

EVALUATING AND FORMATIVE GOALS OF ART CRITICISM IN RECENT (DE)TERRITORIALIZED CONTEXTS

SKOPJE – Two days seminar

Organised by the International Association of Art Critics (AICA) Paris, and AICA Macedonia/ FYROM with the support of UNESCO, with additional support from Swiss Cultural Programme Macedonia and European Cultural Foundation.

29 & 29 May 2009

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THE INTERNALISATION OF THE DISCOURSE OF INSTITUTIONAL CRITIQUE AND THE 'UNHAPPY CONSCIOUSNESS'

Suzana Milevska

The vicious cycle of institutional critique stems from its dichotomous nature. It inevitably entails a certain position that exists outside or beyond any institution, in contrast to the institutional position that is being criticised. It implies a severe critique of powerful, supposedly autocratic, institutions and their systems of governance, in contrast to the preferred form of weak, supposedly democratic, institutions that, by all accounts, are expected to deal with art and cultural production in a more creative and liberal way. I want to argue that, because of this dichotomy, any discourse reliant on institutional critique, paradoxically, becomes dangerously internalised, in a similar way to the biopower and biopolitics that are its initial targets.¹

I am interested in tackling the set of questions that derives from such an intrinsically dichotomous split within institutional critique, which results in an 'unhappy consciousness'. Hegel called this kind of divided mode of consciousness the 'unhappy consciousness', because the self is in conflict with itself when there is no unity between self and other.² On the one hand, this 'unhappy consciousness' within institutional critique is the institutional consciousness that is conscious of itself, as being divided internally and as not being able to reconcile itself with its 'other' – the institutional system. On the other, the undivided consciousness would be a dual self-consciousness which brings unity to the self and the 'other'. In this text I want to argue that what stands behind the 'unhappy consciousness' of the institutional critique is the performative contradiction of contemporary society today that prevents such unity from taking place.

However, the question to be asked here is, what if such a completely independent position of institutional critique (beyond any institution) cannot exist? What if one can utter relevant statements only when there is a certain institutional framework (weak or strong), from which to speak? Does this indicate that the position of any institutional critique is that of a double dialectics, always already simultaneously self-legitimising and self-legitimated and, therefore, strong but questionable, in implying the oppositional shortcomings, exactly because of its reliance on self-legitimated strength?

The main paradox of institutional critique is that at first sight it seems as though it is a logical impossibility, on account of this internal *performative contradiction* – meaning that it is always *already* impossible, a *posited contradiction* within itself, in which the interlocutors are entrapped, since they deny the possibility of communication and understanding.³ However, even if this were so, it would be relevant to discuss the potentialities for other possible directions in transitional institutional critique in the context of the countries of South-East Europe.

Let me give you the good news now: what could demonstrate more clearly that institutional critique is still possible and very much alive than the fact that individuals and communities are still willing to step aside from society, pass judgment on it, and break free from the bonds of ideology? By questioning and pursuing truth, these 'rebels' seek to achieve a kind of institutional emancipation.

Seen from this perspective, if we try, despite all the contradictions, to re-establish the need for institutional critique in a post-socialist context, we see that the question of the standpoint that any such institutional critique might adopt becomes crucial and much more relevant, in fact, than the choice of any professional standpoint. Because of the crisis of legitimation and state authority

¹ Hardt, Michael and Antonio Negri, *Empire*, London: Harvard University Press, 23-27.

² Hegel, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979, 119-139.

³ Habermas, Jürgen, 'Discourse Ethics: Notes on a Program of Philosophical Justification', in Habermas, *Moral Consciousness and Communicative Action*, trans. C. Lenhardt and S.W. Nicholsen (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1990), 89.

in this transitional period, institutional critique has become possible in more general and political terms, and not only in terms of art or cultural institutions. Therefore, it has become increasingly significant to determine whether institutional critique should be understood as:

- a singular position of an artist, art critic or cultural producer
- a position of a self-organised community of art and culture producers
- a neo-liberal governmental position
- a conservative (nationalist) critique, or
- a non-governmental – democratic civil society organisation.

It is important to emphasise that, even though each of the above-mentioned positions entails a different starting point, some of the objectives of these different positions overlap and intertwine with each other. Institutional critique can only have a relevant impact on society as a whole, if the agents of institutional critique are aware that their questions are formulated from a certain institutional platform.

However, a more complex approach would suggest that the different strands of institutional critique can be brought together under a common denominator. Self-consciousness embodies a certain intrinsic 'otherness' within itself, in that the self is conscious of what is other than itself. Self-consciousness on the part of institutional critique is contradictory, because it is conscious of both sameness and otherness. The contradictions of governmentality, self-governance and self-organisation, to name but a few examples. The fundamental challenge of each form of government is how to govern, but not too much, or, as Michel Foucault famously put it: 'The suspicion that one always risks governing too much is inhabited by the question: Why, in fact one must govern?...In other words, what makes it necessary for there to be a government, and what ends should it pursue with regard to society in order to justify its existence?'⁴ The 'art of government', for Foucault, is actually something that does not entail any universalised distinction between different governing systems. 'Instead of making the distinction between state and civil society into a historical universal that allows us to examine all the concrete systems, we can try to see it as a form of schematization characteristic of a particular technology of government.'⁵

According to Gerald Raunig, 'not only resistive individuals, but also progressive institutions and civil society NGOs operate on the same plane of governmentality.'⁶ The main attribute of *parrhesia* ('frankness', 'freedom of speech') is not the possession of truth, which is made public in a certain situation, but the taking of a risk, the 'fact that a speaker says something dangerous - something other than what the majority believes.'⁷ Raunig actually refers to Foucault's statement that distinguishes between the 'classical Greek conception of *parrhesia*' – constituted by those who dare 'to tell the truth to *other people*' - and a new truth game, which entails being 'courageous enough to disclose the truth about *oneself*.'⁸

The activity of speaking the truth is much more important than setting up truth in opposition to a lie, or to something 'false'.

Criticism, and especially institutional critique, is not limited to denouncing abuses, or to withdrawing into a more or less radical form of self-questioning. In the field of the visual arts, this means that neither the belligerent strategies of institutional critique of the 1970s nor the notion of art as a service to the institution from the 1990s offer any guarantee of the potential for intervening effectively in the governmentality of the present.⁹

According to Raunig, a productive game emerges from the relationship between activists and the institution, so that social criticism and institutional critique permeate the interwoven strands of forms of political and personal *parrhesia*. It is only by linking the two techniques of *parrhesia* that one-sided instrumentalisation can be avoided, the institutional machine is saved from

⁴ Foucault, Michael, *Ethics*, Essential Works of Foucault 1954-1984, Editor: Paul Rabinow, New York: The New Press, 1997, 74-75.

⁵ Foucault 75

⁶ Raunig, Gerald, 'The Double Criticism of *parrhesia*: Answering the Question 'What is a Progressive (Art) Institution?''', 18 September 2007 <http://eipcp.net/transversal/0504/raunig/en/>.

⁷ Raunig, 'The Double Criticism'

⁸ Michel Foucault, *Diskurs und Wahrheit*, Berlin 1996, p.14 (cf. discussion of *parrhesia* in English: <http://foucault.info/documents/parrhesia/>, 150, quoted from Raunig, 'The Double Criticism of *parrhesia*').

⁹ Raunig, 'The Double Criticism'

closing itself off, and the dynamic exchange between movement and institution can be maintained.

In addition to Raunig's proposal for applying *parrhesia* as a double strategy (as an attempt to engage in a process of refutation and self-questioning), I would suggest that dialogical critique offers a more appropriate model of institutional critique, in terms of a positive agency of action. I suggest that a kind of deconstruction of the one-way critique inherited from the models of institutional critique from the 1970s and 1990s would engender a collaborative policy that could engage both state and independent institutions in the same critical projects, and favour the development of institutional awareness, though promoting a critical, yet constructive form of institutional activity.

Instead of assuming that an institution has internalised power through the instruments of governance only because it is an institution with a higher position in the hierarchy, perhaps it would be more constructive to remember that the institutions of power are all around us, and that biopolitics reaches much further than only within its own institution. Acknowledging this complex entanglement of power, its institutions, and its critique, could bring us closer to a sober, more refined, critical position that would be responsive to today's forms of institutional critique. Different institutions could then contribute, both by embracing a self-critical approach and by critiquing each others' practices.

Institutional Critique, as the Internalisation of Power and Politics

The internalisation of institutional critique is a two way street :

On the one hand, institutions very quickly internalise the critique aimed at them, by appropriating the same vocabulary as their critics and superficially incorporating the new structures. Institutions criticised in this way are strengthened in the process, even if they continue to work under the same rules as before: an institution constructs itself only after being interpellated by the right kind of critical opposition !

On the other hand, critics themselves internalise institutional power, by practising the same forms of self-criticism time and time again, to the point where this starts to govern their own activities. By continuing to use the same methods, under the pretext of receiving protection from more powerful institutions, they thus become the gate-keepers and agents of a form of negation that itself amounts to the exercise of power, of a different kind.

In particular, the shift in institutional critique can best be discussed, by taking into consideration the shift in the role of contemporary art museums in South-East Europe and the challenge to their monopolistic position on the regional art scene, posed both by individuals and by the emergence of independently run, non-governmental, art spaces. These changes have mainly occurred, because of the new critical curatorial practices that started as far back as the early 1990s and have been carefully nurtured by small, but very active, art institutions.

It is important to stress the fact that, in the beginning, most of these new initiatives - especially, the appearance of the Soros Contemporary Art Centers and their offshoots - were viewed as urgently needed means of balancing, contesting, and even confronting, the monopoly of the powerful state-governed and -supported art institutions. Their important political agenda was to stand up to communist ideology, in favour of an 'Open Society' purportedly by promoting the new art media.¹⁰ However, there were instances where an ambiguous kind of unwritten agreement was reached between the *centre* and *margin*, and between the *mainstream* and *alternative*.. Therefore, the internalisation of institutional critique on the part of these new institutional models for almost a decade threatened to become an even more centralised monopoly of power, at least in cultural environments where the state institutions collaborated closely with their critical counterparts.

¹⁰ George Soros, the main founder of the *Open Society Foundations* that started to emerge throughout Eastern Europe in the early 90s and of their offshoots, such as the Soros Centers for Contemporary Art, is a controversial figure, with an overtly problematic philanthropic image. Beside the intellectual aura owing to Soros' friendship and obsession with the philosopher, Karl Popper, there are many financial scandals that cast doubt on his philanthropic motives. Interestingly enough, his name appeared in one of Mark Lombardi's charts of the flow of capital: Mark Lombardi, *George W. Bush, Harken Energy, and Jackson Stephens*, ca. 1979-90 (5th version).

The most interesting example of this kind of merging of state power with oppositional institutional critique was the collaboration between the Soros Contemporary Art Center Skopje and the Skopje Museum of Contemporary Art that started with the very beginning of the activities of the SCCA-Skopje, in 1994. At that time the Museum of Contemporary Art was at its undisputed acme, as the lead institution for the presentation of international contemporary art in Skopje, and the only institution professionally capable of representing Macedonian contemporary art abroad.

The Museum of Contemporary Art was established in 1964, as the outcome of a political decision, embodied an Act of the Skopje City Assembly, to host the collection of art works that hundreds of international artists had donated to the city immediately after the catastrophic earthquake of 1963. The new museum, which opened in 1970, was one of very few museums of contemporary art in the region and could thus be regarded as a cultural institution of exceptional importance. The plans for the building were themselves a gift to the city by the Polish architects J. Mokrzyński, E. Wierzbicki and W. Klyzewski and envisaged a total area of 5000 square metres, with over 3500 square metres of exhibition space, plus storage space, cinema, archives, library and all the other necessary concomitants.¹¹ However, the museum's administration always had a struggle to manage its assets and the building was completely run down by 1994, as a result of the poor decision the management had taken, to redirect the funds assigned to it for acquisitions and structural maintenance into programme activities. (Recent examples of this tendency have included the decisions to use maintenance funds to cover the expenses of an exhibition in Japan, in 2000, and to use rental income from a wedding reception at the museum in 1998 to pay for the cost of a museum café in 1998, instead of repairing the roof). The decision not to spend funds on structural repairs to the roof, in particular, has led to the catastrophic situation in which the entire collection has had to be removed from public display for the last fifteen years or so, and more and more of the museum's important potential long-term partners, such as international foundations and other museums, have abandoned any thought of collaboration, because of the risk of showing any valuable, or sizeable, exhibitions under such conditions.¹² The first serious attempt to reconstruct the building was started only recently, with the support from the Italian Government, but a question mark hangs over the condition of the works that have been held in storage under appalling conditions for more than fifteen years¹³

This policy of self-promotion on the part of the museum's curatorial team, and of support for only a handful of favoured artists, has gradually resulted in the building, and the institution itself, becoming completely marginalised within society and by the general public. Attempts by independent artists and critics to protest, in the name of democracy, against this centralised abuse of power have been isolated and doomed from the outset. Indeed, any outsider attempting to criticise the institution has risked a form of ostracisation that is virtually tantamount to committing professional suicide. On the one hand, artists and critics who voice any kind of criticism are ruled out from participation in any creative initiatives. On the other hand, criticality turns into a vicious cycle, so that those expressing critical views have been prevented from taking any initiatives of their own through the combined opposition of institutional critique and institutional power.¹⁴

¹¹ Today the stock of donated works consists of around 4600 art works by several hundred artists in various media, but acquisitions are rare and incidental. The works by internationally well-known artists are of special importance, but most of the works that are now in the museum depot either belong to early modernism (Jan Štursa, Václav Spála, Emil Filla, František Muzika, Jindřich Štyrský, Vojtěch Preissig) or date from 1950s -1970s: Fernand Léger, André Masson, Pablo Picasso, Hans Hartung, Victor Vasarely, Alexander Calder, Pierre Soulages, Henryk Stażewski, Alberto Burri, Christo, Enrico Baj, Robert Jacobsen, Etienne Hajdu, Zoltan Kemeny, Robert Adams, Emilio Vedova, Antoni Clavé, Georg Baselitz.

¹² There is a series from 2004 of ten digital photographs, 'Legend About the "legen"' (= 'bucket', in Macedonian) that the artist, Sašo Stanjoković, made on the upper floor of the Museum of Contemporary Art. The photographs show the colourful plastic bucket 'installation' that was 'hosted' by the museum for almost fifteen years, instead of the collection (reproduced in *Contemporary*, London, No.70, 2005, 20.) Taking into account the fact that floods of dirty 'rivers' are frequent sights in the museum after each rainy day, some projects exhibited in the museum (such as *Mozart's Boat* by Antoni Maznevski, consisting of a 6.5 m wooden boat), sounded like a bad joke.

¹³ The fact that the director newly appointed in 2008 comes from the field of theatre management does not inspire much confidence in the quality of future programming, however

¹⁴ From 10 September to 16 October 1990, a three-months' local debate was conducted in Skopje between the author of this text and the museum's curator, Viktorija Vasev-Dimeska. The controversy was triggered by a review written on the occasion of the Second Youth Biennial, curated by Vasev-Dimeska at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Skopje. See Suzana Milevska, 'The Perfectionism of the

The best example of this perverse state of affairs is provided by my earlier comment, to the effect that the Soros Center for Contemporary Art Skopje had initially been promoted as a kind of alternative to the Museum of Contemporary Art. What actually happened was that, when the SCCA-Skopje joined forces with Contemporary Art in the early 90s, it brought even more power to the museum. Of course, there would have been nothing wrong with this, if it had not directly affected the wider art scene in Macedonia. Mainly because of the monopoly of power in the display of contemporary art, hardly any criticism has been directed at to the problematic artistic and cultural policies that are being pursued by the museum. It has even become impossible for artists who are not interested in the issues that dominate the MOCA/SCCA's agenda of large-scale group exhibitions and electronic arts to exhibit in the framework of these institutions.

