on mathematics, psychology, cybernetics, bionics and plastic structures. This first stage led to shared arts

Konstantin Flondor i Štefan Bertalan su obnovili, 1969–70. godine, iskustva grupe dolaskom mlađih umetnika, od kojih je najznačajniji Doru Tulkán, koji će do kraja ostati u grupi *Sigma*. Crta koja karakteriše tu novoformiranu grupu je program rada koji se zasniva na timskom radu i interdisciplinarnosti (matematika, psihologija, kibernetika, bionika, plastične strukture). U prvoj fazi realizovani su zajednički likovni projekti, među kojima se ističe *Informacioni toranj*, osmišljen 1970, koji je uklopio i arhitekturu i vajarstvo, dajući informaciju i putem svetla i putem zvuka. Taj projekat je uključio ideje svih članova, ali je od njega, nažalost, ostala samo maketa. Entuzijasti u istraživanju, članovi grupe *Sigma* su realizovali prvu akciju-instalaciju *Strukture na naduvavanje*, koju su predstavili 1974. godine u galeriji „Bastion“ u Temišvaru u okviru Nedelje likovne umetnosti Uneska. Iste godine učestvuju na izložbi *Umetnost i energija* (u bukureštanskoj „Novoj galeriji“), koja je predstavljala novost: uređenje različitih prostornih ambijenata, strukturiranih po autorima. Na toj izložbi Flondor izlaže rezultate svog višegodišnjeg istraživanja o stapanju nekih prizmi u čvor, Bertalan je realizovao ambijent od obojenih traka i niti dobijajući prostornu mrežu, a Doru Tulkán je izložio nekoliko kocki od metalnih šipki sa ustaljenim pokretom kao rezultatom savijanja aluminijumskih heksagona. Poslednji projekat koji su uradila ova trojica autora bila je multimedijalna instalacija iz 1978. godine nazvana *Multivizija*. Više eksperimentalnih filmskih snimanja prikazana su koherentno tako da izraze njihova vizuelna istraživanja iz tog perioda. Dva filma, crno-beli i u boji, bili su projektovani sa dva različita aparata tako da su se presecali. Projekcija je napravljena na više providnih ekrana smeštenih u prostoru u obliku pentagrama, čineći instalaciju.

Vizuelna istraživanja Štefana Bertalana, Konstantina Flondora i Dorua Tulkana kasnije su nastavljena okrenuvši se istraživanju prirode, naročito putem crteža, ali i na druge načine. Za njih, priroda je postala idealan model za razumevanje sveta a ne model za prepisivanje nekih spolašnjih formi. Različitost uočenih formi, u Bertalanovim crtežima biljaka za umetnika su bili stepenici za holističko razumevanje sveta. Taj tip viđenja nagnao ga je da razvije jedan *umetnički proces* prateći razvoje jedne biljke od semena do kraja, kombinujući crtež, dnevnik, fotografiju i predstavljajući na izložbama fotograme tog umetničkog procesa. Shvatanje prirode ili okruženja i za Flondora je bila prilika za neke studije primarnih elemenata – vazduha i zemlje. Nebo, sa pokretljivošću oblaka, i zemlja, sa svojim reljefom, kao model koji je umetnik pravio od brašna, doveli su do nekoliko crteža velikih dimenzija u kojima se ispunjava takvo totalno razumevanje isprepletenosti sveta.

Razvoj mlade likovne umetnosti Temišvara zasniva se, izgleda, na tradiciji grupe *Sigma* i preko umetničkog „nastavka“ koji su ostavili njeni članovi. Zatvoren, bez vidljivog uzdržavanja, crtež je za Sorina Vremea prihvatanje jednog stanja, koje kasnije može biti valorizovano u drugim oblicima, preko instalacija ili videa. Takvo stanje se definiše u okviru nekih tačaka vizuelnog interesovanja, nekih tenzija u oblasti likovne umetnosti, linije ili ravni; u drugim prilikama, stanje izazvano crtežom je latentno, ostaje difuzno, sa velikim potencijalom stvaralaštva, rađajući takozvane *konfuzne crteže*, vredne izvore inspiracije za radove nastale kasnije. Ponekad se njegovi radovi razvijaju prema određenom narativnom nukleusu,

