

CONTINENTAL



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in memory of Katalin Néray

THE TEXTS

Marko Stamenković (Serbia)

Transitional Economics & Contemporary Art Institution in the Post-Socialist South East Europe

- Political Background

We are suffering from a kind of post-partum depression: having long been pregnant with a future to which the world has now given birth (to paraphrase Marx), we are frankly disappointed.

Susan Buck Morss (1)

The depression that Morss talks of is very much present within the current political climate of post-totalitarian Serbia. More than ten years after Dayton and eight years after the NATO bombing, the priority of EU integration and accession to NATO have clearly been set as political priorities by the newly elected government(s). After the (non-violent) separation of Montenegro from the State Union with Serbia in May 2006, the two major current unresolved political issues that determine future directions are the question of the future status of Kosovo and the urgent obligations towards the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia in The Hague. It is within the framework of these obstacles (or possibilities?) that Serbian society faces its seventh year after the fall of the previous regime.

After a decade of isolation, predominantly due to political reasons in the Western Balkans (characterized by the restrictive mobility, oppressive policy of visa-regime, and limits of international communication), I speak from a position where the current situation reveals a new kind of blockade that is determining the bio-political realities of everyday life in the country. Contemporary art and culture are no exemption from this, whatsoever. I stress out this

necessity to have a 'direct physical involvement' with the international (professional) communities, since I see it as a fundamental precondition for one's proper professional engagement and development. The international context of this program, with colleagues from all over the region participating in it, is an ideal long-term cooperative setting where team work experiences could be exchanged, and further develop, for the benefit of all. My desire to encounter a 'real-time' practice, without constraints of work-improvisation (being a general principle of living and working in the conditions determined by isolation and blockade), would certainly bring benefits to my empirical comprehension of the REAL advantages and disadvantages regarding the curatorial profession today. To be firmly grounded in the (artistic and cultural) field of action necessarily involves the reconstruction of one's personal background and the specific history of one's professional formation. Connected to the reconstruction of the original intentions and attitudes that gave rise to the theoretical discourse as I am trying to point out here, the re-politicization of a proper position is based upon and dependent on one's individual experiences as well as on one's historical situation. This means that my attitude is necessarily inflected by my individual experience and historical context of working, living, and acting in the very conditions of the socialist and post-socialist space of former Yugoslavia, or (more precisely) - in the space between the 'official' (institutional, academic, and mainstream) and the unofficial (alternative and underground) contexts of the political, social, economic, and cultural realities of the late 1990s and early 2000s in Belgrade. Accordingly, my choice of the subject of curating (and the curatorial profession itself) was deliberate ever since

the beginning of my interest for contemporary art issues, and was inspired by some of the professionals in the field that I personally had a chance to encounter, talk to, learn from, work and cooperate with (most significant among them being a Belgrade-based curator and art-historian Biljana Tomic and a Ljubljana-based curator, philosopher, theoretician, activist, and artist Marina Gržinic). My personal interest is therefore conceived not only within the area of 'curating', but within a very precisely determined area of 'critical curating'.

- Professional Needs

The fact is that no comprehensive, long-term, critical and theoretical platform for curatorial education has been developed so far in the entire region of the South East Europe (with the exception of 'World of Art: School for Contemporary Art' - a curatorial course and training program initiated and organized by SCCA, Center for Contemporary Arts - Ljubljana, Slovenia). It is also a fact that the curatorial studies still do not figure as an existing field of specialist research in academic curricula at Eastern European universities. For those determined to get a proper theoretical and practical knowledge in this professional domain, these limiting conditions make therefore one's task towards this direction as difficult and complex as responsible and demanding. My modest (academic) contribution so far relates to the Master thesis research, finalized in 2005 at the University of Arts in Belgrade, regarding the role and status of curatorial profession in the post-socialist conditions of the East of Europe. (2)

I strongly disagree with a traditionalist (art-historical) usage of the term 'curating', where it is broadly synonymous with



the practices of 'exhibiting art' or 'mediating between artists and the audience/collectors/gallerists, etc'. I would rather claim that curating, in a contemporary (political) sense, conceives the phenomenon of exhibition only as one fragment (not even the most important, though the most visible), out of many other significant fragments constitutive for the working process and the production of knowledge. I would thus propose the possibilities of approaching curatorial discourses and practices from a critical standpoint, where a strong emphasis would be put on the inherent ideological mechanisms of power within the art institutions.

The intention of such an approach is not difficult to understand: it revolves around the idea of increasing visibility to a set of relations between the 'institutions of display' (museums and galleries), and the bureaucratic and corporate systems. By producing the distance towards the myth of the neutrality of the exhibiting space, as Brian O'Doherty would claim, my approach focuses on the tendencies of the systems of power and their implications in the contemporary art world. My own way of dealing with such a theoretical and political construction is framed by the interpretation of contemporary art practices in the context of globalization. It is exactly this transnational aspect of cultural production, determined by sound theoretical and political coordinates, that opens up a new discursive matrix for the articulation of meaning and values in the contemporary art world. In my case, there are two precise theoretical and political patterns pertaining to global capitalism, on the one hand, and post-socialist (Eastern European) transition (on the other) that are used as interpretive tools. This predominantly results in my interest for critical interpretations of the institution of art

and the dialectics between public and private property (and, consequently, the issue of ownership).

It is within a structure of post-socialism that my curatorial uncertainties can be proposed and re-thought today, while still longing for the possibility of the better. ('THE BETTER' here resonates with the opportunity for the most reasonable, still critical exit out of the aforementioned blockade, which would possibly open up the possibilities for a collective long-term transformation, be it mental, economic or political in general). Post-socialism evidently does not have an easily definable meaning. It could be defined as a certain state, i.e. a condition, environment, or context (in terms of social, political, economic, and cultural systems, formative of a specific overall climate) floating between bureaucracy and liberalism, real-socialism and late capitalism, production and consumption (enjoyment), but most notably – between the two orders: a real state order and a fictional state order, denoting a shifting character (and consequently the situation of change, movement, transfer, translation, i.e. 'transition') of transitional societies from a previously dominant (generally conceived as 'socialist') paradigm toward a new, still indefinable (yet generally foreseen as 'capitalist') paradigm. What is even more important is the fact that this transition paradoxically reveals a separation between the political and the economic. A transfer is witnessed from a previously dominant 'politicised' condition (in terms of the old, socialist ideology) toward an upcoming, 'economically' dominant condition (in terms of a new, capitalist ideology).

- Socio-economic Orientation

This new orientation is, therefore, provoked by the



demands which • determine the existence, development and programming of cultural institutions in general, and • influence the ways in which contemporary art is understood in the decision-making power structures. It also pleads for a more adequate treatment of contemporary art initiatives that put into question the ambiguous relationship between social and economic mechanisms involved in the cultural decision-making processes. This is especially important in relation to the successful partnerships and the new models of cooperation between the public institutions and the private sector, and/or among the *public* cultural institutions, the interest of the *private* capital, and the initiative of the *civil* sector in the art field. Primarily because of the regulatory and legislative changes that need to be introduced and implemented for the benefit of the proper understanding and support of such synergies, it is necessary to provide the change of attitudes towards the organization of these intertwined structures. How are, then, we supposed to fight for our own independence and not to lose our autonomy? What kind of alternative to the governmental involvement with the arts and the cultural sector is possible to propose nowadays? How these various processes, unified by a single term of reference (i.e. privatization), might affect the traditional role of the state/the artists/the cultural institutions (and of the corporate systems prevailing nowadays) towards the social responsibility issues within the evolving economic environment and the marketplace?