Today many things have changed. The weakening of the SCCA-Skopje, due to the loss of support from its main benefactor, and the right-wing nationalistic cultural policy of the governing coalition that places greater emphasis on national heritage and archaeology, and less on contemporary art, have led to a general deterioration of the situation and a decline in these institutions' once untouchable monopoly. Paradoxically, this worsening situation in the museum has opened up the possibility of new kinds of institutional, or non-institutional, practices.

Some recent public-private collaborations are especially relevant here. Independent initiatives, such as the press to exit project space in Skopje and the Tocka Cultural Centre, in Skopje, function in a similar way to better known and longer established alternative spaces, such as Kuda, in Novi Sad, P74 in Ljubljana, WHW in Zagreb, and Remont in Belgrade. These all function in such a way as largely to overcome the performative contradiction in institutional critique and its *unhappy consciousness*, and succeed in producing art projects that deal with institutional critique in a more positive, and visionary, way.¹⁵ Instead of critiquing, complaining or nagging, the new generation of artists and *artists*, with the support of many different funding sources and foreign institutions, have become aware that their committed art activities are perhaps the most productive form of institutional critique, and that they may ultimately lead towards a kind of *self-parrhesia*.

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Edited by Henry Meyric Hughes

Adapted from an article commissioned by the Vienna based eicpc - European Institute for Progressive Cultural Policies, edited by Aileen Derieg and first published on: <http://transform.eicpc.net/transversa/0208/milevska/en>.

Obedient- or why the 2 Youth Biennial looks so classical', in *Republika*, 10 September 1990. The text of this review was published in the first independent and privately owned newspaper in Macedonia, *Republika*. It was envisaged as an attempt to problematise the ideology behind the strictly modernist institutional and cultural policy of the Museum of Contemporary Art, known for continuously neglecting and leaving aside many alternative postmodern artistic practices, such as the performances, public painting actions, installation, and concerts of the members of the Macedonian art group, Zero.

¹⁵ The best example is the project 'Oskar Hansen's Museum of Modern Art', by Hristina Ivanoska and Yane Calovski, which looks at the proposal that this Polish architect submitted to the open competition for a Museum of Contemporary Art in Skopje, instigated by the Polish Government in 1966. This proposal did not win the competition, as it was conceived as a radical, visionary experiment, proposing the use of transformative design. With 12 posters of imagined exhibitions, Ivanoska and Calovski simulated an imaginary programme for the museum that was never realised. See press to exit project space, 28 September 2007
http://www.prestoexit.org.mk/LectureAndPresentation/HTML_2007/OlafHansen.html

LESS OF A CULTURAL PATRIMONY - MORE OF AN ACTUALISATION OF PAST PRACTICES OF DISSENT

Branka Ćurčić

How can the usual practices for the protection and conservation of our cultural heritage be transcended? And how can they be used today, as political agents of change? Could specific ways of dealing with this heritage become tools for analysing contemporary cultural creation? Could it be said that the once progressive practices of dissent from the 1960s and 1970s are today being implemented in a quite disturbing way, in the flexible and precarious field of contemporary creation? This text includes analyses of two regional and international projects – ‘The Continuous Art Class’ and ‘Political Practices of (post-) Yugoslav Art’ – both dealing with the cultural and intellectual heritage of former Yugoslavia, by way of creating a space for autobiographical narrative, self positioning, and reinterpretation of the art history of former Yugoslavia. As one of the partner organizations in these projects has written, the aim was to work ‘against the understanding of cultural domain based on the notion of identity, particularly on national identity’, in favour of a ‘shift from the paradigm of art-as-representation to art-as-political practice’, and an attempt to use ‘the discursive, analytical, and explicative possibilities of contemporary art’, to re-examine myriad old relationships between social activism and aesthetic gesture, and open up new ones.

Political Practices of (post-) Yugoslav Art

‘Political Practices of (post-) Yugoslav Art’ is conceived as a long-term project in which four independent cultural organisations, WHW (Zagreb), kuda.org (Novi Sad), SCCA/pro.ba (Sarajevo) and Prelom Kolektiv (Belgrade), collaborate on multidisciplinary research, focusing on relationships between visual arts, cinema and intellectual production, and socio-political practices in the (post-) Yugoslav cultural space. So far, numerous strands of the projects have been developed: ‘TV Gallery’ exhibition; the ‘Who is Goran Đorđević?’ project; an exhibition about the Croatian modernist sculptor, Vojin Bakić; the exhibition on ‘The Case of the Student Cultural Center Belgrade in the 1970s; research, a publication and a DVD about the artistic work of Želimir Žilnik, etc. As stated in the project outline: ‘With this research, the aim is to study critically the heritage of cultural, artistic and intellectual projects of former Yugoslavia, so as to draw attention to some of its positive and valuable aspects. Instead of practising the neo-liberal, multiculturalist politics of a kind of folkloristic ‘getting to know the Other(s)’ and learning to live with the ‘Other’ in a form of peaceful coexistence, which obviously goes hand-in-hand with the still prevailing nationalism and chauvinism, this project focuses on the possibilities of reviving the creative and progressive experiences that existed on the cultural, artistic and intellectual scene in former Yugoslavia. Therefore, this research into the historical and political, artistic and cultural processes in former Yugoslavia and how these are perceived and utilised nowadays represents an effort to find a way out of the double bind of discourses about global neo-liberalism and local ethno-nationalism, and to prepare the way for a new, and productive, future of regional cooperation. The usual post-Socialist discourse unambiguously affirms the dominant neo-liberal views on socialist Yugoslav modernism, as unilaterally totalitarian and authoritarian. Also, local nationalist and chauvinist discourses present Yugoslav socialist modernism as a mere tool of Communist dictatorship and Tito’s tyranny. This is the very point of convergence between post-socialist, neo-liberal and nationalist discourses.’

'The Continuous Arts Class, Novi Sad Neo Avant-garde of the 1960s and 1970s'

The exhibition, 'The Continuous Arts Class', is conceived in order to give contextual insight into progressive and *engagé* art and activist practices in Novi Sad during the 1960s and 1970s and, in the process, to reveal something of the complex political and economic environment that determined these practices, to a great extent. The exhibition comprises a new treatment and, therefore, a contextual reading of the documentation of neo avant-garde practices: of actions, interventions, exhibitions, manifestos and performances, including the relationship of those practices to the main economic, cultural and political upheavals in former Yugoslavia, such as the economic and cultural reforms dating from 1965, the youth and student movements of 1968, and the occupation of Czechoslovakia, as well as their effect on the restructuring of social and political life in Yugoslavia at the beginning of 1970s. In relation to the main context, this exhibition also offers an analysis of the relationship of the so-called 'New Art Practices' to the cultural establishment and dominant discourse of Socialist Realism, and to official cultural institutions (student magazines and the Youth Tribune) that practised models of self-organised networking (with the protagonists of the Zagreb, Ljubljana and Belgrade scenes) and ongoing discussions about the autonomy of art, Marxism, progressive political and art theories, and alternative ways of organising social and political life, including an attempt to profile the position of the non-dogmatic 'Left' in former Yugoslav society.

The Novi Sad neo avant-garde of the 1960s and 1970s has been quite marginalised in local and international art historical discourse. The realisation of 'The Continuous Art Class' project indicates a common belief that it is possible to re-interpret, and to offer a new reading of the importance those practices had, less in terms of a new historicisation, than of analysing and updating the specificities of social engagement and the processual and local character of those practices, in relation to *a political genealogy of contemporary art practices*. Three stages may be singled out in this project:

The Neo Avant-Garde in Relation to the Youth Tribune, as an Official Cultural Institution

The Youth Tribune in Novi Sad was created in the atmosphere of the so-called modest democratisation of Yugoslavia, after Tito's break with Informbiro and its 'pro-Western' stance (in the sense in which some sources thought they detected a wave of democratisation of the country, following Tito's encounter with Churchill in London, in 1953). The Youth Tribune was set up in 1954, as the Youth Department of the People's University, which had been established the same year. In terms of the development of culture in Yugoslav socialist society, the political decision to create a Youth Tribune marked a shift from dogmatic socialism to a more moderate form of modernism. This was neither the outcome of an open clash, in the way in which it has usually been represented, nor as a step in the direction of reinstating modernity, in direct line with the pre-War 'bourgeois' culture. This moderate liberalisation of the country produced a certain sense of deliverance, which fluctuated over time. The liberalisation of the country was strengthened by the economic reforms of 1965 and, at the very end of the 1960s, the new generation of the so-called 'baby boom' (i.e. the generation that had been born after 1945), who were inspired by the revolutionary atmosphere of 1968, and started radically to question the very foundations of the Yugoslav socialist self-management society.

The end of the 1960s and the beginning of the 1970s at Novi Sad's Youth Tribune signalled the involvement of a revolutionary and critical 'spirit' into the work of one official youth and cultural institution, which then developed into a sort of autonomous polygon for experimentation. Heavily influenced by the international youth movements of 1968, which found their counterpart in that of Belgrade, the Youth Tribune stood for the radical demands for democratisation of culture which came from artistic and cultural circles in Novi Sad, and gathered around the Serbian language magazines, *Fields (Polja)* and *New Symposium (Új Symposion, in Hungarian)*, published by the Youth Tribune; and the student magazine, *Index*, and the film company,

Neoplanta. These initiatives were experimental, new leftist and international, and they were linked to similar activities in other cultural centres in former Yugoslavia and the rest of Europe. It is interesting that this kind of involvement was, to a significant extent, enabled by the participation of some of the most interesting artists and intellectuals, who took up positions as editors-in-chief of the Youth Tribune and its different departments. In the period from 1968-71, the editor-in-chief of the Youth Tribune was Judita Šalgo, an important protagonist of Vojvodina's modernist, neo avant-garde literature (J. Šalgo's precursors included the movie director, Želimir Žilnik, as editor-in-chief of the Youth Tribune, in 1961-63 and the translator, Dejan Poznanović, as editor-in-chief of the magazine, Polja, in 1958-62). During 1969-70, most of the protagonists of Novi Sad's neo avant-garde scene collaborated on the student magazine, Index, the official magazine of the Association of Students of Vojvodina, where they published some of their most important works, such as manifestos, visual poetry, documentation of actions and interventions, translations, their own writings, and information about different cultural events. Collaboration with Index magazine and the visibility of their work within it, opened the doors to a three years' involvement with the Youth Tribune, where they were 'employed' as editors of the music, film and public discussions programmes. Although these young artists' involvement in the Youth Tribune only provided them with a limited form of protection, it did enable them to open up the space for diverse experimentation. This also points to the fact that progressive practices were possible under a socialist government, in specific circumstances within official art institutions, and that they were not exclusively confined to the realm of 'secondary publicity' (i.e. activities in 'off', private and intimate spaces). The young artists' practice was denoted by collaborative and group work, various forms of activism and interventions in the artistic and social fields, a critique of the commodity status of works of art, a certain amount of 'Luddism' (as an innovative way of revealing potential for transformation in the crisis in contemporary 'forms of life'), a rethinking of the political potential of art, experimentation with different models of (self-) organisation in the realms of social and political life, and so on.

Significant protagonists of the artistic scene at that time were members of the KôD group (Slavko Bogdanović, Slobodan Tišma, Mirko Radojičić, Miroslav Mandić and partly Janez Kocijančič, Peđa Vranešević, Branko Andrić, Kiš-Jovak Ferenc). Group (Ξ (Čedomir Drča, Vladimir Kopicl, Ana Raković and, in part, Miša Živanović), and Group (Ξ - KôD (Čedomir Drča, Vladimir Kopicl, Mirko Radojičić, Ana Raković and, in part, Slobodan Tišma and Peđa Vranešević). Others, such as the January Group and the February Group, also made a significant contribution. These groups all worked in the spheres of linguistics, performance, process art and conceptual art, with a strong emphasis on intertextuality and inter-disciplinary work. A great deal of influence also came from Vojvodinian film production, concentrated around the Neoplanta film production company, which produced the so-called 'Black Wave' cinema, with individuals such as like Želimir Žilnik, Dušan Makavejev and Karpo Aćimović Godina.

The Youth Tribune was the place where the so-called New Art Practices crossed with intellectual production and social practices. This model youth and cultural institution bore testimony to the relationship that had been generated between progressive art and intellectual practices, official institutions and politics, in former Yugoslavia over several decades, and reflected the transformation of the institution itself, in relation to social and political changes. Our intention in examining this topic was to steer away from the romantic notion that critical art practice has always been the victim of censorship and oppression in a socialist society, and instead to examine observe its positive contribution, as 'a critical enrichment of socialist discourse', in order to re-articulate experiences which could be still relevant in today's post-Yugoslav society, at one remove from established art history, which represents those practices only in relation to the international conceptual art scene.

In the period from 1972 to 1974, there was a shift towards clamping down on the hitherto relatively open cultural field, in accordance with the increasing domination of party hardliners in Yugoslav political structures. In Novi Sad, this had a strong impact on current cultural policies and resulted in the removal of the leading figures from the editorial boards of official institutions and magazines. That led the banning of progressive artists and intellectuals from the Youth

Tribune and the magazines surrounding it, as well as a dilution of their radical practices and bureaucratisation of their procedures*. As a result of the many dismissals from the boards of Novi Sad's cultural institutions, there no longer existed an effective framework for commenting on the changes in the social and political climate and analysing them in an adequate way. This was one of the reasons for the silent, overnight transformation from a 'real socialist' to a national socialist state doctrine at the end of the 1980s. In the field of art and culture, the void that was left, when the voice of independent critical discourse connected to the Youth Tribune was extinguished, has continued to affect lack of public critical reflection on the fascism of the 1990s, right wing extremism, and the neo-liberalism of today. The contemporary instrumentalisation of art and culture within the framework of so called 'creative industries' continues to grow and is pursued in a wholly uncritical, unreflective way.

The Neo Avant-Garde in relation to Atelier/Studio DT 20, as an Independent Space

After being banned from taking part in official cultural institutions, the protagonists of Novi Sad's neo avant-garde scene intensified their involvement with the intimate independent space, Studio DT 20. DT 20, which was the studio of Dejan and Bogdanka Poznanović, was named after the address of its location at No. 20, Dimitrija Tucovića Street. Apart from being the couple's working space and the home of a unique library, DT 20 also provided an informal meeting-place for numerous Yugoslav and European artists, theorists, critics and writers. Bogdanka, who was an artist and teacher and Dejan, who was a translator from South Slavic languages, took part in many artist-in-residence programmes in West Europe (in Italy, Switzerland, France, etc.) and also assembled a unique library and archive, as a result of their activity over the years, in collecting relevant publications in the fields of art, sociology and philosophy. Being members of an older generation than most of the protagonists of the Novi Sad neo avant-garde scene, they created an active link between contemporary artistic practice and the artistic heritage of Serbian Surrealism and post-war literature. Studio DT 20 was one of the places where members of the Novi Sad neo avant-garde scene could meet, hold discussions and organise exhibitions and performances, in the period from 1973 to 1976. It offered a forum for further experimentation in the arts and a space for the further development of critical discourse. In general, it represented a transitional period in the development of many individual participants, which eventually led to most of them deciding to abandon their artistic practice.

Invisible Art – A Refuge in Slacking, as the Final Outcome of these Neo Avant-Garde Practices

Some years after their withdrawal from the official cultural institutions, most of these neo avant-garde artists took a decision not to practise art any more and got together in temporary squats or played football together, instead. One of the artists from the scene, Slobodan Tišma announced his withdrawal from public art practice, and he and Čedomir Drča went on to create several works and performances that focused deeply on the end of modernism and the death of utopian projects. They created works such as *Invisible Art*, *Invisible Band* and *Invisible Artist* that were part of a time-based performance, called 'The End', that took place between 1972 and 1977. During that period, Slobodan Tišma and Čedomir Drča drank American Coca Cola and

* We may observe the difference, in comparing the programmes for 1971 and 1975, respectively: Here are some examples:

1971-72. Social Theory and Practice Programme: Discussion with the young Slovenian intellectuals who were the editors of the student magazine, *Tribuna* (speakers: Jože Konec, Andrej Medved, Jaša Zlobec); discussion with the editors of the magazine, *Problemi* (participants included Dimitrij Rupel and Tomaž Salamun); lecture by Mihailo Marković on linguistics and philosophy; lecture by Trivo Inđić on anarcho-communism; discussion with the editors of Belgrade's magazine, *Student* (speakers included Jovica Aćin, M.Vučelić); lecture by Stipe Šušar about social differences in Yugoslav society; lecture by Benedict Švarc on fascism and philosophy; lecture by Jaša Zlobec and Mladen Švarc on Trotskyism; discussion about censorship, in relation to the film, *Film Censorship – What is it?*, with the members of Provincial Committee for Film Reviews, etc.