projects, one of the more important being *The Information Tower*, conceived in 1970, a blend of architecture and sculpture, posting information in a show of light and sound. The project was the brainchild of all the members, but unfortunately, all that remains of it now is the initial model. Enthusiastic innovators, *Sigma*'s first public work was an action-installation, *Bloated Structures*, exhibited in 1974 in Timișoar's Bastion Gallery as part of the UNESCO Fine Arts Week. That year, the group's appearance at the "Art and Energy" exhibition at the New Gallery, Bucharest, struck a new note: atmospheric installations configured and built by the artists. At this exhibition, Flondor showed the results of several years' research into the merging of prisms, Bertalan made an atmospheric installation of coloured strips and threads which produced a spatial net and Doru Tulcan introduced several metal rod cubes, the result of bending aluminium hexagons. The last project by the three was a 1978 multimedia installation entitled *Multivision*. Several experimental shots were arranged in coherent order that illustrated their visual discoveries to date. The black/white and colour films were run from two projectors in such a way that they intersected. These were projected onto several transparent screens arranged around the room in the form of a pentagram, composing an installation.

Later, Bertalan, Flondor and Tulcan continued their visual studies by turning to nature, particularly in their drawings, but also in other ways.

For them, nature became the ideal model for comprehending the world, not a model for copying particular external forms. The variation in these forms, as observed in Bertalan's plant drawings, were a stepping stone towards a holistic understanding of the world. Thanks to this new vision, he developed an artistic process that followed the development of a plant from seed to death, combining drawings, diary entries and photography, and exhibiting photograms of the process. For Flondor too, a grasp of nature and the environment provided an opportunity to study the primary elements of earth and air. The sky, with its movement of clouds, the earth with its relief, like the models he made out of flour, led to several large-scale drawings which illustrated this all-encompassing insight into the interconnectedness of the world.

The development of recent art in Timișoara seems to follow on from the tradition of the *Sigma* group, in an artistic continuum handed down by its members. Hermetic, without any visible restraint, for Sorin Vreme, drawing is an acceptance of a state of affairs that may later translate into other forms, such as installations or videos. This state of affairs is defined by certain points of visual interest, certain tensions arising from the choice of lines or planes; in other circumstances, the situation evoked by a drawing is



Sorin Neamtu

inspirisanim iz sopstvene biografije. Utisnuti znakovi na vertikali sa funkcijom orientira sa preciznošću navode preživljene trenutke, životne etape, tako da se određeni crteži mogu iznova raditi i nastaviti posle dužih vremenskih perioda, a njihova narativna nit je često „isprepletena“. Autobiografski karakter nekih crteža, kao što su radovi iz 1992–1993. godine, kada je imao oko 30 godina, razvijen je i umnožen u kasnijem video-radu pod nazivom *Autoportret sa 30 godina*.

U nekim situacijama, za Sorinu Vreme crteži mogu biti izvor vredne inspiracije za razvoj nekih trodimenzionalnih projekata, za instalacije kao što su *Ring* (1992), *Čvor* (1995) ili *Mladost bez starosti i život bez smrti* (1997). Ako su na početku crteži iz kojih su nastale te instalacije bili jednostavnici, kasnije su oni postali kompleksniji, sa haotičnim linijama i čvorovima, predlažući mogućnost jednog imaginarnog sveta, razvijenog iz mašte.



Sorin Vreme

stavljujući samo jednu stranu višestranih istraživanja koje sadrže i neke predmete realizovane i „testirane“ paralelno sa procesom stvaranja. Niz objekata koje Sorin slika počeo je sa stolicom-kičmom pre mnogo godina, delom sa čijim je ambiguitetom autor vizuelno spekulisao. Zaokupljen odnosom između slike i objekta, između direktnе materijalnosti i čiste fikcije na platnu, on ima običaj da napravi realne objekte, najpre jedan tron u minijaturi, čiji ga produženi naslon na halucinantan način pretvara u nešto drugo – na presečenu kičmu udenutru u čvrstom postolju. Od takve upotrebe forme objekta on stiže do upečatljivog viđenja, do novih oblika koji dobijaju sadržinu. To izražava suprotstavljenu funkcionalnost nepotrebnosti objekta samog po sebi. Neizražajni, ti objekti ipak predstavljaju ideju jednog sveta kojim dominira stvaralaštvo.