Belgrade, for example, won an award in 2006 for its favourable investment climate. The economy has been flourishing since Serbia opened itself to world trade. This wave of privatization is affecting everyone, not least the art world, which is reacting critically. Artists

and artists' groups have initiated various studies into the consequences of these economic changes for the population. In March 2006, Belgrade was awarded the name 'City of the Future in Southern Europe' in a competition organized by the 'Financial Times'. The prize serves as a recommendation to invest in the city, considered in an international perspective. The categories and criteria on which the jury made its decision are based on economic potential, cost effectiveness, human resources, IT and telecommunications, transport, quality of life and FDI promotion. The reason for the award was that the Serbian economy had grown 8.6% in 2004 and was expected to exceed 6% in 2005. Approximately 1.65 billion Euros were invested in Serbia in 2005. Microsoft has established its first East European Software Development Centre in Belgrade. Interventions of this kind confirm that what really determines the new political and economic situation in the transitional societies is the so-called 'investment climate'. Corporate aspects and commercial interests are becoming increasingly important in geo-political zones such as the former Eastern Europe. These countries still have very small markets, yet they are being overrun by foreign companies whose products are completely saturating local markets. In May 2005, Belgrade hosted the annual forum of the EBRD (European Bank for Reconstruction and Development), bringing together more than three thousand state officials, bankers, investors, economists, as well as representatives of the world's leading companies. This is the first time that such a large and significant economic event has been organized in Belgrade. Jean Lemierre, the President of EBRD, expressed his opinion about such a choice by saying that the bank had chosen Belgrade for the two-



day meeting in order to encourage continued economic reforms and positive changes in the region. Local journals announced the event by proclaiming the Serbian capital city 'the temporary banking capital city of Europe'.

On the other hand, speaking about an essential difference between the Eastern artist and the generic type of Western artist in the context of global art markets, the media theorist and professor Boris Groys uses two competitive media that produce value, and explains that the meaning of artworks in the West comes from the outside, i.e. from somebody who is buying these things: their value is produced by money (market), and is fundamentally determined by the intention of the buyer - the works had a meaning but only the one who would buy them would know it. This is a completely neutralized meaning, resulting from extreme atomization, individualism and self-commodification, in terms of commodification of the personality of the artist himself who presents himself as a commodity. Western artists encounter, in fact, a very slippery and open situation which is very market-driven and where every approach is legitimate; they try to avoid every possibility of being ideologically identified, because, according to Groys, people - being compatible with a possible set of expectations and being bought by people who maybe don't share their attitudes - just don't want to define themselves in ideological terms. In the East the value is produced by language (ideology), turning the meaning of artworks to the production processes coming from the inside. The meaning in the East is ascribed through a certain producer of value, i.e., the ideological mechanisms of value production. Eastern artists use a strategy that is quite opposite to their fellow colleagues from the West - a strategy of organizing discourse as

value. The situation in the East has been determined by a strong value order, but (no matter how deep the capitalism intrudes the body of Eastern Europe), this situation still provides a possibility to connect both value productions, the possibility of interplay between discursive value production and commercialization in both directions: the Eastern system, which was almost exclusively a system of discursive value production, is capable of functioning like a kind of machine that turns discursive value production into market value production and also in the opposite direction.(3)

The idea about bringing closer together the contemporary discourses pertaining to art and economy emerges from my current interest in developing an interdisciplinary curatorial platform under the same title [art-e-conomy], in an international collaborative context. The platform was initiated in Belgrade in 2005 with an attempt to re-think the ideas behind the economy of art and the intersection of cultural, economic and business conditions in the processes of globalization. In the local context, art-e-conomy has opened up the issues of contemporary cultural production and the aesthetic dimensions of social and economic transformations in the post-socialist Eastern European situation. It thus serves as my point of departure in developing a specific idea for projects-development, the focus of which has been also put on the Contemporary Art Institution and its respective models (museums, galleries, cultural centers) that are being re-developed and reconstructed in the region as subject to the pressures of global economic, social and political pressures and transformations today.

The main intention is to pose questions about the logic of the market economy, its implications in the institutional



art field, and the way it influences the structure of a contemporary global society. art-e-conomy therefore departs from the questions such as: Why is it important to think about economy in relation to art? Is it possible to talk about the ways in which contemporary art represents economic processes, and (if the answer is positive) what kind of meaning this artistic discourse brings to light? How this art can be read and how this discourse can be interpreted as a source of knowledge about contemporary economy? It addresses the Institution of Contemporary Art as a form of knowledge production, but also as a discursive instrument where, beside the theoretical, visual and organizational aspects of the art programs, the administrative power and hierarchy take place.

Provided that some cultural professionals are critical about the issue of economy, while others take an outright affirmative position, my curatorial approach is supposed to explore various aspects of visual and organizational practices today that are able to offer diverse positions with regard to contemporary global capitalism and the neo-liberal discourse in the world of economics and in the media. Through analyses of economic and organizational mechanisms in the contemporary art projects and artworks, art-e-conomy aims at

- establishing an explicit relationship between contemporary art and economy as understood from a specific perspective pertaining to South East Europe today, and
- fostering the articulation of the various practices of cultural intervention in the region, related to the conditions of working, living, and acting in the field of global economic transformation nowadays.

By establishing explicitly this relational discourse, art-e-conomy is conceived as a stimulating fertile ground and a contribution toward common interests for both

cultural and economic sectors. In terms of subject matter, it focuses primarily on the intersections between current cultural and artistic practices and theories, as well as the social and economic function and relevancy of global production today. The central topic to what the project is intended to convey, however, is a notion of contemporary art as subject to the current economic change.

In order to stimulate an interdisciplinary, multi-levelled and transnational research-based approach, art-e-conomy fosters the need to encourage a broad range of perspectives, from social and economic sciences and humanities to organizational studies, law and public policy, as well as a diverse set of topics to be explored in accordance with the artistic and cultural scope of the idea. Through a creative (both affirmative and critical) approach, art-e-conomy attempts to give a selected analytical overview of the most significant actual protagonists, programs and projects dealing with the relationship between artistic and economic issues, involving both the theoretical dimension and direct investigation in the field. It will contribute towards answering the questions related to the complexity, similarities and contrasts of contemporary cultural and business life, while fostering direct exchange between different professional identities and expert communities.

In order to encourage a long-term platform for further dialogue, art-e-conomy is being realized in a multiple way and provides public visibility through a set of media-based activities. These activities comprise lectures, seminar-style meetings and presentations by the invited experts in the fields of contemporary culture, business and economics, who present their specific positions related to the main thematic framework of the platform. Beside the ongoing

discursive events, the outcome of the project is supposed to take form of a publication, a set of exhibitions, and an extensive scientific thesis (PhD).