1975: Discussions, lectures, etc. in the Social Sciences Programme: 'The Social-Economic Basis of Self-Management in a Socialist Society, including the Necessary Aspects of Development', by Dragoje Žarković (programme realised in cooperation with the Municipal Office for the Community on the Danube); 'The Concept, Ideas and Political Role of the Magazine "Savremenost"' (participants: Ljubiša Stankov and Zemba i Aleksandar Raič); series of lectures, in the cycle, '30 Years of Freedom', with special programmes of public debates: 'We don't owe our freedom to anyone' (participants: Dušan Živković, Novak Petrović Mare and Vlado Strugar); 'The Pleiad of Sons of this Country – The Tradition of the NOR and the Revolution', with the participation of Porđe Radišić, Radivoje Radisavljević and Ranko Končar; 'The Weapons and Technical Capabilities of the Yugoslav Army' (speaker: Borislav Vučetić); '30 years of ORA' (speaker: Jan Srnka); 'The New Weapons of the Yugoslav Army' (participants: Steva Korda and Vojislav Andonović), etc.

Russian Kvas every day with friends in front of a local store. For them, this was the last performance and the end of their art. Still, it lasted over a number of years and, besides its performativity of cancellation and abandonment, it also involved performing a protest, cocking a snook at the authorities, and deliberately adopting a stand, as ostentatious slackers, that exposed them to ridicule. It meant performing a critique. But a critique of what? And can that critique be seen to have any relevance to us today?

The one word that comes to mind here is slacking. Slacking is not the same as laziness. Slacking is a means of challenging the dominant productivist paradigm (Stephen Wright). As distinct from the paradigm of 'abolishing work', it stands for both slacking off from the imperative to work and the counterpart to this, which is deliberately abstaining from leisure and other modes of consumerism. Yet, in the particular case of these protagonists of the Novi Sad neo avant-garde scene, it meant abstaining from participation in the intellectual production of one official cultural institution, in that particular moment in the production of an official discourse of modernist art and culture, and also of an alternative culture, in former Yugoslavia. Of course, their work had always contained elements of open criticism of the economics and productivism of the mainstream art world. That is the main reason why their activities should not be regarded as something which goes along with it, but as a documentation of their attempts at social intervention and at establishing a certain way of life and inscription in the world. In retrospect, these artists felt a sense of disappointment at being abandoned by the Youth Tribune, but they saw it was necessary to put an end to their involvement with cultural institutions, if they were to avoid the institutionalisation and bureaucratisation that went hand-in-hand with institutional critique, at that time. By distancing themselves from one institution without becoming involved in any other, they managed to create a space that traversed the existing structures and institutions.

This is a pregnant period and theme for further research, and at least two potential avenues deserve to be explored in this connection. One of these might be to examine these neo avant-garde practices in relation to other comparable practices that were developed in the late 1970s, including projects such as Mladen Stilinović's 'Artist at Work' or Goran Đorđević's 'International Artists' Strike'. The other might be to try and update this kind of critique (and institutional critique), in relation to contemporary artistic and cultural production within the domain of the 'creative industries', as a function of immaterial labour, driven by the ever more prevalent art world imperative for creativity and production. Nowadays, there is more and more art and more and more of exhibitions! The new demands of an expanding free market economy call for a creative and innovative response. Artists have to be self-motivated and flexible, to think in unconventional ways, to produce new ideas all the time, to build up the potential for networking, and to forget about the ever more precarious conditions of production. In some respects, the interventions by Stilinović, Đorđević and the neo avant-garde in Novi Sad amounted to a prophetic call for the downsizing of artistic production, for slacking off, in general, and for the creation of a form of leisure that is not necessarily tied to consumption, but is a call for commitment, contemplation, free time and 'useless knowledge that promotes a contemplative mind, as opposed to too much readiness for action without reflection' (Bertrand Russell).

Acknowledgements

This text builds upon research by Kristian Lukić, kuda.org's collaborator and curator of the Museum of Contemporary Art of Vojvodina: 'Šta će biti sa Tribinom mladih? Povodom 50 godina od osnivanja Tribine mladih' (2004); and 'Media Ontology - Mapping of Social and Art History in Novi Sad' (2005).

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CONSIDERATIONS ON THE ROLE OF THE IMAGE IN CONTEMPORARY URBAN CULTURE

Irina Cios

Ever since the visual arts started to be time-based, the way the cultural is referred to has changed. Place and space, as the repositories of histories, myths, experiences and emotions, have turned into elements that play an active role in the redefinition of the contemporary urban and visual environment. Nowadays, the interest in conducting research into the contemporary city is an international phenomenon that provides a platform for exchange between visual artists, architects, urban planners, art and architecture theorists, sociologists and philosophers. With the advent of the new millennium, this topic has emerged as one of the main fields of interest, and the continuing health of visual culture relies to an extent on the efforts of individuals to explore the capacity of their city to generate a range of pertinent questions and responses.

The essence of the city – the basic urban sphere – was profiled over time, as a place for meeting and trading, but also for exchanging ideas and artistic experiences. From the very beginning, its elements of novelty – from architecture, public space, infrastructure and technology to clothing, behaviour and customs – have aroused the interest of artists, in treating it either as the *subject* of artistic work or as the *object, place or participative environment*.

As early as in the 17th century the urban context was treated as the *subject* in paintings, engravings, drawings, etc., and later on in photography, video and film. It is treated as the ‘main character’, profiled separately, in its own right, ‘portrayed’, turned into an icon, or used as a backdrop. Architects and urban planners, as well as visual artists, approach the city as the *object* of their endeavour, by designing and/or converting the shapes, formal relations and roles which define it. The city functions as the place, or site, that provides a setting for monumental art works, ranging from sculptures, murals and architecture to projections, fascia boards and multimedia installations. The urban context is also creatively manipulated, as a platform for interaction and participation; it is lived, experienced, and traversed in all directions. It becomes the environment where artists, inhabitants and passers-by build strategies of appropriation.

At the end of the 1950s, efforts to consecrate the urban space as the main vessel for contemporary art were characterised by a move to democratise the access to art, through a denial of its aesthetic ambitions and criticism of the its existing institutional support structure (museums, galleries, art critics). Art ‘forced’ its way out of doors, into the space of life itself. This crisis arose out of the need that artists felt, to be set free from art history and the museum. It aimed at making art more popular and alive, beyond historical frameworks, and sought to become socially and politically committed. The artist was redefined as an agent engaged in a process of social transformation, which expanded the limits of the artistic field through multidisciplinary, performativity and active participation. This led to a rejection of the exiting parameters that set a distance between art and life. In order to be really new, artistic creation had to overcome the separation from everyday reality.

At the same time, mass access to film, photography and, in the ‘60s, television, associated with philosophical and social discourse, on the one hand and an increase in the visual presence of advertising on the other, together with a growth in consumerist attitudes, all contributed to the reconfiguration of the field of imagery.

The artistic movements born in the 1960s and ‘70s (Fluxus, The Situationist International, Arte Povera, Sociological Art, Conceptualism, Minimalism, Visual Poetry) were defined by irony, discontinuity, accident, instability, ludicrousness, fragmentation, appropriation, ephemerality, etc. The urge manifested by artists to get involved in the social and political realms

simultaneously led to a re-evaluation of the city as image, concept, system of relations and space for interaction.

The artist now became the spokesperson for the problems of the community, involved in the definition of the urban space. Innovative and experimental attitudes like this could not be made to work in the museum or art gallery, at the same time as becoming part of the urban space. The elements defining the new artistic approaches included performativity, interpersonal communication, transformation of the public into a creative participant, processual or investigative features, and rejection of aesthetic finality, as an artistic goal.

At the beginning of the 2000s, we are witnessing an international revival of interest in the urban space, also due to the fact that almost half the world's population is registered as living in urban areas. The changes at a theoretical level, caused by the accelerated process of globalisation, reinforced by migration and de-territorialisation, and the change at a geo-political level, the continuous challenge of democratic values, projected onto an ever expanding neo-liberal backdrop, determining a set of phenomena (the hyper-expansion of city limits, the shrinking process, and now the global financial crisis), put the urban structure into a new perspective.

Artistic projects dealing with the urban context – whether or not they incorporate a political or social element - explore transformations in the contemporary habitat and all attempts to redefine the living environment. They reference, or represent, the collective subjectivity, in a paradigmatic way.

Romanian cities, which were greatly affected by the communist strategy of urban reconfiguration, experienced mass demolitions, erasure of the architectural heritage, social displacement and destruction of the infrastructure. Nowadays, all are undergoing an accelerated process of transformation and gentrification.

The artistic exploration of the urban context, both in terms of space/place and community, may be viewed, both as something completely new in Romania, and as something that already has a long tradition. If we seek the origins of a concern for the 'democratisation' of art in Romania in the 1960s, we may observe that there was a moment of synchronicity with certain international formal tendencies, though any coincidence was based on quite different conceptual structures. To quote Viktor Misiano, 'the urban environment served the logic of the ideological project. It was (or pretended to be) in permanent linear development, its dynamics aimed at constant perfection, communicational, functional and visual.'

Setting out from its grounding in a leftist ideology that aimed at criticising western society, it was not difficult for art to be noisily associated with the totalitarian communist world. Thus, this type of approach was imposed on artists, as representing the only democratic way of 'serving the people'. Painting, sculpture, the graphic arts and literature, theatre and cinema, as well, were compelled to include this social dimension. Unfortunately, though, this type of discourse was forced, conditioned, censored and ideologically manipulated, so that 'committed art' actually proved to be an instrument of propaganda. The artist had to voice a 'happy community', troubled only by its struggle to accomplish 'the multilaterally developed socialist society', and not remotely concerned with any of society's actual problems.

For some time in the mid- 1990s in Romania, some artists really did make genuine, though timid, attempts to become involved in the urban and public spheres, and their efforts took the form of artistic interventions in the space, but the very notion of social commitment in art was not even considered an option. This rejection was due not so much to a sense that the theme was exhausted, as to the falsity of the earlier approaches that had openly perverted the intended purpose. However, the transformations that took place in the in Romania in the 1990s, both at a social and an artistic level, produced a fundamental reassessment of the relationship between art and the urban space. In the past decade, we may say that we have been witnessing a new beginning of art in the city. A series of artistic and curatorial initiatives that have established contemporary creation, as the active agency for a set of values have come to question and reposition the role of the contemporary artist, in relation to contemporary creation and ways of intervening in the urban sphere.

After 2000 Bucharest, which might be taken as a symptomatic urban area for the whole of Romania, played host to a sudden rash of artistic interventions in the public space. In the last decade, the space of the city, which had been turned into a desert and only slowly revived in the

'90s, has become increasingly animated and alive. First, there were the improvised shrines for the people who had died in the street in 1989, then the advertising hoarding and signs, the beggars, the strikers, the terraces, the fountains, the playgrounds for children, the benches and in between all this, the music, theatre, dance circus festivals and street art (graffiti, tags, stencils, stickers and posters). We witnessed a complete takeover of the public space, first by visual elements and then by forms of social participation. All these provided artists and curators with the base for a new start in exploring the urban space. Visual, performative, participative, site specific and/or theoretical projects began to make their appearance and were addressed both to the art public and to passers by; to specialists, as well as to people living in the area. Instead of monuments consecrating places, the places themselves started to stir and embody energies, concepts and experiences. The façades became screens or vehicles for temporary artistic interventions; the squares turned into urban lounges.

I took part in a series of projects involving visual, performative, participative, site specific and/or theoretical elements. such as: 'Performing Places' (2003), 'City Sharing' (2005), and 'Va urma/To be Continued' (2005-2007) 'De/Re/Constructions' (2006), which aimed to reframe the urban space, as a major research topic for contemporary culture. This direct experience of projects dealing with the Bucharest urban context and focussing on public space led me to review the relation between the aims and the effects of such projects, in reshaping the public sphere in the city. I would say that there are three determinant elements that have to be taken into account, when dealing with the urban space: the social context, the general interests of the artistic community, and the overall coherence of interventions in public space.

The current social context, deprived of a solid system of social values, was shaped in the passage from totalitarianism to neo-liberalism, as a terrain open to alienation, excesses and extremisms. Peoples' attitudes, as members of an audience, oscillate between 'hard to impress' and extreme Puritanism. Their attitudes, which reflect the pressing needs of individuals to make up for the time 'wasted' under communism, have led to an abrupt transition from a mass society subjected to economic and ideological levelling, to an atomised society motivated by different interests, with profit as the single common denominator.

The affirmation of a new generation of artists – *the fast and furious* - has brought to the foreground a series of concerns engendered by confrontation with the fragmented aspect of the city, the incoherence of discourse, the power play and the neo-consumerism. The framework to which young artists actively relate is defined by fast access and quick consumption, set against a total lack of reaction and attitude. These artists have been formed in a context in which visual communication is prominent, and linear narration has been replaced by hyper-textual reading. If the paradigm of the '90s was still the creation of post-modern landmarks, the new millennium imposes the pressure of a permanent updating of experiences, visual bulimia, and hedonistic self-concern.

As for the coherence of events addressing a public in the urban space, we have to remember that at least half the public in question had no previous exposure of any kind to this kind of experience, or to contemporary art, in general, until 20 years ago, and that their general reaction to the sudden proliferation of such events was one of understandable confusion and bewilderment. The degree of confusion is enhanced by the mass media and the visual environment of the city, which is increasingly dominated by all forms of advertising, such as billboards, projections and LED screens. The image inserted into the frame of the city becomes the hard currency for the fulfilment of people's dreams, but is also unsettling, on account of its lack of coherence and proportion, in relation to the built environment.

Against this background it may be said that projects dealing with the urban space run two major risks – either of being assimilated by advertising and the mass media or of succumbing to the restrictive legislation governing the use of public space - in other words, censorship.

Projects promoting a critique of consumerism, social exclusion, manipulation globalisation etc. and using billboards or LCD screens as support, gain a better visibility but may end up being defeated by their own 'weapons': instead of appropriating the space and disrupting the flow of communications, they become subsumed, in public perceptions, by the general frame of advertising. Community projects aimed at supporting participative attitudes and debate are assimilated into empty, meaningless talk shows, or political campaigns, or even into general

entertainment shows. Video projections on façades (e.g. the Ceausescu Palace) are mistaken for promotional events, dedicated to the launching of some product.

Theoretically, the cityscape focuses on the public space that should be accessible to everyone, for free, no matter what their social or economic condition. In reality, we witness a regulation of public space by a strict set of rules intended to reinforce the urban texture and thereby limit people's freedom to interact with the urban space. The artist ends up either reinforcing these rules, or having to assume the role of pseudo urban guerrilla, in attempting to break free from the statutory rules and controls. In the latter case, all attempts at 'détournement', or at a critical approach, may be (and generally are) punished by the authorities.

The last 20 years of development in the cityscape have set their stamp on general perceptions. The overall image is inseparably linked to the logic of ephemerality and seduction. It functions as a perceptual substitute, by replacing the direct experience of reality. In this age of hyper-visibility the viewer needs to experience and consume more and more emotions, sensations and experiences, by means of images. The permanent consumption of images creates a need and also induces a numbing effect: a kind of anaesthesia, which disables the viewer's capacity to understand and react to real problems, while the senses are saturated to overflowing by the tide of information. Subjected to such an experience, people may be anaesthetised by images into inertia in the face of reality, or they may be intoxicated with information, in a world of consumption that translates into a 'cocktail' culture.