Proces nastanka nekih radova je spor i zahteva mnogo vraćanja, sakupljanja unutrašnjih stanja i komplikovanih prosedera do konačne kompozicije. Primer toga je serija filmova nazvana *Šlepovi*. Snimljeni na Dunavu, među stenovitim obalama, šlepovi nisu, uopšte uzev, naročito spektakularni. Ali način na koji on promišlja seriju filmova sa tim naslovom modifikuje sasvim običnu percepciju: pokret je toliko usporen da se na trenutak skameni, a pojava i razvoj šlepova na ekranu su vrlo pažljivi kao da pejzaž ne sme da bude uzburkan njihovim prisustvom.

Sorin Neamcu, kao i drugi mlađi umetnici, razvija se u više pravaca slikarstva, pred-

latent and remains diffuse, with huge creative potential, yielding so-called *confused drawings*, valuable sources of inspiration for later works. Sometimes his works follow a narrative nucleus, inspired by his own biography. Signs imprinted onto the vertical, intended to function as visual clues, speak with precision of the lived moment, the life phase, so that certain drawings may be done over again, resumed after lengthy periods, their narrative thread often interlaced. The autobiographical character of some drawings, such as those from 1992-1993 when he was about thirty, was expanded and reproduced in a later video work called *Self-portrait at Thirty*.

For Sorin Vreme, in some situations drawings can provide valuable inspiration for the development of three-dimensional projects, for installations such as *Ring* (1992), *Knot* (1995) or *Youth without Old Age and Life without Death* (1997); if initially the drawings that gave rise to the installations were simpler, later they became more involved, entangled in a chaos of lines, exploring the possibilities of an imaginary world springing out of the imagination.

The emergence of some works can be slow, requiring much going back, the assembling of internal conditions and the completion of complicated procedures before arriving at the final composition. An example of this is the series of films called *Barges*, shot between the rocky banks of the Danube. Barges do not as a rule make spectacular subjects, but the way in which Vreme plots this series of films radically modifies normal perception: movement is slowed to a freeze-frame; the appearance and progress of the barges on screen is very careful, as if the landscape must not be agitated by their presence.

Like other young artists, Sorin Neamtu advances in several directions, painting being only one aspect of his multi-faceted research, which includes items executed and "tested" parallel to the creative process. A number of objects painted by Sorin began many years ago with the spine-chair, a work whose ambiguity the author has fully exploited. Caught up in the relation between picture and object, between direct materiality and pure fiction on the canvas, he tends to make real artefacts, first a miniature throne, whose elongated back changes it in a hallucinatory way into something else: a bisected spine threaded into a firm base. Using the object in this form, he arrives at a striking vision, new shapes which gain in substance, opposing the function of the object's needlessness in itself. Inexpressive, these objects nevertheless represent the idea of a world dominated by a prevailing creativity.

Painting takes account of the actual existence of these objects and sometimes crops up as a technical sketch for their execution. The shapes in their shy simplicity, sometimes envisioned as angles with technical details such as those found on manufacturing plans, lead to minimalism. The brutal simplicity of his vision with its brutal simplicity attracts the attention of the onlooker, confronted with facts freed of all "poetry" or sensitivity. Sometimes painted on untreated wood, they appear as relics of some industrial age, preserving the raw breath of *objets trouvés* that have been exposed to the ravages of time. Rejecting any visual interpretation, appropriating them purely as parts of the world around us, the artist progresses in his research which goes beyond the space reserved only for the visual arts.

Slikarstvo ima u vidu stvarno postojanje takvih objekata i ponekad se pojavljuje kao tehnička skica za njihovu realizaciju. Oblici – sramežljive jednostavnosti – ponekad „viđenih“ i kao uglovi sa tehničkim podacima, kao na planovima za proizvodnju, vode do likovnog minimalizma. Takvim viđenjem, brutalna jednostavnost tih objekata privlači pažnju gledaoca stavlenog pred činjenice oslobođene svake „poezije“ ili osećajnosti. Slikane ponekad na neobrađenom drvetu, pojavljuju se kao relikvije neke industrijske ere, čuvajući sirovi dah nađenih objekata, koje su bile izložene nemilosti vremena. Odbijanjem bilo kakve vizuelne interpretacije, preuzimanjem tih objekata kao čistih delova sveta koji nas okružuje, umetnik napreduje u istraživanju koje prevazilazi prostor namenjen samo vizuelnim umetnostima.