Starting from the critical positioning within the global sphere of exhibition making and art production, art-economy is all about the paradigm shift taking place in - what has been politically termed as - South East Europe, a territory still gaining much of its daily disturbances from what could be highlighted as suffering from a 'non-EU' syndrome. This status of "non-being-but-still-somehow-belonging-to" the political matrix of united heterogeneity (that is to be recognized today as the "European Union") is actually revealing a double-sense process insisting on political change, while at the same time being entirely supported by the new economic paradigm (that is to be recognized today as the "Global Capitalism"). It might be that this ambiguity still contributes to the kind of depression Buck-Morss was referring to; however, there is no more time for playing – the depression could only be eradicated by concrete and responsible political acts towards a (finally) sober state of being.

1. Quoted from her lecture, 'The Post-Soviet Condition', May 2005, Faculty of Architecture, Belgrade
2. M. Stamenković, 'Status of Curatorial Practices in the Post-Socialist Condition', MA Thesis under the supervision of Misko Suvakovic, PhD, University of Arts Belgrade, Oct-Nov 2005
3. 'It's like a Drug Experience', interview with Boris Groys, in 'Kontakt. The Arts and Civil Society Program of Erste Bank Group in Central Europe', No. 3, September 2004, <http://kontakt.erstebankgroup.net/magazines/issue3>

Nebojša Vilić (Macedonia)

Shifting of the Curatorial Paradigm or about the Death of some Art Professions

The main idea of this proceeding tends to address the current position of the curatorial practice that expresses the situation in which the museum-based concept of curator/ship is shifted into the wider field of non, even, institutionally organised art events (as an extreme example). In recent times, there are more and more courses, summer schools, university curricula and even scholarships for studying this particular discipline. How comes this widen and increased interest?

The term 'curator' itself in some countries and languages is still not officially implemented in the dictionaries of the art professions. There is still confusion about the meaning of the term going on together with the term 'custodian'. But, both of them are still keeping the very same meaning: a keeper of a museum or other collection or a guardian of a minor. Or, at least, they are referring to a description of one profession related to the institution of the museum and its collection.

From here on, the subject of this proceeding is how and why the institution of the museum curator diverse in the past thirty years in the world of art. In fact, what happened is that the recent appearances of the curator/ship abandon the strict field of the profession of the art historian, who was/is responsible for the presentation of the collection of/in one museum. The term from within of the institution of the museum went out and is entering the very same institution from outside. Some other curators are creating now the presentation of the

art production in the museums. And not even so: they produce a different interpretation than the historical one. So, in time, the role of the curator had changed. In the very beginning the role of the curator was to deal with the representation of the already created art. Then, in the second half of the 20th century this role had to confront the idea and the structure of the museum as a part of the institutional system in which the art work had to exist and verify itself. Nowadays, the curatorial practice is a matter of negotiation and production: between the artist [as creator and producer], the institutions [from museums to the funding bodies], up to the production of the ideas for/of an exhibition. Therefore, not rarely the curator is denominated as producer [overtaken meaning from the film industry], entrepreneur [market], moderator [management], promoter [entertainment industry], mediator [digital industry], negotiator [politics], etc. Or, the curator is, more or less, all of them in one.

The related issue to this situation is the contemporary art criticism. First of all, the art criticism is in serious crisis. The professional, and by that, ethical standards are so widely enlarged that the meaning of the critique is less and less important. Standing at the point that the critique has to be affirmative only, led to the situation that there is no negative critique at all. By that, a vital dimension and qualification of the art criticism is cut. From here on it lost its meaning for the wider public sphere [to which it is addressed]. The interpretation is weakened due to the lack of deeper researches and analysis, lack of keeping to the structure of the system of knowledge and the professional ethics. And in such condition, the art criticism was damped down, even dulled. The importance of the art criticism was decentred and by that diminished. The

centralised power of the museum curator which produces historical values is turned into decentralised producer of instant values of the democratic processes of the equalising neo-liberalism. Under the new forms and types of curator, curatorship and curatorial practice a new type of art criticism arise: affirmative.

The second relevant factor is the change of the nature of the art work itself. Or, which is better to say, its appearance, form and content. It is more than obvious that the art work does not exist any longer through the 'classical' or the modern notion of definition of it. The art work became demystified, open and processual, interactive and changeable as a consequence of the ideas of and for democratisation: less individual, but more collective result of the process of its appearance. The 'fine-art' became art by involving other media, other art disciplines, other kinds of art. It became more narrative and less depicted. The power of image was accompanied by the power of text - the power of imaginative turned into the power of functionalism [in many different ways]. Such a condition of the art is now more a creation in behalf of something else [often even outside of the field of art at all] more than of the representation of the individual statement incorporated into the pure artistic [formalistic] procedures that have to generate artistic values. Weaker the relation with the modern idea of the art, the stronger influence in the society: less social, more societal.

In general, the new kinds of artistic activities are in need of new kinds of their presentation and interpretation. The domination of the context [or the contextualisation of the art work] replaced the interdisciplinary structure of the art work into intradisciplinary existence of the art work. The more fields [or disciplines] involved, the better



the work becomes. Same as the curator became all from everything [producer, entrepreneur, moderator, promoter, mediator, negotiator, etc.].

Through this prism onwards, the curatorial practice [even more - curatorial projects] is changing the whole system of the art world. The curated art exhibitions became a reading of the topic, theme, title of the exhibition posed by the curator himself. They have to provide the contextualisation of the art production more than its historisation. Immediate result for immediate use. As everything today.

Hence, what are the new forms of curator/ship, what is the reason for that change or innovation and what is the meaning of them? First of all, they all derive from the concept of museum curator (●) and diverse in three possible lines (●●). They are defined as follows:

- Museum Curator - the original notion of the profession, educationally derived from the field of art history: designated as position of production of power [regarding the artist's expectations]; the main role of it is production of meaning of the museum's collection.
- Free-lance Curator - is the practice of [still, but not only] an art historian outside of the museum and its collection, but into the field of the general art production; it appears as new possibility for 'employment' in the widen market of labour; the main role of it is production of meaning of the contemporary art production.
- Artist as Curator - the practice of the artist(s) as overtake of the curator/ship as a tool of her/is conceptual and practical expression, but not artistic expression yet; mostly appears as reaction of the 'critique in a first person singular' of the art critics/curators from the early 80s; the main role of it is production of alternative meaning.
- Guest Curator - is, so-called, experimental type of

curator/ship, done by non-professional from the field, such as guests of the museums, writers, architects, art lovers and, even, some casual people; it is an activity besides the legitimacy and responsibilities; the main role of it is production of receptional meaning both of museum's collection and/or contemporary production.