In today's circumstances, is visual art really capable of defining a place in the frame of the urban space? Or does it drown in the general pool of visual consumption? Do community art projects enable communication and participation? Or are they perceived as entertainment in an individualistic and hedonistic society, no longer capable of being surprised by anything? No doubt, such projects as I have described continue to play an important role in revealing new ways of seeing and understanding, and promoting participation and self-awareness. Beyond the rhetorical character of these questions, I think it would be important to redefine the relation between the contemporary creation and the urban context, in terms of aims, meaning and outcomes. Should we predict the complete submission of art projects to rules and regulations, or a revolutionary outburst?

The contemporary artist searches for, and performs, a multi-faceted identity, and is permanently related to several space-time realities. The artist proposes an imaginative discourse, capable of holding its own, with both logic and emotion.

WHAT DO WE HAVE IN COMMON?

Dunja Blazević

I use this title, or question, on different occasions when I talk about the Balkans or, more precisely, the region of former Yugoslavia.

The answers depend on specific issues, but also on different perspectives or points of view. Namely, what we recognise as something that we all have in common often has two sides: it may be the cause of conflict, or the cause of mutual attraction and affinity.

In any case, talking about cultural history and its impact on present-day developments, one cannot deny, or erase, the fact that we used to inhabit a common or closely connected cultural space, despite the strong efforts of the new political elites to prove that we never had anything in common, in the cultural sense and to isolate, separate and appropriate the suitably 'cleansed' national components.

The common denominator for the successor states of the Socialistic Federative Republic of Yugoslavia has been the creation of nation-states (a process that still continues), based on the national or nationalistic ideologies and policies which continue to dominate the political space of the Balkans. The result of such policies is not (only) liberation from the domination of the bigger and stronger, or a struggle against the aggressor, in the interests of safeguarding one's 'own' territory and national integrity, but the ethnic division and homogenisation of a people, accomplished through the perpetuation of a feeling of endangerment and fear of the 'Other'. Alternatively, if we assume that the cause of the dissolution and wars was the hegemonic and aggressive national policy of the Serbian leadership in 90s (which declared itself Yugoslav), the consequence is not only the legitimate defense and formation of independent states, but also of ethnically 'clean' states. The *raison d'être* of these new states is ethnic homogeneity – unity. One collective ideology – 'the rule of the working class' – was exchanged for another – 'the rule of the (ethnic) nation.' This pre-political state still exists, despite the fundamental changes in the political system that were carried out almost two decades ago, with the introduction of a multiparty system and a parliamentary democracy. The majority of the influential political parties, regardless of their names, go no further than 'defending the interests of their people', in their programmes and corresponding populist discourse, in all spheres of social and economic life.

Instead of establishing a new system, with economic and social programmes and reforms, the new ruling parties controlled chaos, in the absence of a system, and where there was a lack of political transparency and of public opinion in all spheres, from the economy, to culture and art. This had to do not (only) with the inability and incompetence of the political players to solve the urgent problems that had accumulated, but with the intentional production of chaos. Because only in the conditions created by an absence of a system, a clear policy and a programme and set of values upon which good and responsible decisions can be made, can one maintain an arbitrary rule over people and institutions.

The consequences of the kind of political landscape I have described are particularly harmful to art and culture, not only because of the lack of an art system, but first and foremost on account of mental contamination.

In no country in Europe is cultural policy more important than in Bosnia Herzegovina. **Culture is both the cause and the solution to its problems.** Cultural arguments were used

to divide the country, yet culture might be able to bring the people back together again through initiating cultural programs that increase mutual understanding and respect.¹⁶

Today's attitude towards the past is the key to the solution and non-solution of numerous regional problems particularly in the countries of former Yugoslavia that shared a common history and lived in a common state throughout most of the twentieth century. Ever since the breakup of former Yugoslavia the new nationalist élites have been rewriting the history of their countries. The process of overcoming the past cannot be truly commenced, unless history ceases to be identified with national epic poems, sentimental tales of heroes, and myths of eternal heroism and sacrifice.

The erection and dismantling of monuments is becoming one of a means of displaying this newly achieved 'improvement' and empowerment of history. At the same time, art in public space or the monument with all its symbolic meanings and connotations become the perfect medium for multidisciplinary analysis. That was the reason why, in 2003, the Sarajevo Center for Contemporary Art conceived its 'De/construction of a Monument' as a project spread over three years. This project, which was rooted in recent artistic practice, deals with all aspects of the process of 'clearing a mental space', or else, overcoming the past. It opens up, and tries to find the answers to, a wide range of different and controversial questions in theory and practice, from art to politics.

'De/construction of the Monument' is based on the need for a systematisation of individual artistic phenomena in the recent art of former Yugoslavia and the surrounding region. It starts out with different representations of the past and targets various attempts at demystifying, reinterpreting or reinforcing these. Artists dealing with monuments to the past appear in the role of critics of the forced selective interpretation of the past, on which today's general outlook, or *Weltanschauung*, is based.

The works that artists from Bosnia and Herzegovina have produced in a variety of context – mainly for exhibitions or site specific artistic interventions organised since 1997 by the Sarajevo Center for Contemporary Art - provided the initial impulse for embarking on this project. The theme of the monument is common to the work of many artists from the entire region and presents many features in common. The genesis of this preoccupation may be traced back to the '90s, in the work of artists ranging from Mladen Stiljnović, Irwin, Sanja Iveković, Rasa Todosijević, Milica Tomić and Sokol Beqiri, to the younger generation, including Erzen Shkolli, Kurt&Plasto, Boris Maljković, and many others. What these artists all share in common is, on one hand, the critical interpretation of symbolic representations of the old, combined with a variety of new, or renewed ideological constructs, or else the re-affirmation of 'forgotten' figures and symbols, without which the fundamental values of contemporary society would remain unchallenged. On the other hand, by emptying/clearing the fields of meaning, these artists construct personal, virtual, imagined/imaginary realities or create some form of parallel reality. In the new semantically empty spaces, the new icons of contemporaneity move in and settle down. The problem of the individual's identification with the subject or object of history, or of collective identity – is also the subject of many artists' analysis and self-analysis.

The most apparent form of artistic engagement is to intervene in the ruins of monuments damaged or demolished during the wars in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia, as well as in the other countries of former Yugoslavia, or so-called Eastern Europe. This kind of artistic practice aims at the reconstruction of ruined material traces of the past.

¹⁶ Cultural Policy in Bosnia Herzegovina: Expert's Report, 'Togetherness in Difference: Culture at the Crossroads in Bosnia Herzegovina', by Charles Landry; European Programme of National Cultural Policy Reviews; Steering Committee for Culture, COUNCIL OF EUROPE. This report was presented and accepted at the 1st Plenary Session, Strasbourg, 9 October 2002.

The project has developed out of working with artists such as Braco Dimitrijević and Sanja Iveković, who have created ‘anti-monuments’ or, in the case of Jochen Gerz, ‘monuments to a negative past’. The most recent phase in the ‘de/construction’ of the monument was a competition we held for a ‘new’ form of commemoration, which has resulted in the production and installation of four new monuments in Mostar and Sarajevo.

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English text edited by Henry Meyric Hughes

THE 2ND THESSALONIKI BIENNALE: PRAXIS, AFTER THEORY

Sirago Tsiara

The 1st Thessaloniki Biennale attempted to trace the heterotopic character of contemporary artistic creation, by creating a dialogue with the work of the French intellectual, Michael Foucault. In the second Biennale, the discussion shifts to the English school of cultural criticism. Based on Terry Eagleton's work, we re-examine the relation between theory and practice within contemporary artistic creation.

The English theorist, in his study published in 2003 under the provocative title, *After Theory*, assesses the contribution, the gaps and the omissions of cultural theory from the 1960s up to the present, providing arguments, not so much for its death, but for a redefinition of its objectives and fields of research. He points to the 'deflation' of cultural theory and the loss of its original and radical character, and asserts that any form of renewal may only be possible, if theoretical reflection is directed towards issues such as love, ethics, pain, poverty, virtue, politics and revolution, truth and unselfishness, that had preciously been out of bounds.

It is not only the field of cultural theory that has suffered from the loss of its radical character. Similarly, in the sphere of political philosophy, as early as 1984, Alain Badiou had talked about the withdrawal of the political, its reduction to the limited sphere of financial accountability and its limited ambition to underpin the existing power structures, rather than working to bring about innovation and the indispensable rupture and dispute. The revival of the political constitutes a timely demand, and it will take place, according to Badiou, through radicalism, an attachment to the endlessly revolutionary character of the political, a rejection of the simple management of necessities and the active defence of justice and equality. In his book, *L'Être et l'Événement: Peut-on penser la politique?* he maintained the following viewpoint: 'The unhindered mobility of politics derives from the fact that it touches upon reality in terms of innovative incision rather than concourse; as well as from the fact that it constitutes an active interpretative concept rather than undertaking of power'. The necessary reformation of politics might be implemented only at a safe distance from the state, as it is essential to defend the independence of politics from state violence. Anyway, the enlargement of government powers and legitimisation of state violence on the basis of tolerance, as phenomena permissible by us all, are among the most significant causes of the crisis in politics, as Giorgio Agamben was able to analyse, in his *State of Exception*, where he attempted to revise the transformations this phenomenon underwent, from the organisation of the Third Reich to Bush's prisons in Guantanamo.

The crisis in politics is evident in the unreliability of the systems of parliamentary representation, but also in the inability to observe a common code of political principles. Is it that we have become the witnesses of a universal repulsion for the ideologies adopted over the last few decades, for the apprehension and resolution of critical social problems? After obliterating the big narratives, as a result of our disillusionment with the promises of both liberalism and communism, as forms of government, can we say that we have accepted scepticism, neutral heterogeneity and the pluralism of postmodernism without any protest? Is there any alternative?

Terry Eagleton counter-proposes a return to the great ecumenical issues, in a spirit of re-meditated vigilance. Referring back to Aristotle, the early-Christian ethics,

Marx and the Enlighteners, he seeks the deeper essence of a 'righteous life' and self-realisation; he takes as his premise the organic incorporation of the rational, active subject in collective life. Thus, transgressing the deadlock that passes through praxis, he ends up rediscovering the creative activity that contributes to the shaping of our political attitudes and identity. The concept of praxis helps us understand the role of the contemporary work of art.

According to Giorgio Agamben, in his study of *The Coming Community*, the original structure of the work of art is the establishment of an ethical space, within which the person is capable of acquiring knowledge and taking action. In an even more analytical way, he expressed his viewpoints on art in his book, *The Man without Content* in 1994, maintaining that the original structure of the work of art has been fully obscured because it had become a 'self-annihilating nothingness', wandering about in the *terra aethetica*. He examined the feeling of alienation that contemporary human beings experienced, in contemplating the possibility of rational action in public.

The core of our proposals for the main programme for the Biennale is made up of collective or community-based projects and works involving the spectator in a creative role and seeking to establish a link with collective memory, by going beyond the closed forms of ingenious individuality.

Richard Wagner's strategy for *The Art-Work of the Future* (1849-50) nowadays becomes central in any discourse on participatory art – a fact that is susceptible to historical interpretation, however paradoxical this may seem. In this work, written soon after the suppression of the 1848 Revolution, Wagner argued that the artists working in isolation from society, was compelled to pander to the foibles of the rich and of the wealthy patrons who commissioned the work. He proposed overriding the distinctions between the different artistic genres, on the one hand and the espousal of collective endeavour, on the other, as the most appropriate means of overcoming the sense of isolation and of barren self-sufficiency, in the field of artistic creation.

I do not consider the transcendence of individuality to be as a contemporary necessity, although intensity and artistic profundity have always struggled to make themselves felt in the public realm of institutions, the market and collective action.

Collective action and the reconciliation of art with life have been the chosen strategies of numerous avant-garde movements. As early as the beginning of the 20th century, the Italian Futurists, the Russian avant-garde artists and the Dadaists of the Cabaret Voltaire, in Zürich, all consciously invited the participation of the audience in different ways, and in different political and historical contexts. They attempted to revert to collective production, by rejecting the notion of autonomy in art, which had become a characteristic of the modern age. The Futurists, under the leadership of Tommaso Marinetti, introduced new methods for communicating their ideas, such as the publication of a newspaper (the famous *Lacerba*), writing and distributing manifestos violently and verbally attacking their opponents, and organising 'serate futuriste', which were a mixture of improvised dramatic performances, concerts and demonstrations – often, with the active participation of the Italian forces of repression. The Futurists' strategy for inducing collective action and consciously provoking scandals was adopted by the Dadaists, as well. The gatherings organised by Hugo Ball and his companions in the Cabaret Voltaire caused confusion and disturbances in the audience, through the recitation of poems in different languages by several performers at the same time. The meaning of the original, individual texts was drowned in an incomprehensible set of inarticulate cries, and we now know that this was actually the object of those performances. Ball considered the verbal rubbish uttered by journalists and politicians was beyond hope of redemption, and this, for him, was a reflection of the general decline of western culture. For this reason, he resorted to the deconstruction of language, suggesting incomprehensible sound poetry', as the unique resource from this general crisis of meanings and values in wartime Switzerland. This heralded the new worship of paradox, as the one and only form of speech that was not devoid of meaning and facilitated the attempts of the Surrealists, later on, to draw on the workings of the collective and individual unconscious. However, it is worth recalling, while we are on the subject of collectively in the early 20th century, that attempts to incorporate the individual into the collective project of transforming everyday life became the ultimate gamble of the Russian avant-garde and was treated as a sign of the Russian Constructivists, and token of their commitment. In keeping with the principle of the synthesis of the arts, dramatists, architects, musicians, painters and poets worked together in groups, whatever the intensity of their internal disputes, with the result that they were

collectively engaged in all aspects of the May Day celebrations and the anniversaries of the October Revolution, from drama performances to books and everyday items, from propaganda leaflets and posters, and to anything from entertainment clubs for the proletariat to utopian entertainment projects for settlements in outer space.

In the 1960s, the call for 'participatory action' was revived in radical groups such as Fluxus, the artists of the Situationist International, and Andy Warhol's factory. The common denominators underlying these different projects were the aims of transcending the bounds of the individual and of breaking down the boundaries between the various artistic genres. Despite the individual ideological, historical and aesthetic preferences of each of the aforementioned groups, their common objective was to implement *Gesamtkunstwerk*, or total work of art, on the basis of surmounting the distinctions between the artist-producer, and the audience/consumer of the artistic 'product'.

Nowadays, we talk about interaction as a significant parameter for the function of art in cyberspace, while at the same time we witness a tendency to re-evaluate the significance of natural, bodily participation in artistic actions - already evident in the initiatives of the Vienna Actionists and in most performance art from the 1960s up to the present.

The issue of collectivity is as important in the choice of artistic practice, as it is on a theoretical level.

At the first public pre-Biennale meeting organised at the Contemporary Art Centre of Thessaloniki in February 2009, under the title: *Art For the Public or With the Public? Collective Projects in Public Space*, the following questions were raised: Is it possible for contemporary art to create something more than mere spectators, and to involve different individuals as organic partners in the creative process? Is it possible to deploy critical reasoning, as a tool for the democratisation of our societies? Can function be used, as an agent for reallocating public space and as an instrument of expression for a variety of different marginal social, cultural or national groups? Can we narrate different stories and organise activities *with* communities, rather than *for* them? Nowadays, can we envision the artist's role as, in Antonio Gramsci's words, that of an 'organic intellectual', taking part in an activity of conscious intervention, in order to shape our aesthetic perceptions and political reflections on the multiple, differentiated levels of contemporary reality? - These were some of the fruitful questions to be raised, and they have, in part, shaped our attempt to provide some of the answers, in the light of our own experience in Greece and abroad, of the presentation of collective, community-based projects. The issues of collectivity and conscious public intervention became powerful factors, in guiding the decisions that all three of us who were curators of the main programme were persuaded to take, in relation to the main programme of the Biennale, as follows:

The *Chto Delat* group was formed in 2003 in Saint Petersburg with a view to bringing together the activities of artists, philosophers, art critics and authors under the umbrella of political theory and activism. The group was named after the famous political manifesto written by Lenin in early 1902, proclaiming the need to establish a revolutionary party that would direct all the actions of the working class. Their film, *Perestroika Songspiel*, constitutes a revival and heretical interpretation of the late Soviet past. It adopts the typical structure of the tragedy of the Ancient Greeks, by using epic and lyrical features in alternation, for a free adaptation of the myth. The protagonists of the new, post-Soviet era are given the leading roles, of the 'idealist democrat', the 'aristocrat businessman', the 'heroic revolutionary', the 'cruel nationalist' and the 'woman who found her voice'. The chorus, with its periodic lyrical interjection, ironically deconstructs the futile promises made by the protagonists for a better, utopian life.