Istraživanja Lilijane Merčoju Popa više liče na one Sorina Neamcua, iako im je polazna tačka različita. Ona svedoči o značaju stvari koje nas okružuju, industrijskih prostora ili proizvedenih objekata, tražeći u njima određenu likovnu senzibilnost koja je stalno privlači. Objekti, slike ili fotografije vezani su međusobno, dodajući duh spremjan da ispituje manje istražena likovna područja.

U novoj seriji slika vidljiv je energični, skoro pokretni zamah iz prethodnih radova, ali paleta je svedena na nežne sive boje naglašene kratkim hromatskim bojama. Taj likovni jezik pokreta je zajednički imenitelj različitih stilskih traženja, onaj koji vodi umetnicu ka „čistoj“ slici, predstavljenu kroz hromatska istraživanja, ali i teksture, površine natopljene bojama ili drugim materijalima koje umeće kao svojevrsne kolaže.

Rezultati različitih likovnih eksperimenata – fotografskih istraživanja, beleški iz prirode – su radovi koji se promeću u koncentrisaniju i ređu materiju čuvajući sveukupnost objekta. Ponekad se objekti iz slike otelovljuju i konturom, dodajući tako veću čvrstinu tim istraživanjima i nemajući nameru da ostanu samo u čisto konceptualnom prostoru. Nezavisno od biranog subjekta, slikarstvo Lilijane Merčoju Popa ostaje prostor čisto vizuelnog istraživanja, u kom umetnica selektivno otvara mogući put kao vremenski vodopad između „grmova“ sveta, poziv na istraživanje koje je podjednako i suštinsko i likovno.

Parafrazirajući diskurzivno-ozbiljnu umetnost, instalacija Saše Livija Stojanovića pod nazivom *Čiviluk* suprotstavlja dva sveta, dve tradicije, koje se pojavljuju kao u „sudaru civilizacija“. Jedan tradicionalni predmet koji ima upotrebnu vrednost postaje mesto susreta nekih arhaičnih predmeta iz ruralnog sveta i sveta novih tehnologija, predstavljenih putem dva mini-monitora. Savremeni jezik tih predmeta stavlen je pod znak pitanja jer slika izražava samo prazninu.

Stasao u Temišvaru, Saša Liviju Stojanović podjednako se bavi i eksperimentalnom muzikom i vizuelnom umetnošću, a dokaz dobrog balansa između te dve umetnosti jeste film sa muzičko-kulinarskog performansa izvedenog u Mastrihtu i nazvanog *Večera*. Spremajući kačamak za publiku, u sofisticiranom tehničkom ambijentu, uz prikazivanje površine na kojoj se kuva i umnožavanjem zvukova koji se tom prilikom proizvode, pomešanih elektronskim miksevima, umetnik je dobio neočekivane efekte sa neverovatno smešnim notama, istovremeno upućujući na jednostavne pokrete – u traženju autentičnog identiteta.

The studies of Liliana Mercioiu Popa are akin to those of Sorin Neamtu, although they set out from a different perspective. They testify to the importance of the things that surround us, of industrial premises or manufactured items, seeking in them a certain painterly sensitivity which continually attracts her. Objects, pictures, photographs are linked to one another, giving an impression of readiness to explore less well-trodden fields of painting.

A new series evinces the visibly energetic, almost motional swing of the previous works, but the palette is reduced to delicate shades of gray accentuated by brief touches of chromatic colour. This language of movement is the common denominator for various stylistic explorations, leading the artist to a “pure” painting, represented by chromatic questing, and texture too, surfaces drenched in colour, or with other materials inset in a type of collage.

The results of artistic experiment - photography, nature notes - are works that transmute into concentration and rare matter, while preserving the universality of the object. Sometimes objects from the painting are embodied by a contour, thus adding muscle to these explorations which have no intention of remaining in the merely conceptual. Whatever subject she chooses, Mercioiu Popa's painting remains an area of purely visual research in which the artist selectively opens up a possible path, like a cataract of time between the “bushes” of the world, a call to explore which is at once fundamental and artistic.