All of these three positions are deeply questioning the radical base of the idea of the curator/ship. Or, in other words, how happened that the curator/ship turned itself from a position of defined and structured activity in an institution into another possibility to access the wider market of labour, liaison and entertainment? This situation shows the consequences of decentralisation of the institutional power and its dispersion to the less powerful and numerous activities as production of the exhibitions and various art projects. From here on, there is a reflection that the system of promotion, presentation and definition of the work of art [or the collection and groups of them], somehow turned back in the time:

- From The Ancient Craftsman
[ars vulgaris and ars poiesis]
- Towards The Modern Artist
[ars modernis]
- [back] Into The Pre-modern Entrepreneur
[ars 'entrepreneuris'].

Two art works can be a appropriate to illustrate this. Two work of the Croatian conceptual artist from the 1970s Mladen Stilinović, 'An Artist who cannot speak English is not an Artist' from 1992 (canvas, colour; 140x300 cm) [fig. 1] correspond to the new needs of the artists regarding

the new requests and conditions of the system of art. The English language as 'lingua franca' is the tool more of communication of the artist, than a component of the art work itself. A decade later the young Macedonian artist Oliver Musović, referring to the Stilinović's work, created the work 'The Artist', 2003 [fig. 2] (re-designed as artist's pages project in the art magazine 'Art republika' [Skopje] 1 (3) (2005): (48-9) [fig. 3]. There he lists most important things that the artist should know and be able to do, according to his own and other artists' experiences, to enter and build an international career. The highlighted statements [by N.V.] [fig. 4] are very essential for the transformation of the notion of artist: from a modernist creator s/he turned into someone who has to be able and capable to manage different activities, most of them based on the negotiations with the institutions and curators - s/he became an entrepreneur.

Turning back to the definition of the contemporary curator [which is different from the curator of contemporary art], from the other side, in which different descriptions and denominations [producer, entrepreneur, moderator, promoter, mediator, negotiator, etc.] it seems that both of the professions are sharing the same condition: in which the both 'pure' professions [art historian and artist], by this widening (or enriching), but first of all - mingled and melted, are diminished.

By that, as a consequence of the neoliberal notion of decentralisation [of the power], what is happening now is increasing level of shifting of the curatorial paradigm into the democratized [!?!], yet numerous, and by that reason - less meaningful type of activities.

AN ARTIST WHO CANNOT SPEAK
ENGLISH IS NO ARTIST

1



2

ART

THE ARTIST HAS TO SPEAK ENGLISH / THE
ARTIST HAS TO HAVE A PORTFOLIO AND BE
READY TO SHOW IT AT ANY TIME / THE
ARTIST HAS TO AT LEAST APPEAR AS
HAVING SOME POLITICAL VIEWS / THE
ARTIST HAS TO BE NICE TO CURATORS,
MUSEUM DIRECTORS, GALLERISTS... / THE
ARTIST HAS TO KNOW HOW TO USE
COMPUTERS, AT LEAST TO CHECK EMAIL /
THE ARTIST HAS TO BE INFORMED,
ESPECIALLY ABOUT OTHER ARTISTS / THE
ARTIST HAS TO ALWAYS APPEAR AS
WORKING ON A "PROJECT" / THE ARTIST HAS
TO EXHIBIT OCCASIONALLY (ALTHOUGH IT IS
NOT NECESSARY, AS LONG AS THE
PREVIOUS CONDITION IS FULFILLED) / THE
ARTIST HAS TO KNOW HOW TO WRITE
PROJECT PROPOSALS / THE ARTIST HAS TO
BE ELOQUENT. "MY WORK SPEAKS FOR
ITSELF" DOES NOT WORK ANYMORE /

THE ARTIST



with the famous master René Brice

*Occasional photo
in the magazine
with some big shot
would be very good too*

ART POINT

3

THE ARTIST HAS TO SPEAK ENGLISH / THE
ARTIST HAS TO HAVE A PORTFOLIO AND BE
READY TO SHOW IT AT ANY TIME

THE
ARTIST HAS TO BE NICE TO CURATORS,
MUSEUM DIRECTORS, GALLERISTS... THE
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THE ARTIST HAS TO BE INFORMED,
ESPECIALLY ABOUT OTHER ARTISTS / THE
ARTIST HAS TO ALWAYS APPEAR AS
WORKING ON A "PROJECT"

THE
ARTIST HAS TO KNOW HOW TO WRITE
PROJECT PROPOSALS

"MY WORK SPEAKS FOR
ITSELF" DOES NOT WORK ANYMORE /

4

Maja Cirić (Serbia)

Mind the Gap! Towards a Defined Methodology of Curatorial Practice?

In their book 'What is Philosophy?' Deleuze and Guattari ventured that different forms of thinking, each in their own way, manage chaos through various interventions upon its essence: that is, philosophy creates concepts, art nurtures sensory feelings, whereas science produces different functions. They also wrote that there is an inevitable interaction between these separate planes of human imagination, and that there is always a possibility of the entropic descent of our constructs into chaos once again.

Methodology is the systematic study of methods that are, can be, or have been applied within a discipline. Curatorial practice, being a wide interdisciplinary field, implies the process of negotiation between concepts, feelings, functions and contexts. Therefore the methodology of the curatorial practice should always inscribe in its *rationale* and the philosophical assumptions the awareness of the possible gap that exists between these discourses. Laurence Wiener once said that art does not come with a manual of instructions. One more reason for us to say that multiple readings cannot be articulated. However, curators could benefit from the illumination of possible gaps. By raising the awareness about these gaps, curators can develop their practice more accurately and in accordance with particular ethics.

- Gap number 1: Artist-Curator

It occurred more than once, that an artist complains about the curator, who picks the work of art out of their context

and use it in a completely different one. This contextual shift often makes the artistic concept completely invisible. If this is the case, how can we improve the position of the artist? How can we speak on their behalf? If a serious research is made prior to the selection of works, is a research of the artist's intentions a must? Or, is a proper method, one that does not overlap the work of art, beneficial to both, a curator and an artist? If the work of art is exhibited properly, it can keep its autonomy.

- Gap number 2: Exhibition Concept-Exhibition Content
It often occurs that the text is extremely well written and that the concept is developed, but that the works of art illustrate the concept, only if we inscribe the text over them. It is also a case that, although a text fits a particular work of art, its meaning does not fit in a local context. How can a curator respond to the needs of the local context?

- Gap number 3: Visitor-Exhibition

An exhibition catalogue often serves as a tool, a facilitator for the comprehension of the show. Through the catalogue, curator's idea reaches the audience and the mediation process is stimulated. Has the catalogue become a secondary tool, in respect to the development of recent curatorial methodologies?

In order to demonstrate a positive example of how these gaps can be bridged, or at least diminished, I would like to introduce one particular collective. Founded in January 2005, Le Bureau/ is a group of curators based in Paris, whose aim is to question the very form of the exhibition as a medium. They got together in order to challenge the multiplication of independent curators, also called 'authors', and exhibitions that are defined as

the showcasing of an ensemble of artworks following an individual's intentions: exhibitions which often mask singularities behind a supposedly optimal presentation of the works. According to their statement, Le Bureau/ was founded as a group, in order to question these exhibiting strategies by avoiding the prominence of a single personality. This method is special, since multiple readings are already inscribed in it.

In this perspective, Le Bureau/ curates exhibitions following precise protocols highlighting such examinations, while also surveying exhibition practices: for example, through the constitution of a library (grouping texts and archives dealing specifically with the subjects of curating and exhibitions), and through conferences, publications, and a web site.