Jinoos Taghizadeh, from Tehran, uses the form of stamps, 'the visual memory of a nation', since they document the official truth in a subversive way: on the back of the official stamps she records her own unofficial and painful memory of persons who have been victims of political murders in the late 'nineties. Ironically, this work has recently taken on a bitter edge, in the light of the recent resurrection in Iran after the elections.

In an attempt to manipulate collective traumas through the therapeutic influence of *kitsch* lyricism, Alla Georgieva, in her painting installation, *Tales of Love, Great and Small*, focuses on three powerful political leaders of the 20th century, namely Lenin, Stalin and Hitler. Exploring the potency of Socialist Realism, the critical Sots-Art Soviet hybrid, and the mass culture of

family postcards, she attempts a brave re-appraisal of the supposedly 'private' aspects of those personalities, tracing qualities such as romantic love and affection in their behaviour.

Artists such as Fredi Casco from Paraguay, Khaled Hafez from Egypt, and Marios Spiliopoulos from Greece, use official archives, documentary material, photographs and interviews, with the intention of merging narratives from different areas in the public and private domains, thereby revealing the interaction between power relations and self representation.

Thanks to the major contributions of Gabriela Salgado and Bisi Silva, the 2nd Thessaloniki Biennale attempts to enlarge on the possibilities for tracing different histories which are interconnected, through their common basis in a colonial past. For the State Museum of Contemporary Art that organised the Biennale, it was a conscious decision to create the space for a different narrative of the evolution of contemporary art, which would not follow the common Eurocentric stereotypes that tend to exclude whole cultures, such as Latin America, Africa and the Diaspora.

The role of a contemporary art museum obviously does not consist in constructing an artificial consensus, but in structuring a field for social and aesthetic experience, bringing out the subjective character of artistic activity, and at the same time offering the possibility of expressing dissent and the potential for conflict. The times of uncertainty we live in may provide an occasion for self reflection, and we may choose, in this connection, to recall the multivalence of the term *kairos* ('time' and 'opportunity', in ancient Greek), which offers the right moment for re-evaluating the role of artistic practice.

The 2nd Biennale has been developed in the form of an invitation to walk around the centre of Thessaloniki, starting out from the port and moving in the direction of the historical and commercial centre of the city, taking in Ottoman monuments, public squares, and institutional and alternative spaces along the way. Actually, it has been designed as an invitation to see once more the complex structures of the contemporary city and its different ethnic, religious and cultural layers in a fresh perspective. It is an ambitious venture that does not aspire to reproduce the stereotypical structures of big international events; it is rather a multidimensional programme, organised with a view to promoting collectivity, as a curatorial method of working. Artists of different generations and different degrees of recognition are exhibited side by side in creative dialogue with the public, on a shared platform. Our selection was determined in every case by the quality, maturity and integrity of the works themselves, and in the absence of any prior commitments. We have attempted to propose alternative ways of viewing the complexity of contemporary life through the eyes of the artists themselves, and both to question the impasse conceptions or sincerity of their intentions determined our criteria of choice, without any decisions being pre-taken. Through the artists' look we attempt to trace down alternative ways to denote the complex contemporary era, to question the impasse created by contemporary crisis and re-define the meaning of artistic praxis.

THE BIOPOLITICAL APPARATUS AND THE CULTURAL CRUNCH

Melentie Pandilovski

Vilém Flusser claimed that apparati are generally based on technical and political programmes, which are highly ideological and always biased. He also stressed that there is no value-free technology – especially, when it comes to the production of images, meaningful surfaces.

We are increasingly made into witnesses to the creation of the biological apparatus, with all its paraphernalia, and participants in the process. Power relations are being established, and biopolitical conflicts in the real and virtual worlds increasingly involve governments, NGOs and corporations in disputes over stem cell research, bioethics, gene technologies practice and regulations, and bio-patenting.

Of course, as the biopolitical apparatus cannot be devoid of values, it has inevitably to base itself on philosophical/ideological and political programmes. In March 2009 the US President Obama put an end to the Bush administration's strict limits on human embryonic stem cell research. He also attempted to lower the ideological temperature in the US stem cell debate by pledging that his administration would 'make scientific decisions based on facts, not ideology'. And yet, stem cell research had moved to the forefront of the US presidential campaign last year in a heated ideological debate, which had resulted in a decision to lift the restrictions on embryonic stem cell research!

In this context, it seems clear that the mirroring of fundamental ideologies has social and economic parameters that we need to decipher. It has to become the role of philosophy (including ethics, as a branch of philosophy), criticism and art to examine the structure of the 'apparatus' and to determine how its construction changes the reality we live in.

Biotechnologies are also appealing to the general public, and we can detect a rising interest in DNA profiling, personal genomics, bio-data gathering and, lately, genetic social networking. One of the outcomes of this is the creation of a genetically based value system. We may suspect that another of the outcomes may be the development of appealing forms of neo-eugenics in the 21st century and, paradoxically, the creation of new utopian communities.

Extensive advances have occurred in the field of biotechnology and our awareness of the complex structures and processes involved in biotechnology, addressing issues as diverse as the social and political context surrounding biotechnology; the relationship between ethics and biotechnology (e.g. the ethical implications of genetic engineering); the background to scientific processes, their essence, and their spectacular nature; the complex relationships between science and culture; and the politics of the discipline of biotechnology.

Biology has a long history of being politicised. Michel Foucault, in his research into 'the ontology of actuality', was the first to put forward the term 'biopolitics', when speaking about 'the enigma of biopolitics'. He defines biopolitics as the style of government that regulates populations through biopower (the application and impact of political power on all aspects of human life). Since Foucault proposed the term 'bio-politics' we have understood its genesis to be firmly rooted in the project of modernity and the political thinking coming out from it, as politics projects itself as the supreme horizon of biology. He says: 'For millennia, man remained what he was for Aristotle: a living animal with the additional capacity for a political existence; modern man is an animal whose politics places his existence as a living being in question.'¹⁷

Foucault made it clear that life had become a commodity, and was to be treated as fundamental to contemporary political and economic battles. He defined 'biopower' as a technology of power, which is a way of managing people as a group (entire populations). He also

¹⁷ Michel Foucault, *History of Sexuality 1: The will to knowledge*.

clarified the objectives of biopower, as acting on the population in a preventive fashion, rather than as disciplining the individual in the diverse forms of rehabilitation, normalisation and institutionalisation.

We are now at a stage where the idea of biopolitics is widely accepted and we have a plethora of definitions, starting from Foucault's own, which embrace issues as diverse as public policies regarding the various applications of biotechnology, political applications, and the advocacy of bioethics and various biotech applications, down to the notion of biopolitics, as a form of political advocacy concerned with the welfare of life-forms.

This great variety seems to make it obvious now that the claims the 21st century will be the century of biology are correct. However, this also means that the 21st century will represent a range of different responses, and yet another triumph for politics, for we must remember that biology has a long history of being politicised. In a sense, we can define biopolitics as a political spectrum reflecting all the facts of the socio-political consequences of the biotech revolution. On top of this, the constant advances in biotechnology (e.g. the Human Genome Project) signify a shift in the balance of power toward a society that is able to select and design desirable life-forms well before they are conceived.

Some of the arresting questions that arise out of this include the role that biotechnology plays in bio-politics today and the development of political thinking that is fully at ease with the essence of biopolitics, including the biopolitical legacies of globalism. This is how we should interpret Hardt's and Negri's view of biopolitics, in a practical sense, as the conceptual opposite to biopower, as the practice of sovereignty in biopolitical conditions, and as the embodiment of the 'anti-capitalist insurrection using life and the body as weapons'¹⁸.

Yet, however strong the attractions of Hardt's and Negri's emphasis on the political aspects of biopolitics, this still provides no answer to the question of how biopolitics directly converts its philosophical potential into a political one. Namely, the succession of human catastrophes in the 20th century strongly suggests that political thinking cannot reach to the core of bio-politics, as the origin and core of biopolitics cannot be separated from philosophical issues.

And what, in truth, is the overarching philosophy that connects all the nodes across the biological spectrum? How does bio-politics influence the way we experience life?

In addition to the above-mentioned philosophers, it may be as well to cite Giorgio Agamben, who highlights the potential for resistance to imperial power that is linked to Hardt and Negri's revolutionary approach, as well as Donna Haraway, with her research into biopolitics in postmodern bodies, Derrida, with his notion of auto-immunity, and Agnes Heller, who describes biopolitics as a new cultural revolution and thereby connects it to the phenomenon of mass culture.

Most intriguing of all, in this respect, is Roberto Esposito, one of the most important exponents of Italian political theory, with his three studies *Communitas*, *Immunitas*, and *BIOS: Biopolitics and Philosophy*, in which he investigates the role that biotechnology plays in relation to biopolitics and discusses the theory, origins and development of biopolitics, in relation to the contributions of Nietzsche, Foucault, Merleau-Ponty and other philosophers who have contributed to this field of study. Esposito picks up on issues about the sense and disposition of biopolitics at the point where Foucault leaves off. He is also able, successfully to reconstruct in great detail the negative legacy of Nazism, as well as genetic engineering and the legacy of eugenics, but perhaps the most important aspects of this approach are to be found in his conclusions, as to why no system of political thought can fully grasp the essence of biopolitics¹⁹.

Ethical considerations may provide the answer to this, as he bases his discourse along the lines of positive and negative factors (industry and novelty versus withdrawal from life). Biopolitics certainly has a complex structure, but I have some doubts about the value of introducing Esposito's good/evil, positive/negative dichotomies, as a means of trying to decipher it. If we have to try and answer that question, we should probably regard the negative as the lowest figure on the scale of the positive, or the positive as the highest figure on the scale of

¹⁸ Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri (2005), *Multitude: War and Democracy in the Age of Empire*, Harvard, Harvard University Press, 2000.

¹⁹ Roberto Esposito in *BIOS: Biopolitics and Philosophy*, by Roberto Esposito (intro. And trans by Timothy Campbell), USA, University of Minnesota Press, 2008.

negative, rather than view the two as diametrically opposed. Nevertheless, perhaps it is this dichotomy that helps Esposito to come up with the notion of the 'paradigm of immunisation', as a sort of decoding device in the great biopolitical debate, in which authors such as the phenomenologist, Heidegger, and Negri clearly come down on one side, and Marx and Deleuze on the other. The notion of 'immunisation' acts as a safeguard in both juridical (in respect of the law) and biological (in respect of disease) linguistic discourses. The overall concern in the 'paradigm of immunisation' is the fact of existence - e.g. the 'protection or negation of life' - and it thus exposes the paradox, whereby what saves the individual and political body from harm is also what obstructs its growth.

Arts, Science, and Biotechnology

The relationship between biotechnology and the arts can rightly be seen as a curious one and is no more than the tip of the iceberg. Still lurking in the depths are some of the most difficult unresolved questions arising from the breakdown of communications in society, such as the issue of the relationship between the arts and the sciences, which has plagued humanity throughout the greater part of the twentieth century and was described by the author, C.P. Snow, as the rift between 'The Two Cultures', in his celebrated 1959 lecture series of that title ... except that Snow saw in this breakdown a chance for humanity: 'The clashing space of two subjects, two disciplines, two cultures, - of two galaxies, so far as that goes - ought to produce creative chances. In the history of mental activity that has been where some of the breakthroughs came. The chances are there now. But they are there, as it were, in a vacuum, because those in the two cultures can't talk to each other. It is bizarre how very little of twentieth century science has been assimilated in twentieth century art.'

Closer to our own age, artistic and cultural research in the area of biotechnology has questioned established philosophical beliefs, questioned commercial and ethical practices, and proposed new ways of looking at life and society. In practical terms, this aestheticisation of the biopolitical apparatus in the life of forms is quite significant. At one level, the artists are critical of developments in biotechnology, and at another, they collaborate, as many of the artworks in this field suffer from looking at biotech arts through positivist lenses, which essentially contribute to the non-critical acceptance and formation of the bio-political apparatus.

Bio-art changes the custodial role of the art institution. Art institutions, have been expanding their exhibition policies in order to present bio(-tech) arts in the past 10 years. Art institutions such as Ars Electronica, SymbioticA, Experimental Art Foundation, and the Contemporary Art Center-Skopje, take part in this development by supporting artistic research in the area of biotechnology, which includes the elaboration of current developments in bio-philosophy and biopolitics. This role is especially important in commissioning and supporting the work of bio-artists, and in opening up the 'white box' to 'live' artworks, created in collaborations with scientists. I would also refer you, in this connection, to the projects of artists such as Eduardo Kac, TC&A, Andre Brodyk, George Gessert, and Natalie Jeremijenko.

The changing role of art institutions, in supporting artistic research in certain of the grey areas that are closely linked to the formation of the bio-tech apparatus (as a reflection of current theoretical developments in biophilosophy and biopolitics), is directly connected to the thinking of Michel Foucault, Agamben, Hardt and Negri, and Roberto Esposito.

Nowadays, we might add to this linkage the interface with biology, which represents both the 'ultimate objectivity' of 'biological facts' in the hands of science and a form of 'ultimate subjectivity', as the most intimate repository of individual sentiment and emotion - the irreducible humanist bastion of 'feelings'. Namely, biotechnology intersects the constituent parts of both the technological, in the sense of authentic rationality and objectivity, and the artistic, in the sense of subjectivity and the emotions.

Marshall McLuhan said, 'We shape our tools and thereafter our tools shape us. Indeed, biotech arts is a wide-ranging subject, utilising the tools of biotechnology, building on both the arts and science (biology and biotechnology), with abundant material coming from both cultures.' Biotech arts can certainly assist us to bridge this divide, as it demands an equal knowledge of,

and attention to, both the artistic and scientific processes. The discourse surrounding this subject is evolving all the time, as many philosophers, theorists and artists are currently engaged in trying to work out a definition of biotech arts. Theorists and artists have understood the cultural and aesthetic significance of biotechnology in a quickly changing society that is altering the planet, with its new notions about science and technology. The display of visual and material aspects of biotech art becomes equally important in the gallery and the scientific lab – likewise, the effort to engage the public with contemporary biotechnology.

Indeed, biotech arts are a wide-ranging subject that builds on both the arts and sciences, and draws on an abundance of material from both cultures. On top of this, new artistic and cultural codes have to be developed, as we have seen already that biotechnology intersects the fields of both art and technology, reason and emotion.

We can also see that the formal aspects of biotech arts have matured, and that some of the necessary research and development has already been carried out. We might also say that audiences have become accustomed to thinking of biotech arts as a valid art-form and treating it with the respect that artwork deserves, rather than as a spectacle of the new. This would all seem to indicate that we have genuinely started to understand our world, as a point of encounter between the biological and the engineered. But can we say that our world is simply the place of encounter between straightforward biology and clever engineering? Perhaps we can, but in order to understand this, we need to go back a step and consider whether we have truly reached a stage at which the general public may be said fully to have assimilated the lessons of science and technology into their mental experience.

All this is very problematic, as artists and scientists have been educated in either the sciences or humanities, and in the last analysis we have to deal with the background to scientific processes, their essence, and their spectacular nature, as well as the complex relationship of science and culture, and the social and political context surrounding art and biotechnology.

This complexity is further increased, when we take into account the artistic and cultural codes, by locating individual artistic trajectories in the fields of biotechnology and genetics, as contributions to the transformation of society at the intersection of the biological and the engineered.