Paraphrasing discursive, serious art, Sasha-Liviu Stojanovici's installation *Hat Stand* opposes two worlds and two traditions, as in a clash of civilisations. On two miniature monitors, a useful household item becomes the place where archaic articles from a rural setting encounter the world of new technology. The modern language of these items is doubtful, as the picture expresses a mere void.

Growing up in Timișoara, Sasha-Liviu Stojanovici's interests are divided equally between experimental music and visual art. Evidence of the balance between the two is a film of a musical-culinary performance presented in Maastricht, called *Supper*. Making porridge for the audience in a technical setting of some sophistication, showing the cooking surfaces and multiplying sounds such as the buzz of an



Bogdan Rata

Perece postavljene svuda po sali – na podu, na postamentima, kukuruzni hleb, TV ekran „ugrađen“ u „seljački“ hleb (sećanje na eksperimente neodade koje je pravio Nam Jun Paik), čokanjčići sa rakijom vezani s pažnjom za kaput s namerom da budu aluzija na novo društveno spremanje hrane, jedan umetnički koncept koji je namenjen da istakne stav o životu individualca ili društva – proživljen kao umetnički događaj.

Izuzetno procenjujući prostor izložbe, u koji je stavio instalacije ili *ready-made* objekte, stvorio je ambijent koji je naterao publiku da analizira i razume skrivena značenja u unutrašnjosti tih hibridnih konstrukcija – pomešanost arhaičnih objekata sa *new media* (čiviluk natrpan starim stvarima – peškir sa likom Sv. Georgija u borbi sa aždahom, pored mini TV monitora sa slikama sa običnih stanica itd.).

Saša Liviju Stojanović nije zainteresovan jedino za antropološko-umetnički aspekt prihvatanja nekih iskustava bližih arhaičnom životu već i za komentare sa političkim konotacijama, ukratko i jednostavno prizivajući istorijsku prošlost (osiromašenje seljaka za vreme komunizma, spasavanje jednog dela rumunskog društva uz pomoć „tehnika za preživljavanje“ u nepovoljnim istorijskim i političkim uslovima). Sablasno prisustvo komada sasušenog kukuruznog hleba i na njemu komunistička medalja „za zasluge“ jasno govori o nekim događajima iz naše bliske prošlosti, uključujući kolektivizaciju poljoprivrednih dobara.

Bogdan Raca je veran tradicionalnim načinima i umetničkim tehnikama kao što su modeliranje, livenje, finalizacija glodanjem, ali u isto vreme je intuitivno koristio neke nove materijale – sintetske smole i industrijske pigmente velikog hromatskog intenziteta i potpuno neprirodne, koji su imali zadatak da izazivaju šokantan i jak efekat, pukotinu između privida jednog poznatog kosmosa i otuđenja kroz nešto veštačko. U isto vreme, žive i vrišteće boje odgovor su na savremenost, na komercijalne proizvode i tu su kao kontrast spram duboke i autentične dimenzije koju poseduje telo.

Za umetnika telo je suštinska tema, opšti reper, čist, izazivački, ali koji odgovara i interesu publike za taj subjekat. Njegovi vajarski projekti kao prethodnicu imaju crteže- studije velikih dimenzija, koji predstavljaju delove tela, koje analizira, primećujući njihova mesta i gestove. Crtajući samo ruke, noge ili trupove, on selekcijom traži ekspresivnost koju će kasnije upotrebiti u „scenskim“ konstrukcijama. Bogdan ima običaj da stvara sintezu anatomskega predstavljanja, koncentrišući poruku, svedenu na minimum, i način na koji ona može biti shvaćena na površini vajarskog dela. Problematizacija tela, iznenađujućim deformacijama koje dovode do nepovratnih metamorfoza, postao je njegov privatni način da se udene u savremenu umetnost. Suprotstavljajući savremenu uznemirenost prema telu u stalnoj transformaciji, umetnik obično bira jedan značajan detalj koji ili preuvećava ili ga kombinuje sa različitim spojenim fragmentima, čuvajući snažan hibridni karakter. Žonglirajući sa proporcijama tela – ponekad predimenzioniranim, ponekad umanjenim – on obara inicijalni smer viđenja, drugačije usmeravajući birani fragment,

electric mixer, the artist achieved unexpected effects with extremely funny moments, while using simple movements in pursuit of an authentic identity.