Le Bureau/'s method is based on the fact that they have chosen to be a mobile and infiltrating entity. In order to overcome the third impasse between the visitor and the exhibition, Le Bureau/ always integrates as a pre-existing and functional group in the general structure hosting the exhibition. As they say, unlike subcontracting, which would consist in delivering a totally pre-designed project, Le Bureau/ includes the functioning of the hosting structure in its project. Each event is thus conceived in terms of the hosting structure's own stances regarding exhibition displays and strategies; Le Bureau/ adapts to every new structure practically and nominally. Thus, at each exhibition, Le Bureau/ will carry the name of the current project, becoming Le 'Bureau de...' For example, in the case of the exhibition '35h' at Les Laboratoires d'Aubervilliers (December 2004), Le Bureau/ was called 'Le Bureau des 35h'.

The exhibition 'Nuages fig.1' by Le Bureau/ is a possible



way to resolve the gap between the artist and a curator, but also to enhance the mediation of the piece of art, and inscribe the exhibition concept in its practice. In this exhibition Le Bureau/ proposes a selection of works presented in slide format, hanging within optical viewers. This presentation plays on a virtual multiplication of the exhibition space and facilitates the exhibition of series of works of different artists. This way the autonomy of the work of art is maintained. It thus allows one to consider at the same time the singularity of the works, registered within the closed framework of the optical viewer, and their comparison, seen at a glance, quick or attentive, selective or exhaustive, of the spectator - the resultant visual combinations depending on the trajectory taken by each individual.

Due to its incapacity to bridge every possible gap, curatorial methodology cannot be entirely articulated. However, this example has shown us that there is a strong potential for the evolution of the curatorial practice. Le Bureau/ has demonstrated the possibility for the integration of multiple agents in the curatorial practice. These curators think creatively of different ways to inscribe their texts in the physical structure of the exhibition, but are also responsive to the local context and to the artist's intention. They represent a new method of curating, that goes beyond the mere assembling of the artworks around a particular topic.

Santa Nastro (Italy)

Building a strategic Development: Fundraising for Contemporary Art?

This speech will study fund raising as a model network in Eastern and Western Europe, with the aim of reaching, through culture and contemporary art, the starting point in order to create advanced cultural districts as the ones described by Prof. Pier Luigi Sacco, the scientific director of 'goodwill'. This model is one of the most innovative approaches in the local development issue. Today a wide survey of international experiences shows how economical dynamics of innovation and knowledge demand new forms of territorial integration. The traditional districtal mono array scheme is replaced by a model of horizontal integration linking operators from different channels in new forms of partnership and cooperation. Culture represents the 'fil rouge' of this horizontal model of integration, operating on a double level: on one hand culture acts on the social spread of behaviours and of innovative ideas in the various components of the society; on the other hand, instead, it influences the creation of new fields of learning and interaction encouraging the entrepreneurial risk's culture and the disposition to change.

There are three different approaches concerning the development of the advanced cultural district: the first one is based on the attraction of resources and external talents reflecting only partially the Richard Florida's theory; the second one is based on the creation of cognitive skills spread among the population (capacitation) and comes



from the Amartya Sen's approach; the third one is based on the creative reconversion of the pre-existent industrial structures and recalls the Michael Porter's approach.

In the anatomy of an advanced cultural district, characterized by a creative combination of the mentioned three development channels, it is possible to identify – on the base of a critical and careful analysis of the most interesting and innovative cases of study – twelve actions or politics of intervention. These actions could be interpreted both as actions or working modalities of the system and as the description of a being or, further, as a strategic address for the intervention politics on the same system.

The 12 actions/politics are:

1. quality of the cultural offer
2. capacitation and education of the local community
3. entrepreneurial development
4. attraction of external firms
5. attraction of external talents
6. running of the social criticality
7. development of the local talents
8. citizens and local community participation
9. quality of the local governance
10. quality of the production of knowledge
11. internal network
12. external network

It is curious to record that the model of the network for culture diffusion was, immediately after 1989 and for almost two decades, the base of Eastern European countries' development.

Indeed, after the independence from the URSS at the beginning of the Ninety's, Eastern European countries became protagonists of an increasing development in contemporary art production and of the creation of a supporting system of promotion on an international scale (see Luigi Fassi), in spite of the enormous transition difficulties due to the passage from a statist artistic system as the Soviet one, to a liberist and globalized one characterized by international competition. Probably, this process would have been long and traumatic without the birth of the Soros Centers for Contemporary Art created as financial emanations of the Soros Foundation and the Open Insitute of New York.

The network was born in 1985 and was formed by 19 foundations dislocated in different Eastern European cities and countries (Riga, Skopje, Prague, Tallinn, Moscow, Sofia, St. Petersburg, Kiev...). Some of its aims were:

- favouring the birth of further not for profit associations (i.e. the 'i_CAN' International Contemporary Art Network registered in Holland with the aim of continuing the Soros mission and maintain a high level of condivision;
- supporting the development and the diffusion on an international level of the Eastern European contemporary arts as vital elements of an open society;
- encouraging the mobility and the exchange of human and material resources;
- encouraging cultural spread with specific educational programmes aimed to enlarge contemporary art targets;
- making Eastern European creativity competitive on an international level through an activity of promotion and thanks to the creation of a complex network of contacts, lead by a fragmented system of non-profit organization;
- documenting the local artists' activity;

supplying prizes and organising annual exhibitions.

The Soros network today is dismantled and reformulated, but yet is an example of an internal network, despite its heterogeneous composition. In a way of thinking finalized to the creation of a cultural advanced district, the main aim should be the creation of a transnational network joining West and East with a spirit far from the mutual aid that sometimes animated the Soros, and also without the assistentialist spirit of a tired, but strong, Western Europe, which researches new folklorist and dizzy emotions and, finally, it should be far from using and casting relationship finalized to the collection of the European finances. This network spirit should be a meeting held on a joint floor of optimal exchanges of resources and long term ideas, having as its final aim not only the attainment of pragmatic objectives within the project, but also the consolidation of a common feeling and of stable and productive relationship, finalized to the local communities involvement, with a particular attention to young people, asked to know, meet, travel and share together new ideas.

On these premises and in the contemporary art field, 'goodwill' is building two important projects finalized to the creation of an enlarged strong network.

- The first one is the Festival of contemporary art 'Futuro Presente/Present Continuous', the first example of Contemporary Art Festival in Italy.

The Festival is not focused on exhibition events, but aims at constituting a global platform for the elaboration and the presentation of new ideas, experiences, and models. Such initiative may have a very strong appeal for all

practitioners working in the art field, doesn't matter if they are artists, curators, critics, museum directors, gallery owners, managers, collectors, and so on, or general public which constitutes an increasing part of the audience of major contemporary art events. The aim is to stimulate the debate among different groups belonging to the art system, involving students, collectors, firms, foundations interested in contemporary art.