Phenomenology of the biotech artwork

How, then, can we define the new art forms that exploit the merging of genetics, art and information technologies? How can we experience the full potential of biotech arts? My *preferred theoretical approach* involves a combination of phenomenological theoretical approaches, as they provide the best means of analysing biotech arts. In fact, the very phenomenon of biotech fatally undermines all previous aesthetic theories, as these are unable to encompass the incursion into the realms of technology and embodiment, in the way that phenomenological approaches do.

We are still largely venturing into unknown regions; therefore, the domains of the ‘metaphor of the phenomenon of the biotech artwork’, as well as ‘the lived experience with the biotech artwork’, might be better suited to guide us through the various discourses surrounding biotech arts. The domain of ‘lived experience’ clearly builds on the idea of direct contact with, and experience of, biotech artworks. We should be able to extract the most meaning from the phenomenologist, Max van Manen's, division of experience into the *spatiality* of biotech artworks (referring to ‘the lived space’), the *corporeality* of biotech artworks (referring to ‘the lived body’), the *temporality* of biotech artworks (referring to ‘the lived time’), and the *relationality* of biotech artworks (referring to the ‘lived other’).

1. The domain of *lived experience* clearly builds on the idea of direct contact with biotech artworks, in the way we experience them, rather than the way they are conceived.

A: The concept of *spatiality*, or the *lived space*, or the felt space, represents an integral part of the experience of creating, displaying, and seeing, or witnessing, biotech arts in the gallery space, science lab, workshop area, hospital, city square, etc. It differs on each occasion, and the experiential differences are the ones we need to discover.

B: The *lived body* refers to the *embodied experience*. We experience biotech artworks through our bodies, as we experience the world through our bodies. The main question then is: how do we experience the biotech artwork through our own body? Another important question is then: how do we experience our own body in different bio-tech art spaces?

C: *Lived time* refers to temporal issues, such as subjective time, as opposed to objective time. This notion can be researched with the artist, but also with the audience. What are, in fact, the issues of temporality that we face with biotech artworks? Is there any difference between the temporal aspects of artworks that are biotech based, and those that are more traditional? A possible difference might be a speeding up, or slowing down, of our perceptions of time. This may comprise of perceptions of time speeding up, or slowing down. At the next stage, we might link this to time wasted by audiences that do not want to stay in the exhibition for a long time, but are compelled to do so in the process of trying to understand the work.

D: *Relationality* involves all kinds of interrelationship. Max van Manen, in *Researching Lived Experience: Human Science for an Action*, speaks of the lived relationship we maintain with others in the interpersonal space we share with them. Forms of relationality include seeking to establish a shared presence in a single space involving the 'lived other', such as the artist who has created the work, with other artists who are present in the exhibition space, but have not created this specific work, members of the press in the gallery space, directors of other gallery spaces, scientists in the gallery space or in the science lab, artists in the science lab, the audience in the gallery space, and so on.

In *Metaphors We Live By*, George Lakoff and Mark Johnson claim that we not only use metaphors in language, but that these same metaphors shape our language. The metaphors employed in biotech arts become crucial in interpreting what biotech arts stand for. For Lakoff and Johnson, 'New metaphors, like conventional metaphors, can have the power to define reality.' We have seen artists who use biotechnology to create their artwork make use of both old metaphors (e.g., *Genesis* by Eduardo Kac), and new ones (e.g. the Tissue Culture and Art Project's concept of 'semi-living').

Artists such as Zoran Todorovic continue to explore the connection between the biological and the emotional. His recent work, 'Warmth', is created through the gathering of biological stocks (hair) collected from hundreds of Belgrade's hair salons, army barracks, state penitentiaries, etc. Through the re-contextualisation of hair, he is able to create a certain awareness of the incorporation of bodily products into our daily practices. The hair undergoes a process of technological transformation, thus acquiring new cultural codes. This is realised more subtly than in his previous work, 'Agalma', in which he used soap created from his own body fat, extracted by means of invasive surgery. Warmth, on another level, is reminiscent of the work of Donna Franklin and Gary Cass, who research the meaning of individuality in biotech arts, by exhibiting the aesthetic and fetishistic aspects of fashion. In their work, 'Micro "be" Fermented Fashion', these artists refer to the ethics of textile production, in which we disassociate ourselves from the natural world. 'Micro "be" Fermented Fashion' seems to suggest a way out. The living cloth/skin in 'Micro "be" Fermented Fashion' is produced by living microbes that ferment wine into vinegar, to produce a microbiological cellulose by-product, chemically similar to cotton.

All of the above-mentioned projects address the complexities of working with biotech arts and point to Merleau-Ponty's notion of 'habitual space', which refers to neither 'explicit comprehension nor blind reflex'. The 'habitual knowledge', thus acquired, makes knowing and doing work with biotechnology a process that is somewhat instinctive. These biotech artworks certainly generate enthusiasm for analysing the biopolitical apparatus and add to the research into, and creation of, 'habitual knowledge in process', by raising questions related to:

- Creativity (e.g. technological manipulation, as a creative act).
- Aesthetics (e.g. the aesthetic questions that biotech art works address, and the qualities they possess).
- Ethics (e.g. the implications of biotechnological research and genetic engineering).
- Biopolitics (e.g. in the domain of the biological as political, including notions of the changed environment, human rights, and bio-terrorism; decision-making processes, when using biotechnology, etc.).

- Transformation issues (e.g. how is our society being transformed by biotechnology?).
- Embodiment issues (e.g. how do we experience the biotech artwork through our body?).
- Awareness (e.g. what are, in fact, the issues of awareness which we face with biotechnology and related artworks?).

Art does seem to have a role to play, in the creation of the bio-political apparatus, doesn't it?

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THE CENTRE FOR VISUAL CULTURE AT MOCAB. REVISING THE MODEL FOR THE EDUCATIONAL/RESEARCH DEPARTMENT

Zoran Eric

The Centre for Visual Culture at MOCAB

The Centre for Visual Culture at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Belgrade (MoCAB) was established as far back as the mid-1970s, as a branch of the museum's pedagogical department. At that time, the Centre's programmes were guided by the methodology of permanent education and grounded in an ideological conviction regarding the social role of the arts. The main aim of the Centre was 'education through art', and its activities comprised a series of public seminars and lectures, held both inside the Museum and also in cooperation with schools, faculties, factories and public companies, with the goal of reaching the broadest possible public.

When I took on the role of Head of the Centre for Visual Culture in late 2005, I set out to redefine the mission of the Centre, to take account, both of the current socio-political situation and recent developments in artistic practice. The new strategy of the Centre was intended to continue local as well as international cooperation with educational institutions and professionals of various profiles and to create a platform for all the contributors: an open laboratory, where they could discuss issues surrounding contemporary art and its social function in relation to the art system and socio-political context that frames it. The Centre would thus be oriented towards both research on a new set of topics, put forward and developed each year by the team working at the Centre and towards education through public presentations and talks by team members and guest experts contributing to the programme. Above all, the idea of this working methodology was to create a melting pot for individual or group production, which would undertake a critical investigation into the issues connected to the Centre's overall topic for the year in question. The main challenge for Serbia's transitional society, with its new ideologies and systems of value — manifested in the perverse 'marriage' of neo-liberal redatory capitalism and aggressive Orthodox Christianity, as two driving forces — is to find out how to engage in critical and discursive thinking about the formation of this kind of social space and about the inscription of art and social sciences in the public sphere.

The first annual topic, put forward to the initial research group in 2006/2007, was entitled 'Differentiated Neighbourhoods'. It espoused a very broad perspective, but its theoretical subtext was Henri Lefebvre's idea about the possibility of creating differentiated spaces (neighbourhoods), in opposition to neo-capitalist homogeneity. The context of transition in Serbia was important for the choice of Lefebvre as a reference, as the onset of neoliberal capitalist ventures in the urban core of Belgrade, and especially in New Belgrade, had the side effects of homogenisation and segregation in urban spaces, which effectively produced a situation that was similar to Lefebvre's examples. The idea was to have a topic that would provide a good platform for the development of different approaches within the interdisciplinary working group—an 'empty signifier', to be filled with content, as the work progressed.

Set Topic – Differentiated Neighbourhoods

An important step in the conceptualisation of the project and its further profiling within the working group was to analyse the common connotation of the term 'neighbourhood' as derived

from the vocabulary of architecture, urbanism and sociology and related theoretical concepts.²⁰ The landmark theory of neighbourhood change was developed in the Chicago School of Sociology as early as in the 1920s by Robert Park, Ernest Burgess and Lewis Wirth. Their first theoretical concept was based on comparisons with natural systems; it was therefore called the 'ecological theory of urban development'.²¹ Because the model took up the analogy of life cycles, the prospect of a neighbourhood was its inevitable decline over years.

In recent theory Arjun Appadurai has made an important distinction between locality—understood as a phenomenological quality that is relational and contextual rather than scalar or spatial—and the neighbourhood, which is understood to actualise existing social forms, spatially or virtually.²²

Bearing this and many other theories in mind, I was above all interested in the contribution of Henry Lefebvre's thought to the analysis of the 'neighbourhood'.²³ Lefebvre suggests that, in spite of all attempts of modernity and modernization to homogenise and commodify space, the project of 'normalisation' conducted by the state ultimately provokes opposition and negativity. The consequence, in his view, is a plurality of what he calls 'differentiated' spaces that continue to persist under neo-capitalism, wherein difference is registered and linked to the clandestine or underground side of life. Thus, one of the most important theoretical issues put forward to the analysis was that of disclosing societal processes driving towards homogenisation and segregation in the urban realm in different social systems and historical contexts, and finally of detecting them in the actual situation of the case study, i.e. the neighbourhoods of New Belgrade.

From the historical perspective of many European countries, one could argue that two major forces—religion and economy or trade—have guided the process of homogenisation in urban structures. In multi-confessional environments and cities, the quarters were clearly marked between communities of different religion. With the rise of the capitalist mode of production and the attendant secularisation of public life, class and economic motive became the main driving forces for urban segregation in the city. Social (class) segregation through the process of homogenisation of the urban environment created different extreme 'neighbourhoods', such as isolated 'residential' areas and even gated communities on the one hand and illegal settlements and ghettos on the other, all of which created a different socio-spatial environment.

However, in the countries of 'Real Socialism' (as Soviet propaganda referred to the Eastern Bloc under its sway), the idea of the socialist city created a different kind of urban/social stratification and neighbourhood. The 'socialist city' does not necessarily imply social housing, but most cities that could be designated as such eventually developed into big (suburban) settlements of high-rise buildings that were often regarded simply as dormitory blocks. (In East Germany, these were referred to as *Plattenbau*, after the prefabricated concrete elements from which they were constructed). In the post-socialist period, the resultant thoroughgoing urban changes affected these city blocks as well, either through a process of 'gentrification' or, as so often happened, through socio-spatial transformation into 'urban ghettos'.

Local Case Study

One of the main questions to be addressed by the Centre for Visual Culture research group was that of the term and concept of 'neighbourhood', and specifically what it represented in socialist Yugoslavia, keeping in mind the social concept of 'workers self-management' and what it means now, in the period of rapid urban transformation and transition within the recently formed country of Serbia.

²⁰ In a brief elaboration of the year's conceptual theme, I revisited some of the key points (elaborated in this text) in the development of theories on the 'neighbourhood'. I also distributed the related theoretical literature on the topic to all participants of the initial research group as a kind of reader.

²¹ The first major publication was Park, R. (ed.) 1916. *The City*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

²² Appadurai, A. 1996. *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

²³ Interestingly enough, Lefebvre had been well known in socialist Yugoslavia, ever since the translation of his books in the 1950s; this was in contrast to the more recent 'discovery' of his work in the English-speaking world. He was also present in the journal for Marxist theory *Praxis* and at the Korčula Summer School, which brought together philosophers and social critics from all over the world. Because of the Mediterranean atmosphere of the island of Korčula, and the open air debates, Lefebvre described the Summer School as 'Dionysian Socialism'. (See Kangra, M. 1997 *Izvan povijesnog dogadanja. Dokumenti jednog vremena*, Split: Feral Tribune biblioteka, pp. 278-294).

The initial concept behind the building of New Belgrade, which was first conceived after WWII, was the creation of a capital for the new socialist country in a completely unpopulated space, actually a swamp, which was ideal for inscription with new social projections and ideological constructs.²⁴ The post-war idea of a new society had to be materialised in the form of new urban structures and the architectural shapes of the socialist city, thus constituting a new administrative, economical and cultural capital of Socialist Yugoslavia. The first urban plan of New Belgrade was adopted after the public competition in 1947, which set the goal of functional organisation within an orthogonal urban structure, with the two dominant buildings of the Palace of the Federation and the headquarters of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia. This 'contemporary socialist architecture' as it was described at that time, quickly abandoned any pretension to socialist realism, at the time of the conflict between Tito and Stalin in 1948. Social modernisation and a modernist orientation became the order of the day. The entire notion of constructing an administrative centre for the socialist country was abandoned as early as the 1950s, and social housing took precedence in New Belgrade over the next two decades. The failure to create a complex multifunctional spatial-urban structure produced a central space in the capital city which remained as an economic, social and finally a spatial void. New Belgrade thus never managed to fulfil either the physical or the symbolic space envisioned by the 'socialist society of workers' self-management'.

After the political changes in 2000, the earlier failure to realise the concept of full urbanisation in New Belgrade made possible the creation of new social paradigms, for inscription in this space and its urban structures. New Belgrade could be now seen as 'the city within the city' and as one of the biggest and most populous neighbourhoods of Belgrade, that continues to face rapid urban restructuring, both in terms of gentrification and ghettoisation. On the one hand, there is the problem of the loss of public space that was never fully developed in New Belgrade and is now being taken over by big supermarkets and shopping malls. On the other hand, the new segregation, which is driven mostly by economic, social or even racial distinctions, has created new homogenised neighbourhood and even 'urban ghettos'. The new socio-political context of New Belgrade places a number of urban issues, such as social migration, the 'crisis of identity', the processes of homogenisation and de-homogenisation, the impact of neo-liberalism and of creeping gentrification (to name but a few) into sharper focus. Some of the most intractable problems are created by the difficulties that marginalised social groups, such as the Roma, the Chinese community and refugees, in general, experience, in trying to gain acceptance in the housing blocks and urban areas of New Belgrade.

A Venue for the First Public Presentation

The initial idea of the team was to have the first public presentation of the project in one of the two old cinemas of New Belgrade, called the Fontana. The entire local community centre of the '25th of May' was built in Block 1 of New Belgrade, from 1963 to 1965 and was popularly known as the Fontana, after the cinema. It also comprised basic amenities such as the local community offices, a restaurant and a small socialist version of a department store. This was one of the rare public spaces in New Belgrade and also a vital meeting place in a yet to be defined area, where a neighbourhood could be formed. At the time when it was opened, the Fontana was one of only two cinemas in the whole of the municipality of New Belgrade that, by the end of the 1970s, had just under 100 000 inhabitants; now it has officially almost 250 000. Its symbolic importance for young generations was crucial, and many people from this part of the town say that they grew up in the Fontana Cinema. Besides this cinema, as a kind of nexus, the other possibilities for 'hanging around the 'hood' included the basketball courts and the nuclear shelters where local rock bands often held rehearsals. In the course of our investigations, we discovered that the Fontana Cinema, like many others, had been closed for years. It has now been privatised and waits for the new owners to decide what to do with it. Most of the old Fontana Centre has been 'privatised' by the biggest company in Serbia, called Delta. This means that it is currently

²⁴ This concept was best elaborated by architecture theorist Ljiljana Blagojević. See Lj. Blagojević, 2007. *Novi Beograd: Osporeni modernizam*. Belgrade: Zavod za udžbenike, Arhitektonski fakultet Univerziteta, Zavod za zaštitu spomenika

impossible, even to enter the old cinema, let alone obtain a permit to do a project inside, even though the Municipality of New Belgrade mediated in this process and tried to help us to reopen the cinema.