Pretzels were scattered around the hall - on the floor and the plinths – corn bread, a TV screen fitted into a home-baked “rustic” loaf recalled Nam June Paik’s neo-dadaist experiments, mini schnapps bottles carefully tied to a coat intended as an allusion to the new trend of meal preparation as social activity, an artistic concept intended to point up attitudes to individual life or life in society, all to be experienced as an artistic event.

Cleverly making use of the opportunities offered by the space available, he set up installations or ready-made objects, creating an atmosphere that encouraged the audience to analyse the hidden meaning at the heart of these hybrid constructions: a mixture of archaic items with new media (a hat stand laden with old things, a towel with an image of St. George fighting the dragon beside a mini TV monitor showing pictures from the usual stations and so on).

Sasha Liviu-Stoianovici is not only interested in the anthropological-artistic aspect of experiences of archaic life, but also in politically-shaded comment, simply and pithily invoking the past (poverty-stricken peasants under communism, how some members of Romanian society managed to stay alive with the help of “survival techniques” under trying circumstances). The macabre presence of a piece of dessicated corn bread bearing a communist medal “for merit” is a clear reminder of certain events from our recent past such as the collectivisation of agriculture.

Loyal to traditional ways and art techniques such as modelling, moulding, machine-finishing, Bogdan Rata also made intuitive use of new materials: synthetic resins and industrial pigments of a high chromatic intensity, very unnatural and used for shock effect, the only crack between the semblance of a familiar universe and alienation through the artificial. The bright, screaming colours are at the same time a response to modernity, to commercial products and are there as a contrast to the profound and authentic dimensions of the body.

For this artist, the body is the essential subject, the general landmark, pure, challenging but which corresponds to the public's interest in it. His sculpting projects are preceded by large-dimension, drawn studies of parts of the body that analyse their place and gestures. By electing to draw just hands, feet or torsos, he strives for an expressiveness which he will later use in “staged” constructions. Rata tends to synthesise his representations of the anatomy, concentrating the message and the way in which it can be understood on the surface of the sculpture, reduced to a minimum. He raises questions about the body by deforming it. The resulting metamorphosis has become his private method of finding his way into contemporary art. Contesting the modern unease with the body in a continual state of transformation, Rata usually chooses a significant detail which he either exaggerates or combines with various fragments, achieving a strikingly hybrid character. Juggling with physical proportions – sometimes exag-

koji dobija novo značenje, pretvarajući ga u novu konstrukciju, ponekad smešnu, ponekad kao mutaciju, jednu bolnu transformaciju koja izaziva saučešće.

Ti delovi tela ili gestovi pojedinih fragmenata tela prenose jednu negovornu semiotiku, prenose stanje nelagodnosti u okviru tih ljudskih relikvija. Metamorfoza tih fragmenata u nešto drugo, dodeljivanjem drugih funkcija, pozajmljenim, nalazi se u seriji skulptura koja predstavlja noge, pretvorene u ruke, preuzimajući njihovu ulogu da nešto nose, da prave poznate gestove, odvojene iz rituala blagoslovenja i molitve. Ponekad je funkcija ruke da nešto nosi dodata nozi, pri čemu stopala zamenjuju dlanove koji drže grumen zemlje. Noge i ruke su određeni delovi ljudskog tela i zato im se umetnik stalno vraća u svojim delima. Ruke prave određene gestove i suštinski prenose govor tela, a noge metaforički predstavljaju, u njegovom viđenju, vezu sa zemljom, sa svetom koji nas okružuje.

Metamorfoza tela kroz bezbrojne kombinacije, proizašle iz umetnikove imaginacije koja proizvodi nove mogućnosti, iznenadne mutacije različitih delova tela, dovele su do realizacije skulpture *Hand Gan*, jedne noge sa dugačkim prstima, kao na rukama, koja oponaša preteći gest koji proizilazi iz transformacije u vatreno oružje. Projekat je postao monumentalna skulptura, na početku postavljena na goli postament sa kojeg je 1990. godine bila sklonjena Lenjinova statua, a posle, 2012, postavljena je ispred Muzeja savremene umetnosti u Bukureštu. Umetnik svedoči da je taj trenutak metafora ljudske agresivnosti i „novog čoveka“ vezan za psihičke mutacije na individualnom nivou, ali i društva u celini.