In the international contemporary art scene, there is a substantial and growing number of festivals going on, some of which is very ambitious and financially well endowed. Nevertheless, virtually, all of them are focused on exhibition events. What is still missing in spite of the number of already launched initiatives is a meeting place to discuss about the outstanding issues and prospects of the field on a global level.

This mission is particularly well fitting into the 'new' festival format with its wide development in the Italian context. The entire urban environment of an Italian town could be a place for presentation, discussion or meeting, with a number of parallel events taking place and all revolving around one main theme, which is analyzed from many points and perspectives. This relatively informal setting favours the interaction between the speakers and the audience, and is especially conducive to effective networking: a substantial key factor, for instance, of the success of the Literary festival in Mantua.

The choice of Faenza as the hosting place for the festival is dictated by several reasons.

It has already launched an ambitious project of culture-led local development, promoted by the town hall, and supported by the network of local cultural organizations, which aims at making Faenza a culturally thriving city at



the national and global level, and sees in the festival its key future asset to achieve this goal. Moreover, the city hall is promoting new cultural institutions, a new non-collecting exhibition space with an all-European focus of consulting curators, a new multi-disciplinary cultural facility and a new centre of artists in residence.

The city of Faenza tends towards the creation of synergies among the productive, formative and cultural sector in order to carry out a progressive cultural district and, under the scientific coordination of Pier Luigi Sacco, is fostering the link between the local government, the civil society (the so called third sector), the university and educational system, the corporate sector and the cultural producers. This long-time strategic policy starts from the process of collaboration between public and private subjects, not omitting the important citizens participation: they can suggest possible solutions and identify projects to realise. In a way, the "progressive cultural district" model ideally encompasses all these aspects in a common theoretical perspective, where the crucial integrating role is played by cultural innovation and production (in its interaction with technological innovation) and by its gradual transmission to different industries and fields of activity. The "progressive" aspect of the district organization lies in the fact that these dynamics are rationally anticipated by the actors of the local system and is therefore strategically pursued as a collective, cooperative endeavour of cross fertilization. The Festival participates to the triennial strategic plan for the progressive cultural district in Faenza (2006-2008).

The theme proposed is 'Futuro Presente/Present Continuous', that wants to convey the idea of exploring what is coming just after what is now under the limelight of the

contemporary art scene, both in terms of presentation of outstanding experience and of discussion of critical issues and unexploited opportunities. This sort of theme appears to be especially appealing for testing festival's potential, maximizing the impact of a new initiative that aims at the filling of a pre-existing void by providing a platform to discuss issues of strict actuality, which are customarily covered by the informal talks taking place in the context of the major art events already existing, and occasionally touched by isolated, unsystematic events as conferences and talks programmed within a given exhibition event. Events are organized as parallel sessions, according to a schedule that is carefully planned in advance but that contains some islands of flexibility for last-minute initiatives.

The festival is organized along three full days, most optimally during a weekend (Friday-Sunday).

It will take place on 23rd – 25th May 2008, dates carefully chosen in order to contribute to the 'European Year of Intercultural Dialogue'.

One of the most important aims of the Festival is, indeed, encouraging intercultural dialogue, favouring the mobility of international culture operators (but also schools or institution) and the circulation of new ideas, with a particular attention to Countries of the EU enlargement that have a fundamental position in the Festival planning and organization. Mnac (Bucharest), Acax (Budapest), Caic (Vilnius), together with UIAH – University of Art and Design (Helsinki), with their specific attention to conservation, cultural development and education, will plan an impressive part of palimpsest, scheduling debate, seminars and workshop about their own purpose for the future. Moreover, another Festival aim is to become a

possible intermediary of future collaborations between European art institutions and schools, a place of meeting in which work together and stipulate possible new professional and emotional alliances.

Furthermore, a particular attention is given to new generations and students of every age and level of scholarisation, that will be also involved in the planning of the Festival's programme. Some European schools, from France, England, Italy et cetera, in fact, will be invited to contribute with a self – governing event and will be hosted by the local community in order to create a very strictly dialogue and relationship among different realities.

The idea of the network within the Festival of contemporary art focuses the desire to add value to the initiative thanks to the presence of some heterogeneous international presences and, above all, to the idea of understanding the project as a work in progress in which the involved institutions became active promoters of the event and the Faenza city is transformed into a transnational island supported by culture and contemporary art, bonding agents of the network.

- From similar guidelines moves Fondazione March, that was born in Padova on the last 29th March, thanks to the passion and the ideas of the President Silvia Ferri De Lazara that makes good use of the strategic consulting of 'goodwill' for the fund raising, the cultural and artistic planning and the governance.

As far as the governance is concerned, the model proposed by F.M presents many innovative characteristics if we speak about contemporary art. In facts the traditional

models are foundations that start up for: defending a pre-existent property; defending an immaterial inheritance; continuing an excellence route (i.e. Fondazione Merz, Cittadell'arte, Pistoletto). The F.M instead moves from very different premises. In fact F.M would be a project for contemporary art with a spirit that resembles some American not-profit laboratories of production and promotion of the new trends in contemporary art. F.M has involved Porsche as a promoting partner, beginning with the famous car firm a route that refuses the simple donation and promotes a model of co-division of values in which the firm invests its own credibility, in a long term relationship.

From the point of view of a philosophy aiming at creating a network of relationships oriented to the co-division and the promotion of the contemporary art, the F.M keywords became mobility and fund raising. Even if F.M has a venue in Via Armistizio, Padova it has decided to go out of the space and occupy every local, national and international space that would join this spirit - from the streets to the museum to every space of everyday life - with a particular attention to realities and institutions in Eastern Europe and in the Balkans. In this sense, I should tell you about the 'Myfolder' project, a travelling archive of young and midcareer artists pieces that will travel from the foundation to everywhere and will be used for creating exhibitions about new international trends. Regarding the network, the executive director of the Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art of Rijeka, Mr. Branko Franceschi, contributed strategically at the F.M press conference. Also strategic will be the exhibition that will take place in Padova in March 2008 dedicated to an overview, without any exotism, about new Eastern European trends.



Further, the fund raising it's not conceived as a tool for simply find resources but as a careful weapon focused to building relationships and to consolidate the F.M position as a socially sustainable not-profit body. Every action of the F.M will reply to an aimed and clever strategy doomed to build both an independent art project with a particular attention to the education and the enlargement of the contemporary art target and both to the supportability individualized through a comparative analysis of the American and the Canadian fundraising best practice.

The examples analyzed in the USA – i.e. the White Box, Pierogi2000, SWAP – distinguished themselves for the remarkable ability of producing and distributing art objects both in limited editions or in gadget. They have also demonstrated a particular capability in the ideation and in the organization of fundraising events – i.e. auctions, thematic dinner, donation campaigns or involving corporate programmes. The fund raising strategy of those spaces is based, excluding the rental activities, in the creation of a fidelized community that is directly involving, through campaign of donations, memberships and benefits. The community is also seduced by an exclusive relationship made of discounts and reserved invitations. Furthermore, the space is not only expositive but also creative and a recreational laboratory, characterized by a feeling of ferment of new idea and multidisciplinary situations. The spectator is tempted to follow constantly the life and the activities of the space, that became a real alternative to the everyday life.