The logical choice was for us to find another space whose symbolic connotation related to the socialist period and whose role was important for the concept of workers self-management—a uniquely Yugoslav contribution to Marxist theory. We eventually found the kind of space we needed in one of the so-called local community centres (a *Mesna zajednica*), that every housing block used to have, which were a form of basic municipal administrative unit, where workers could exercise their rights, and which also provided a space for festivities and celebrations, including dances for the military.

The local community centres still represent an important facility for citizens and a wide range of organised groups from Serbia's new and fragile civil society, where they can meet and hold public debates on many issues regarding the socio-spatial aspects of life in their neighbourhood. They have managed to 'survive' in the new social system, but their visibility and importance are diminishing, in spite of the local population's need for new kinds of self-organisation. They have a similar organisational structure (of a board and employees) to that developed under socialism, but they now serve mostly as voting stations or rental spaces for different sporting and folklore activities.

After going around New Belgrade and meeting the secretaries of several local communities, I suggested that our group should stage its presentation in Block 30, in the centre of New Belgrade. This community space had not been renovated, so the atmosphere and the furniture were strongly evocative of the period some thirty years ago. A particular point of interest in relation to the wider context was its location immediately next to the new building of Radio and TV B92 (a symbol of civil resistance to Slobodan Milošević and his regime in the 1990s, now a commercial corporation) and its very new GTC 'Class A' office building, that symbolises the general tendency to transform New Belgrade into a business centre cum giant shopping mall.

Individual Contributions

In the course of developing the project, the entire working team held two working meetings of from four to five day each, to discuss the overall concept, how to profile it and scan the area of New Belgrade, and how to get acquainted with some art/architectural projects and research addressing the local context that had already been produced. In the resulting discussions, each participant had the opportunity to outline his/her individual point of view and areas of research. We then took a collective decision to go ahead with developing each of the individual projects that had been presented to the group.

At the end of the first public presentation of the project organised in the local community centre of Dunavski Kej on 29 November 2007, it became possible to identify three conceptual clusters, based on the focus of the respective individual proposals.

The first of these involved revisiting the concept of New Belgrade, as the administrative capital of Socialist Yugoslavia and the development of its neighbourhoods along socialist lines. The basic question that could be asked in this respect was how to deal with socio-spatial homogenisation vs. differentiation.

The second cluster related more to urban transformations in New Belgrade and the (im)possibilities of avoiding socio-spatial segregations and the overpowering spread of neo-liberal capitalist forces into the "empty" spaces in New Belgrade. Here the main questions posed were how it might be possible to form differentiated neighbourhoods, as opposed to shopping malls and business districts, and who would be responsible for taking the relevant decisions.

The third conceptual cluster dealt with the 'inside view' of someone who might belong to the "hood" – i.e. the view from within subcultural, marginalised and segregated neighbourhoods and meeting places in New Belgrade. The most relevant question for this cluster was how to initiate the creation of a community or neighbourhood.

Conclusion/Continuation

In trying to sum up the content of the project in one sentence for the flyer announcing its first public presentation, I wrote that it explored different connotations of the term neighbourhood, in the vocabulary of its urban, architectural and social contexts, and that it analysed the historical development and actual dynamics of the urban transformation of the neighbourhoods of New Belgrade. This sentence could be seen as a common denominator and a platform for all the different approaches to the topic developed in the course of more than a year long process of working within an international, interdisciplinary team. However, there is one particular topic that I would like to underline as a possible future focus for public debate, in connection with projects of this nature - namely, how to build on the local socio-political legacy of workers' self-management and reaffirm this concept in the new context, where a different kind of self-organisation was greatly to be desired.

In the turmoil of the rapid and wild urban transformations of New Belgrade the questions that Henry Lefebvre himself had posed, in relation to his ideas about the 'new citizenship' seem to have lost none of their relevance.²⁵ How might it be possible to develop new relations between the individual, society and the State? And could citizenship be redefined, in a way that took account both of the vagaries of globalisation (or *mondialisation* as he called it) and of both immigration and migration, which continue to shape the urban/social landscapes and new forms of belonging? Lefebvre's plea for a new form of citizenship itself relied strongly on the right to difference and self-management. He was seeking new rights for the citizen. This included the rights to information, free expression, culture, identity within difference (equality), self-management, and city-space and its services, among others factors that had yet to be defined.²⁶ In the text submitted for the 'International Competition for the New Belgrade Urban Structure Lefebvre elaborated on the new role of the citizen in the following way:

The right to the city comes as a complement, not so much to the rights of man (like the right to education, to health, security, etc.), but to the rights of the citizen: who is not only a member of a "political community" whose conception remains indecisive and conflictual, but of a more precise grouping which poses multiple questions: the modern city, the urban. This right leads to active participation of the citizen-citadan in the control of the territory, and in its management, whose modalities remain to be specified. It leads also to the participation of the citizen-citadin in the social life linked to the urban; it proposes to forbid the dislocation of that urban culture, to prohibit the dispersion, not by piling the "inhabitants" and "users" one on top of another, but by inventiveness in the domains and levels of the architectural, urbanistic, and territorial.

In the local context, one of the crucial aspects of the development of possible 'differentiated neighbourhoods'—as opposed to economic, ethnic or racial socio-spatial segregations fostered by the 'predatory capitalism' of today—is the potential for new types of self-organisation in local communities. If Lefebvre defined self-management (*autogestion*) as 'knowledge of and control (at the limit) by a group - a company, a locality, an area or a region - over the conditions governing its existence and its survival through change', it is through this notion of self-management that different social groups may be able to influence their own reality and even to fight for spatial justice, as Edward Soja suggested.²⁷

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²⁵ Serge Renaudie, Pierre Guilbaud and Henri Lefebvre, International Competition for the New Belgrade Urban Structure Improvement, Competition Report, 1986. In the accompanying text Lefebvre claims that, as with many other cities, Belgrade failed to realise the idea of the "The Socialist City". This was mainly due to its zoning which was based on conceptual and morphological schemes that could have led to nothing but failure, both in social and urban terms. He stated that the decision to "authoritatively separate, disjoint and disarticulate" the parts of a city would eventually kill it, as could be expected with any other "complex living organism".

²⁶ Elden, S., E. Lebas & E. Kofman (eds.) 2003. *Henri Lefebvre Key Writings*. London, New York: Continuum, pp. 218-219.

²⁷ Regarding Lefebvre's definition, see Ibid, p. 252 The right to self-management that Lefebvre was writing about involves the right to democratic control of the economy and, therefore, of companies, including national or nationalised companies - i.e. those that have, up to now, remained, to some extent, under state control. It is interesting, for the local context, that Lefebvre was arguing that it was precisely thanks to its principles of self-management that Yugoslavia was one of the few countries to be able, concretely, to pose the problem of the New Urbanism. Edward Soja was one of the guest experts contributing to the project; he gave two public lectures: one, in the Museum of Contemporary Art and the other, at the National Library in Belgrade.

TRANSLATION/COMMUNICATION

Eva Fotiadi

The current debate about art education provides the overall context for my paper. I have deliberately opted for a fairly general title, as my original aim was to examine a wide range of concepts, experiences and shifts in the framework of reference in the field of art education. These 'shifts', or transfers, are practically ongoing translations that play a prominent role in what is taking place and what is being communicated. When I speak about translation and communication here, I have in mind the whole nexus of linguistic and cultural translation and communication. The linguistic aspects will not surface as strongly in what follows as in the original version of this paper, which grew to a disproportionate length!

The first part of this presentation contains some thoughts about the ongoing process of translation that has operated at multiple levels within three teaching/ educational programmes I have been involved in since the beginning of this year. In the second part I will refer specifically to one of them, a series of guest lectures called 'Studium Generale' at the Gerrit Rietveld Academy. (My reason for discussing these is that last semester's Studium Generale focused on the themes of artistic research and knowledge production in the art academy, which have a particular relevance outside the frame of the Rietveld Academy itself). In the third part I will explain how it seems almost as if the ghost of Irit Rogoff, the director of the Department for Visual Cultures at Goldsmiths' College in London, has been hovering over us. Rogoff was quoted in the concept on which the semester's Studium Generale was based, as well as by several of the individual invited lecturers. Her writings and lectures appear to have articulated, if not exactly a wholly new way of thinking about art education, some of the most important current thinking about recent developments in education, and the relationship between education and curating. What I am interested in doing here is to take a couple of key terms and concepts that Rogoff has proposed, and to reflect on their translatability from London and Amsterdam to the southern part of the Balkans.

I have been involved with the Dutch educational context for the last six years. After spending the first five years primarily as a PhD researcher, it is only since the beginning of 2009 that I have found myself primarily in the position of teacher, or moderator. The first programme in which I was involved as a moderator in one of the seminars, was the BA in Art History at the University of Amsterdam (UvA). Due to my lack of Dutch, I taught this in English, which is far from unusual, even if it is not the general rule for a BA course. The second programme was the theory class for second year BA students in the Fine Arts Department of the Gerrit Rietveld Academy (GRA). ('Theory', at the GRA, potentially includes anything that is not practice. The teaching is in English, on account of the number of international students. There is neither a curriculum, nor anything specific that students are meant to know by the end of the year, apart from how to write artists' statements). Finally, the third programme was the above-mentioned Studium Generale of the GRA, for which I was a moderator. This year its title was 'Monte Verita', and its sub-title for the second semester, a quotation from Irit Rogoff: 'The Academy As A Model Of Being In The World'.

All three programmes are quite open, in the sense that there nothing very specific is required of the lecturer or moderator, with regard to the form or pattern of teaching. It is expected that students will be given some kind of assignment and that formal lectures in an amphitheatre will be treated as the exception, rather than the rule.

Each programme has its own logic and aspirations, as well as a degree of inbuilt scepticism towards any of the others. The Art History Department at the UvA regards the Art Academy as

too disorganised and rather superficial. The GRA's main body seems to regard the university's teaching of art history as somewhat rigid and old-fashioned, and sometimes sees the Studium Generale - which has been an autonomously organised initiative for the last nine years - as a kind of foreign body, grafted onto the school's organism. As an art historian, and especially as someone who neither trained as a teacher nor trained within the Dutch BA and MA educational system, I feel incapable of fully imbibing the logic of either of these separate programmes. This seems merely to be stating the obvious. One starts by becoming acquainted with the conditions of the different programmes (or apparent lack of conditions), and more particularly with the logic behind their 'openness', because the absence of clearly stated conditions does not mean that these institutions do not impose any, or that they do not harbour any unspoken expectations. What might be less obvious is that this situation is more or less the norm, rather than the exception. This is comparable to the parallel case of the students at the Rietveld Academy. Both the students and I, in our shared use of English and approach to the open-ended nature the curriculum, are caught up in a process of translation and appropriation within the system itself. This process of ongoing translation forms a substratum to that of communication, and is an operational necessity.

Something similar could be said about the situation of the Dutch-speaking, university students, even if the curriculum for the BA in art history is not as open-ended. The Dutch speakers are just as much caught up in the process of translation, because without even moving away from their familiar ground and themselves becoming culturally 'deterritorialised', they are expected to interact with a foreign teacher from a different educational system, using a foreign language that is neither theirs, nor her own. The situation at both the GRA and the UvA is exactly what we might have been led to expect, in the light of their targeting of international students, under the terms the Bologna Reforms of the higher education 'industry' (inspired by the American-British model) and the impact of economic globalisation and, very significantly, the English-speaking globalisation of the art world. Nonetheless I would maintain that this situation is still rooted in the pre-existing culture, and in a tradition that has its own inherent logic, specific to Amsterdam.

I will explain what I mean, by giving an example. Recently a colleague pointed out to me an article in a Dutch newspaper. The article suggested that, while the use of English is expanding at Dutch universities, Dutch students are unable to think in English. And I wondered: Why *should* they be able to think in English? How, and why, should one be expected, not only to be able to communicate effectively in a foreign language, but even think in it, without ever moving out of one's own country or culture? I remember that, when I was learning German at my German high school in Thessaloniki, which had existed since Ottoman times, in the late nineteenth century, I was told that you had really learned a language only when you started thinking in it. My school in the early 1990s was still a good school, in so far as it was a good example of a leftover of cultural imperialism in a territory that had not been colonised by a Western army. Nonetheless, back in late 19th/ early 20th century, the local middle-to-higher social classes voluntarily offered themselves up to cultural colonisation by the Western Europeans.

Today, more than hundred years later, if we take a closer look at the educational context of Amsterdam, we may detect an overall logic behind the constant emphasis on responding to present-day needs, whether by setting a flexible curriculum, establishing formal guidelines for teaching, or showing a general receptiveness to the use of English. The past, whether in the form of experience, tradition, continuity or local cultural specificity, is not often brought into the foreground. It still operates, but in a variety of indirect ways. At more visible, explicit levels, there seems to be an urgency, constantly to translate the present moment, with its own means, into its own terms. In a way this is the norm, inherited from tradition.

What is of interest for the present discussion in a Balkan capital city is that this underlying logic is in marked contrast to the cultural priorities inherited from different traditions that surface in contemporary regional, educational and cultural policies. The political, psychological or social construction of the present seems so much more often to fall back on translating and rehearsing the past. And this is inherently connected to the fact that de-territorialisation has not been a

process at cultural and economic levels, reflected in theoretical developments in education. But it has been a more powerful experience in the formation of political states. Therefore, also holding onto cultural constants has been a collective, psychological factor, as much as a tactical, political one.

Let me now turn to the second part of this paper, namely the Studium Generale of the GRA. The lecture programme comprised a total of six series of six lectures each per semester, all by invited speakers. The overall title for the year was 'Monte Verità' and, as mentioned above, the sub-title for the second semester was 'The Academy As A Model Of Being In The World' (quoting Rogoff). The choice of the general theme was influenced by the implementation in the Netherlands of the so-called Bologna Process in higher education. Bologna met with resistance in other educational systems (e.g. in Germany), but not in the Netherlands. Importantly, Bologna has foregrounded for art academies the question of what kind of knowledge they produce. And this means, what kind of knowledge does art produce? And how can the acquisition of 'art knowledge' by students be measurable and comparable between different schools - e.g., between an Amsterdam art school and a school in Skopje, Athens, Sofia, Barcelona, Hamburg or Tallinn? Bologna has also highlighted another important development in the field of art - namely, the fact that artistic practice is shifting from the production of objects to more research-based and knowledge-based approaches. In view of this, the organisers of the Studium Generale considered that critical debate on these developments should take place within the art schools, as well.

The six lecture series were²⁸: 1. 'The Debating Club', which explored the meaning of artistic research. 2. 'No Academy', subtitled, 'from limbo to freedom', which asked the question as to whether there could be such a thing as a teaching and learning situation (i.e. an educational situation, still) that was not an academy. 3. 'The Shadow Academy', that asked whether the current curriculum of the art academy was sufficient to cope with present needs, especially as most art academies' curricula are dominated by teaching competencies in media such as painting, drawing, design, photography and video. 4. 'The Artaud Academy', that focused on the impossibility of representing experience. Antonin Artaud was taken as departure point, as he was haunted by the idea of the unspeakable, from the beginning of his career onwards. 5. 'The Knowledge Academy', that asked the question of how, and why, artists and curators turned to artistic research and knowledge production, thus, in a sense, turning to educational spaces as 'spaces of potentiality', for the development of 'new critical practice' (to quote Irit Rogoff: 'Can or must an artist be a researcher and an educator?'). 6. 'The Global Academy', which asked: Whose culture is it anyway? How can an art school take into account its new context on the global stage? Are artists 'rootless cosmopolitans'? What makes it worth mentioning all this here is the fact that, in the range of questions that were posed, it might be possible to find something of relevance to art education in very different cultural and geo-political settings. The extensive booklet and website for the project, including information about the forty or so international participants (guest lecturers and moderators), constitute an easily accessible resource.

Finally, I will now move to the third and last part of this presentation. Whilst I had originally taken up a few concepts and ideas from Irit Rogoff as my departure point for some reflections on their possible translatability from London or Amsterdam to here, I ended up retaining only one.²⁹ As I mentioned earlier, ideas about art education articulated by Rogoff were inspirational in the conceptualisation of the Studium Generale's lecture series. They were heard by several invited speakers, who were not aware of one another's talks. The idea that I retained for the final version of this paper was the distinction Rogoff makes between the notions of criticism, critique and criticality. She sees these as successive stages in critical theoretical thinking about art, manifested also in the work of the art academies.