Telo skljono oštećenjima, promenama, patnji ili propadanju, i koje zna svoje granice, dovodi do pomisli o uslovjenosti čoveka, o njegovom nežnom stanju; fizička bol, patnja i čak smrt, upisane u naš genetski kod, dovode do zastrašujućeg saznanja kada je telo viđeno kao „zatvor“ za dušu. Granica između života i smrti i „njihovo prihvatanje kao medijā u koje se telo i duša presele“ (kao što kaže umetnik) čine stalne teme jednog uz nemirujućeg dela koje krasи elokventnost ekspresije. *Pokušaj da se sačuva život* prikazuje jedno telо puno patnji, iznurenog i mučeno, u kojem voda, koja se skuplja u rupama koje prikazuju propadanje, sugerise nežni život koji još treperi ili koji je upravo napustio telо.

Kroz svoje radove umetnik sanja individualnu ljudsku sudbinu, koju obeležavaju tematika, frustriranosti, sumnje – osećanja koja kao da izazivaju fizičke promene, kao i kolektivnu sudbinu, stanje društva u kojem je pojedinac samo anonimni element, ali sabiranjem i hibridizacijom šalje poruku opшteg nemira ili krize. Raščlanjena tela, upotreba jezika koji se čini hiperrealističan, načini su koje autor upotrebljava na vizuelnom planu, manipuliše gledaocem i vodi ga ka percepciji preterane osećajnosti, jer raščetvorenog ili tela u patnji postaju simptom kolektivnog zla, izraz kolektivne osećajnosti.

Ovaj osrvт na neke temišvarske ateljee nije konačan sud, pre je to poziv za detaljnije gledanje i istraživanje navedenih radova.

* Prezentacija održana u Zavodu za kulturu Vojvodine, Novi Sad. 24. januar 2014. godine

gerating, sometimes reducing them – he diverts our initial path of vision, turning the selected fragment in a different direction, giving it new meaning, transforming it into a novel construction, sometimes funny, sometimes like a mutation, a painful transformation that excites our sympathies.

The body parts, or its individual fragments, emit an unspeaking semiotic, a state of unease of these human relics. Giving them other – borrowed – functions generates a series of sculptures where feet turn into hands, taking on their role of carrying things, of making familiar, ritual gestures, raised in blessing or prayer. Sometimes the carrying function of the hand is given to the foot, the two feet replacing the palms of the hands holding a clod of earth. The hands sketch certain gestures, conveying body-language in the most vital way, while he sees the feet as a metaphor connecting us to the earth and the world around us.

The metamorphosis of the body through countless combinations springing from the artist's imagination, generating new possibilities with startling mutations of various parts, led to the *Hand Gun* sculptures: a foot with long, finger-like toes, mimicking a threatening gesture which transmutes into a fire-arm. This project turned into a monumental sculpture, initially set on the empty plinth from which Lenin's statue was removed in 1990; in 2012 it was moved to the pavement in front of the Museum of Contemporary Art in Bucharest. The artist sees it as a metaphor for human aggression and "the new man", linked to the mental mutation of both the individual and society as a whole.

The body, prey to injury, alteration, suffering and decay and aware of its own limitations, invites reflection on man's dependence, his vulnerability; the physical pain, suffering and death written into our genetic code, lead to a grim discovery where the body is seen as the prison of the soul. The line between life and death, "their acceptance as media into which body and soul move" (as the artist says), are a leitmotif of a disturbing *oeuvre*, eloquent in expression. *An Attempt to Stay Alive* shows a body wracked with suffering, tortured and exhausted, the water collected in holes that depict decay suggests the last flicker of tenuous life, or life that has just left the body.

In his works, the artist dreams of individual human destiny, its frustrations and doubts – feelings that seem to evoke a state of physical change; but these are also dreams of the collective destiny, the state of society where the individual is a mere, anonymous component; the message is one of general turbulence or crisis. Bodily dismemberment and hyper-realism are the visual means by which the artist manipulates the viewer, leading him to an over-sensitive state of perception; the mutilated or suffering body becomes a symptom of collective evil, the expression of a collective sensibility.

This appraisal of works emanating from some of the artistic studios of Timișoara is not a definitive one, but rather an invitation to a more detailed examination and exploration of their worth.

* Presentation given at the Institute for Culture of Vojvodina, Novi Sad. 24th january 2014

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