Also we have to underline the undertaking of Pierogi in the creation of a new class of collectors. Pierogi's strategy moves from the ascertainment of the lack of a new generation of collectors and creates the Flat File

(the archive that has inspired the F.M 'Myfolder'), an archive composed by very economical pieces of modest dimensions, accessible to everybody with a very low level of risk, but with influential signatures and an update taste. In Italy, where the last art fairs have demonstrated the persistence of a very rich, but old generation of collectors, the example of Pierogi is very important.

Excellent cases of study regarding the relationship among not-profit organizations and institutions come from Canada. Indeed the Canadians chose the culture as a distinctively character in order to launch the Canadian culture abroad and get over its condition of geographical isolation. For this reason the governmental institutions, the museums and the local foundations have activated a situation of mutual aid, with the aim of favouring the building of a network of a complex internal relationships direct to the optimization of all the resources.

The great strenght of Plug In (winnipeg) is its central position as referring point in Manitoba's contemporary art, in a very strong network of institutional relations that comprises the universities, the arts council, the external affairs department and many local exhibition spaces united in the exploitation of the territory and its own identity, in the promotion of local art, in the spread of it in Canada and abroad, with the aim of creating some exchanges with foreigners bodies and developing projects abroad and residence programmes.

On these premises (see Sacco, 2006) we can speak about fund raising as the arriving point of a network of social relationships and interactions based on the building of complex and creative forms of exchange. The fundraiser asks to the donor not only a contribute in money but often



demands a contribute in kind or in terms of competence, credibility, contacts, occasions, et cetera...Fund raising should mean above all involvement, giving and at the same time receiving. The fundraising is judicious when comes from several objectives, experiences, possible results, that could enrich at the same time the donor and the beneficiary. Properly in this sense the fundraising could represent an extraordinary perspective of wellbeing and value for a society that often experiments various sad and myopic forms of individualistic bending based on the erosion of the human and social relationships and which is unable to imagine and plan sharing projects in order to favour any narcissistic instincts.

For a cultural organization choosing the fund raising way means to guarantee the greatest transparency in its own administration models regarding the resources received and also to accept the discussion with the donors and at the same time to comprise the donor reasons and ideas. On these premises we could affirm that the cultural fund raising, before creating the supportability conditions for any activities, creates the possibility to make a stimulating experience for the donors. The conscientious and responsible donor would know how and why his cash is used, of course. Further, the donations, as it was just told, should be also of another kind, maybe focused on an exchange of resources and competences with the aim of involving the donor in the experiences that the cultural organization usually promotes and with the result of opening the mind of every shareholder involved in the swap.

Paradoxically, if the cultural institutions wouldn't need to make their own fund raising for surviving they should use it anyway as a form of active involvement, as a channel of

spread of that system of values, reason and competences which hold up the complex architecture of the knowledge economy. The main topic of this brief intervention is not, finally, the attainment of a contribute in cash, but the fund raising as a tool for the participation with the aim of making it more and more qualified, justified and frequent.

The paradox mentioned is apparent. In fact the fund raising could be a basic socially sustainable way for the community that could give a very fundamental contribute in order to carry out the Lisbon strategy and could improve the civil society of a country as Italy as well as for the Eastern European realities.

Ana Peraica (Croatia)

woman @ the crossroad of ideologies

Every time I see web pages of cultural policies using the word 'art', I understand nothing, but I think I used to understand art and in my view everyone is capable of their own understanding. During the last years it has been witnessed the appearance of bureaucratic global cultural policies and of 'creative industry' which are distracting attention from the original meaning of art itself. These incomprehensible and banal approaches are giving a perspective of the process of globalization of art, as a political and economical issue.

Therefore the phenomena we used to call art, inherent to history, has been reduced to simple social epiphenomena. Besides, being a Marxist definition used by the market and

resembling the programmes of Socialist Realism, there may be some operative truth but it is surely a mistake to define society in terms of groups consisting of the same or similar individuals. Furthermore, the term 'majority' is generalised. This definition is in complete contradiction to art, and I intend to prove this to the public.

Do the current overall rules of creative innovation for competitive advantage influence the evaluating criteria of art in force? *

As advertising becomes stronger, selling even the "unmentionable", therefore competing with the original media of art, making it impossible to recognise art as a primarily unique and isolated event. It's difficult to distinguish between the "manipulations" and art itself, it's impossible to rely on visual art studies or on history of art. What is missing is the ontological picture, rather than the epistemological picture which would define art in terms of the single event, rather than analysing its visual layout and message or defining it in terms of style. That would be difficult, but one thing is clear to professionals in the field: the struggle to define art is to be able to separate something resembling art to real art, because in this world of copies there are also copies of art. So the hardest choice for curators today is to find not so much originality as individuality, because apparently originality can be industrialised.

Is it useful to consider exhibitions in terms of their contribution to research and to understanding social transformation?

This issue has become more and more important... Emphasizing the individual creation and perception, by which I also mean researching the needs of the public – considering it as a group of individuals connected

to the event and not as a mass – and the research undertaken by curators before exhibitions in order to find every possible individual approach to each piece of art, making its (excuse this terrible word) “consumption” easier. Usually, giga exhibitions and festivals are ‘user unfriendly’ layouts for art. They tend to treat the public as the background of the show. Apart from reconsidering the space for individuals, rather than for masses - curators should be able to find and define channels and open them up, for different individuals, even if it is not the standpoint of a curator, even if conflicts arise...

What is the responsible (and reliable) role played by the curator in the era of virtual-media and market saturation?

Certainly, both virtual media and the market are dealing with copies. While, the so called ‘virtual media’ that in the newer age of the net emphasized connection, the actual individual phenomena are still disconnected. We are facing the situation in which some possibly original art can be lost behind those super-sponsored, mega-announced and extremely linked layouts. The role of curators should therefore be to go beyond the surface of things and interface what economy and politics, but especially advertising, are offering as art. This would mean firstly to clearly distinguish art from its ontological copy so that art would appear as something that can be approached in different ways, while copies would be left to represent what is usually designed by politics and the market.

Will good information on contemporary art philosophy offer suitable instruments for a better understanding of the individual in an extended and mediating field of relationships?

Yes, the possible approaches should be offered in a simple

way and moreover once the dynamics relating to art have been triggered, discussions and round tables should be opened and the goal of curators should be to allow art to come into its own and to address the public with the individualism of art.

Are there any exhibitions that supply, at least on a general level, supplementary tools for the formation of the individual?

I have curated a project, for which I was originally invited to this meeting, named 'Women at the crossroad of ideologies'. The programme was fully orientated for the public and included the possibility to download the programme.

It consisted of many 'entrances' for different kinds of audiences, all addressing the same issue, women's rights. There were exhibitions, concerts, public lectures of scientists, talks with artists, round table discussions but also a small library. A special interest was given to the 'advertising' of the project, which was done by an artist, Andreja Kulunčić, whose interactive installations in public spaces gave results of anonymous voting, giving quite alarming discriminating results. The public was constantly invited to interact, having the opportunity to show they are not 'a public' but individuals and they have attempted to voice their opinions. The most interesting interaction was done during the part of programme entitled 'questions and answers' but individualism has shown up also in official publications like newspapers and in new ways of publishing, such as blogs. I hope that the new blog phenomena will express individuality and an original outlook even in mass societies. I hope that a new kind of public – the one that reads about artworks, downloads movies' preview and also says

something about them (and curators' task is to listen those historically silent voices too) – will manage to break through the universe of advertisements and engineered marketing of art simulation.