²⁸ The information is taken from the booklet, *Monte Verità (2) or the academy as a model for 'being in the world'*, Studium Generale, Gerrit Rietveld Academie.

²⁹ The related texts are available online: 'Academy as potentiality' <http://summit.kein.org/node/191>; 'From Criticism to Critique to Criticality' and 'Smuggling - an embodied criticality' <http://eipep.net/transversal/0806/rogoff1/en>; 'What is a theorist?' <http://www.kein.org/node/62>.

Criticism is understood here as ‘a form of finding fault and of exercising judgement according to a consensus of values’.³⁰ *Critique* is understood as the thinking that ‘examine[s] the underlying assumptions that might allow something to appear as a convincing logic’.³¹ Thus a notion of critique refers to the critical analysis of culture that aims, through analysis, to bring hidden structures and relations of art and power to the surface. *Criticality*, as the last concept and stage of thinking, is differentiated from both *Criticism* and *Critique*, in that, ‘while building on critique, [it] wants nevertheless to inhabit culture in a relation other than one of critical analysis; other than one of illuminating flaws, locating elisions, allocating blames’. What Rogoff calls *criticality*, she relates to a ‘reflective shift from the analytical to the performative function of observation and of participation’, where ‘meaning is not excavated for, but “Takes Place” in the present. Criticality exemplifies not just the dynamics of learning from, of looking at and of interacting with, works of art in exhibitions and in public spaces, but it also echoes the modes by which we have inhabited the critical and the theoretical over the recent past’.³²

There is a point here at which I find myself at a loss. If I transfer Rogoff’s model of criticism, critique and criticality to Greece, for example, the idea of passing over the stage of critique (the critical analysis of culture) as an already exhausted stage, makes me rather anxious. Rogoff asks: ‘What comes after the critical analysis of culture? What goes beyond the endless cataloguing of the hidden structures, the invisible powers and the numerous offences we have been preoccupied with for so long? Beyond the processes of marking and making visible those who have been included and those who have been excluded? Beyond being able to point our finger at the master narratives and at the dominant cartographies of the inherited cultural order? Beyond the celebration of emergent minority group identities as an achievement in and of itself?’ Her point is that the critical discourses developed over the last few decades in, for example, institutional critique, feminism, post-colonialism, and so on, have provided us with an arsenal of tools and methods for critical analysis. However, we have already moved on to a stage beyond this kind of critique within the art educational and institutional context.

Here I feel a bit at a loss, to understand fully the process of transfer-translation. On the one hand, I can see Irit Rogoff’s point, if I think, for example, of the postgraduate theory seminars in cultural analysis in Amsterdam, where analysing case studies with the aid of a range of the available tools from gender or postcolonial studies has turned into a kind of exercise in theoretical approaches rather than anything urgent and radical. I can also see Irit Rogoff’s point, and even find it quite liberating, when I think of the fact that some of the students in my Theory class at GRA even found that some of Andrea Fraser’s core propositions were more or less self-evident! But can I transpose this idea of ‘critique’ onto the situation in Greece and onto the relations there between art, education, theory and society? Can one apply it to recently ‘de-territorialised’ contexts, such as the new states that followed the dismantling of Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union? If I think of the Greek example, current theoretical reflection is haunted by the gaps and omissions in art historical writing, and by critical approaches that have *not* been taken, or were taken but never published, or failed to circulate widely. Some significant efforts have been made since the late 1990s to process the history of Greek contemporary art more systematically and critically. But it seems to me that this process is nowhere near reaching exhaustion. Elements of an approach grounded in critique are still relevant today, even if they are already becoming mixed up with alternative approaches, as one should not overlook the fact that at least half the younger generation of Greek art writers and curators have been trained in Britain! When it comes to testing the wider applicability of this model for thinking about criticism-critique-criticality, I would not have the knowledge to comment on examples from neighbouring countries, or whether it would be appropriate there to skip the stage of exercising a ‘critique’. I do not even know whether the model of thinking about ‘criticism-critique-criticality’ is ‘translatable’, in general.

³⁰Academy as Potentiality’.

³¹Ibid.

³²Ibid

I mentioned earlier that Rogoff's ideas seem to have given articulation to what has already been taking place, which is why she has recently been quoted repeatedly in art education debates. In a sense, her attempts at articulation are a form of answer to concerns seeking a form of expression - even if an answer is itself open to various translations or interpretations. If I feel a certain resistance to 'translating' these attempts at articulating an answer, or transposing them into another context, the reason is that I imagine I would first need to find out more about the educational situation and state of critical art writing in that particular context. This is why I believe events such as this seminar, and other forms of workshop, lecture series, exchanges and symposia should take place on a more systematic basis.

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English text edited by Henry Meyric Hughes

RECYCLED IMAGES

Slobodan Jovanović

After ten years of working as 'Talent Factory' and as 'Talent', the Serbian artist, Vladimir Perić (b. 1962, Zemun, Serbia, formerly Yugoslavia), finally presents his installations under his full name. His new ten-year long work-in-progress, 'The Museum of Childhood', was started at the end of 2006. In this project, he plans to exhibit his selection of objects (toys, photographs, tools, etc.) that were popular in most households during his childhood in former Yugoslavia. This museum will be made up of a collection of the exhibitions Perić plans to hold in various Serbian and European cities over the next seven years. 'The Museum of Childhood' had its big première in February 2007, in the Belgrade Cultural Centre, and last year part Perić presented some works as a part of group exhibition *Disclosure*, at the Museum of Modern Art in Saint-Etienne.

In his installations, Vladimir Perić appropriates discarded objects, without modifying them in any way or subjecting them to any kind of conservational measures. These are used objects, so it is very important to the author that they remain impregnated with the marks and stains that bear witness to the lives of their previous owners. An exhibition named *Taken Memories*, planned for the Museum of Applied Art in Belgrade, in October 2009, will be part of Perić's 'Museum of Childhood' project. For this exhibition Perić will present his new installations and video art, from photographs he has found at flea markets in Serbia over the last twenty years. One of these installations has already been presented in his exhibition in the National Museum in Vranje, in November 2006, which was the first showing of his 'Museum of Childhood' project. In these new installations, Perić comments on popular myths about the importance of individual works of art for the cultural heritage by appropriating these photographs and placing them on display in the public space of a museum. His installations in the Museum of Applied Art in Belgrade will be made of photographs taken by some known, some unknown and some very famous twentieth century Yugoslav photographers. Thus, Perić's 'Museum of Childhood' will come to represent a fraction of our cultural patrimony, assembled in a series of artistic installations over the next seven years.

In the act of appropriating photographs by some unknown artists, Perić places them in the institutional context of the Museum of Applied Art in Belgrade. As the new author of these artefacts, he imbues them with elements of their previous history, and that of their past owners. The result is a personal presentation of 'collective memory'. As far as we know, the purpose of art museums is to collect, archive and exhibit various works of art. Each museum piece has a history of ownership, but that is less important than the cultural and art historical value of that piece. The objects that Vladimir Perić incorporates into his installations are part of the history of the people who made them, cherished them and finally discarded them. These photographs were part of the lives of their owners, but they are also images of their lives.

The main protagonists of the photographs in Perić's *Recycled Images* are children, engaging in sporting activities or official ceremonies. They are part of the story that involves a history of private life based on 'popular memory'. The process of forming an informal history of society begins with an examination of personal photographs. These are not cherished for their aesthetics or quality, but for the context in which they are made. They are representations of an individual or group of people, and their purpose is to contribute to the identity of the user. These photographs reflect the way in which their authors wish to be seen. So, their basic function is the representation of happiness. They help us to reconnect with past events, so we can override the gap between past and present and redefine our relationship with parents, a carefree childhood or forgotten friends and memories.

After the First World War, when almost all the artifacts in Perić's collection were made, photographs of children were the central feature of the family photograph album, even though children did not have any influence on the manner in which they were photographed and were

merely expected to present themselves in a decent manner and keep still. We can read various conventions of family life into these photographs.. They become the place in which the family becomes identified. These documents record the happy moments of family life and become a focal point with which the members of the family are able to identify. But Perić finds all his photographs in flea markets, which are final destination of these treasured artifacts. Flea markets represent the end of their history, for the purpose for which they were originally intended, and the beginning of their new history within the Museum of Childhood.

According to Bernstein, personal photographs represent a limited code, whose meaning depends on whether the person looking at them is aware of the original meaning they embodied. If we don't know the history of the photograph, we lose the meaning of some of the original information it contains, but that 'limited code' still gives us enough information to work on. The photographs are then analysed in a new environment, where they can be made into the objects of study. According to Roland Barthes, photography registers a moment of an event that has already passed; therefore, it provides evidence of the existence of that moment. That moment is gone, but a record of it is preserved, in the form of a photograph. The photographic trace bears a certain relation to reality, so the photograph becomes an index of that reality. One of the distinctive features of photography is the way it functions as a referent, not as art, or as communication. Thus, it is situated behind its meaning – it is 'the message without a code'. It is a form of passing testimony.

Personal photographs, when regarded as historical documents, become aesthetic objects. The omnipresence of photographs enables us to examine them from a variety of different points of view, and their original content is erased. We have interests, in examining old photographs – thus, we may examine the clothes, postures, or facial expression of the person who is featured. A central focus of attention is the behaviour of the subject in different situations. The person, whose photograph is taken knowingly takes on a pose, in anticipation of the image. For example, when we make tourist photographs, we want to capture a particular moment and event, and the feeling of happiness we were experiencing, when the photograph was taken. These photographs have elements of carnivalesque behaviour and record moments of leisure that become the focus of desire, after the event.

For his Museum of Childhood, Vladimir Perić selects photographs that have a similar motif. Among several thousand photographs there are thirty to forty motifs that he incorporates into his installations. Thus, he establishes a sign in each photograph. When they are in relation to other photographs with a similar motif, they form a social history that is somehow at variance with the official history. Anonymous characters sometimes appear on photographs with different motifs, but that depends on the quantity of material that Vladimir Perić chooses to buy and then incorporate into his installations. At all events, this variety of characters enables us to focus on a given motif, that then becomes centerpiece of each video piece and installation. These motifs present a unique view of the collective history of a prosperous society.

LIST OF SPEAKERS

Dunja Blažević

Director of the University of Belgrade's Student Cultural Center Art Gallery from 1971 to 1976, Dunja Blažević later took over as a director and head of programming at the same Center from 1976 to 1980. In 1981 she began to produce and direct the TV program TV Gallery dealing with a new developments in art and author's video (the title is homage to Garry Schum) which was regularly broadcasted on Belgrade Television and on the National Network until 1991. From 1991 to 1996 she lived in Paris and worked as an art critic, curator and independent producer. Since 1996 Dunja Blažević has been a Director of Soros Center for Contemporary Arts in Sarajevo, B&H (2000 changed the name in - Sarajevo Center for Contemporary Arts - SCCA). 2004 – 2007 leader of the SCCA's multidisciplinary regional project De/construction of Monument.

Irina Cios

Art critic and curator, director of the International Center for Contemporary Arts, Bucharest, and guest lecturer at the Bucharest University. Phd candidate at CESI - Center for Excellency in the Study of Image, Bucharest.

Initiator and curator of the SPACE Gallery of ICCA (2000 – 2003) promoting experimental art and new media she organized important events in partnership with international art institutions. Initiator of an Artist in Residency program in 2007, organized in the frame of ICCA. Editor of contemporary art catalogues; Co-author of the volume Photography in Contemporary Art. Trends in Romania, after 1989 (2006). Contributes with articles and interviews in catalogues, journals and magazines like: Observator Cultural, Artelier, Balkon, Secolul 21, Praesens, Idea etc. Since 2006 president of the Romanian section of the AICA - International Association of Art Critics.

Branka Ćurčić

Program editor in the New Media Centre_kuda.org (www.kuda.org) from Novi Sad, Serbia, since 2002. She graduated Fine Art and Theory of Art and Media (MA) in Novi Sad and Belgrade. In the Center_kuda.org, she is the editor of publishing project (kuda.read) and she participates in organizing lectures, conferences, workshops and exhibitions. She also takes part in several international research projects and writes for several magazines. Ćurčić is interested in critical approaches to new media culture, new relations in contemporary culture and labor, contemporary art practices and social realm.

Zoran Erić

Born in 1968, Novi Sad, is an art historian, curator, and lecturer. He holds a PhD from the Bauhaus University in Weimar. Currently he is working as curator of the Centre for Visual Culture at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Belgrade. His research fields include the meeting points of urban geography, spatio-cultural discourse, and theory of radical democracy. Between 2005-2008 he was a member of the IKT Board and currently he is the President of the AICA International - Section of Serbia.

Slobodan Jovanović

Graduated from the Faculty of Philosophy in Belgrade, Department of Art History. Lives and works in Belgrade. Since 2007 he is a curator at the Department of Modern Applied Art at the Museum of Applied Art in Belgrade. He was engaged as an art critic at the Radio B92 and magazine Vreme, and was the editor of Remont Art Magazine. He is a member of AICA and a member of ICOM. He is laureate of DIUS Award for the best exhibition of the year in the Republic of Serbia in 2007.

Suzana Milevska

Curator and visual culture theorist based in Skopje. Her research and curatorial interests include postcolonial critiques of art institutions, gender studies of art, and participatory art. She is a professor in Art History and the Analysis of Styles at the Accademia Italiana Skopje and New York University in Skopje. Her texts have been published in more than twenty languages in various art magazines and academic journals such as *Feminist Review*, *Third Text*, *Documenta 12 Magazines/springer*, and in publications such as *Manifesta Companion*, 2008 and *Continuing Dialogues*, 2008.

Melentie Pandilovski

Curator and art critic based in Adelaide. Director of the Experimental Art Foundation in Adelaide (2003 to 2009), Director of the Contemporary Art Center in Skopje, Macedonia (1999 to 2002), and Curator of SEAFair – Skopje Electronic Arts Fair (1997-2002). His theoretical research deals with examination of the links between art, culture, technology, individual identity, and consciousness. Pandilovski was the Editor of *Art in the Biotech Era* (Experimental Art Foundation, Adelaide, 2008) and *Understanding the Balkans* (Contemporary Art Center, Skopje, Macedonia 2002). He has delivered texts about new media art for international conferences in San Diego, Perth, Beijing and in the International Symposium of Electronic Arts (ISEA) as artist and theorist (Chicago 1997, Liverpool/Manchester 1998, Nagoya 2002, Singapore 2008). He is a PhD Researcher, Visual Arts, at University of South Australia.

Eva Sevasti Fotiadi

Ph.D, (GR/NL) has studied art history, archaeology and museum studies in Greece, the U.K. and the Netherlands. Since 2003 she has been affiliated to the University of Amsterdam making research on contemporary socially and politically engaged art, public art, forms of collectivity and activism in art, leading up to a PhD entitled *Participation and Collaboration in Contemporary Art. A Game without Borders between Art and 'Real' Life* (2009). She has worked for exhibition making in Greece (Macedonian Museum of Contemporary Art, Thessaloniki, 2001-2003), Egypt (Library of Alexandria Biennial of Artists' Books, 2004), Amsterdam (*Relocated Identities: Overexposure*, 2004; *Connecting Cultures*, 2005; *Irene Kopelman Scale 1:2:5'*, 2008). She is currently teaching 20th century art history and theory at the University of Amsterdam and the Gerrit Rietveld Academy of Arts.

Syrago Tsiara

Born in Larissa, Greece, 1968. She studied History and Archaeology at the Aristoteleion University of Thessaloniki, Social History of Art (M.A.) at the University of Leeds and her PhD thesis was devoted to Public Art and the formation of National Memory. For the last ten years he has been working as a curator at the State Museum of Contemporary Art –Costakis Collection, lecturer at the University of Thessaly, and since 2007 she has been appointed director of the Thessaloniki Center of Contemporary Art and she is a curator of the 2nd Thessaloniki Biennale.