One may give many results of the show, like 400 people at the opening, 300 for the lecture, 200 people a day for the exhibition, which indeed are interesting figures, but I would like to say more about my public. Most of the audience were women, which was predictable, but there were men too, and they were brave, proud and loud. The older women were more able to express themselves while the younger women had more vibrant voices. Some of them wanted further education, so they were following each stage of the programme, scheduled for 6pm so that ordinary workers could arrive on time after their working day. Some of them were uncomfortable, probably feeling out of place. The organizers made every effort to make them feel more than welcome. Some mothers and daughters appeared together but at the end only the daughters stayed. Feeling free the public found their individual voices; some decided to read their own poems to a small groups, some stole the microphone from presenters and had their own talk-shows. Some were text messaging during round tables and these messages were great and can be found in the book. Some copied Breda Beban's video with a mobile phone so they could keep it. A week later I got a phone call telling me that a music number from her video was a radio hit, two Gipsy music parties were organized... Some unknown people told me they wanted to go to Venice to see it again. None of the public knew each other before. This underlines my thesis – the public is not a group and that the 'outpost' of production actually resides in the individuality of the



public that is not, and unlike cultural analysts think; 'the intentional public' or which art theorists name 'the art-crowd' – being the predictable and known group of people with similar attitudes.

(*) The author is answering to the questions that Giuliana Carbi preliminarily proposed to the participants of the Forum.

Jovana Stokić (Serbia / U.S.A.)

Representing Women Artists from a Blind Spot of Europe ('Off-Center Femininities: Regards from Serbia and Montenegro', Exhibition at the Kimmel Center, New York University)

As a curator, I was asked to create a rather specific insight into the representations of feminine subjectivity. By bringing together six artists from a region – Serbia (and Montenegro) – that does not belong to the centre of the art world, I am invested in showing that their visual formation of femininity corresponds, and sometimes can even regulate our standardized (and standardizing) viewpoint. The insights provided are purposefully made off-centre and they are definitely trans-national. The subtitle 'Regards from Serbia and Montenegro' should be understood as an ironic intonation of a postcard sent from the place where these six artists live. Serbia and Montenegro represents a certain 'blind spot' of the artworld since these young artists (with the exception of Milica Tomic, who has been presented to the international

art scene) are absent from the international art world's circuits.

Terms such as margin, sites also known in the West as 'nice places to come from' – unavoidably imply that there is such a place in which margin or province is imagined, i.e. constructed as the other (1). Following Bojana Pejić's argument, I agree that this otherness is constructed from the outside, as is seductively summed up by Slavoj Žižek: 'For a long time, the Balkans have been one of the privileged site of phantasmic investments in politics... the fantasy which organized the perception of ex –Yugoslavia is that of Balkans as the Other of the West: the place of savage ethnic conflicts long since overcome by civilized Europe; a place where nothing is forgotten and nothing is learned, where old traumas are replayed again and again; where the symbolic link is simultaneously devalued and overvalued.'(2)

My curatorial choice of the region represented is motivated by a personal investment. I am related to the place of the origin of these works – by birth. As national identity is pre-given and therefore not chosen, I try to prove it is not the deciding factor in one's identity formation. In choosing the non-existing geo-political unit – Serbia and Montenegro – two neighbouring countries that were once one country (until 2006), now officially separated – I emphasize the arbitrariness of national geo-political definitions. Ironically, the continuing technological and communicational advances in our globalized present do not guarantee equal opportunities for all. Instead of generating a 'trans-national community with a shared set of aesthetic and perceptual foundations,'(3) the artworld remains structured as a set of multiple hegemonic systems.

The exhibition *Off-Center Femininities* in Kimmel Center Gallery at New York University, New York is purposely planned to coincide with pivotal exhibition *Global Feminisms* in Brooklyn Museum of Art, the major show which powerfully extends the notion of transnational notions of feminisms today, showing more than eighty international women artists. In its catalogue, Linda Nochlin provided a masterfully direct 'state of the art' statement, in which she achieves to look at the past in order to illuminate the present, which is so necessary today, in time often called post-feminist. Nochlin tied the problems of 'historic feminist artists' of the 1970s with critiques of their related receptions by the museum world. (In 2007, parallel with the Brooklyn show is WACK!: Art and Feminist *Revolution* in Los Angeles MOCA). Nochlin powerfully discussed how women artists are capable of subverting traditions and visual regimes in so many different ways, only to claim a representational sphere of their own. Finally, she posits this as a real progress since women artists have never been more prominent - they are indeed leaders in many medias and they opened new ways of representations, which *Global Feminisms* took as a role to show. Nochlin's co-curator, Maura Reily explained the generational shift in the show: 'We are looking at a young generation of artists who are exploring feminism from a kind of third-wave perspective, and who are part of that generation that takes feminism for granted. And, she continues: So, this is precisely the type of audience that could really make a change.'⁽⁴⁾ This exhibition follows Reily's powerful remark: the artists represented in 'Off-center femininities' work within the cultural climate that takes feminism for granted, but, at the same time, this is the generation of artists who could 'really make a

change.’ Except Milica Tomic (born in 1960), the artists Sinisa Ilic, Ana Nedeljkovic, Milena Putnik and Nevena Popovic, Jelena Tomasevic, and Sanja Zdrnja belong to my generation (born in the 1970s, and early 1980s) and they insinuate a certain subliminal identification. Except Tomic’s work *Belgrade remembers*, of 2001, all the works are made in 2006-2007. This shows Milica Tomic not as a representative of an older generation (or worse, a progenitor of a style) but proves her work corresponds closely to a sensibility these representations all share.

Carol Armstrong, previewing *Global Feminisms* for *Artforum* in January 2007 criticized the fact that ‘it focuses on women’s art, eliding the distinction between categories ‘feminist’ and ‘woman’.(5) The revival of the feminist category, with a global twist and with an emphasis is a good thing, claims Armstrong. She goes on to explain that the equation of feminist and woman’s art is not so good as if it suggests that only women can be feminist. I believe this is not the most important issue – although I felt compelled to include a ‘non-woman artist’, Sinisa Ilic, whose representation of femininity’s investigations of subjectivity I am invested in, interrogating myself.

Off-center Femininities should not be interpreted as a critical intervention to much more ambitious exhibitions. Rather, it is a little exercise in criticality of *parafeminism*, understood in terms of Amelia Jones. Jones provocatively reminding that a term with the prefix ‘para - meaning both side by side and beyond,’ indicated a powerful ‘conceptual model of critique and exploration that is simultaneously parallel to and building on (in the sense of rethinking and pushing the boundaries of, but nor superseding) earlier feminisms.’(6) For Jones, parafeminism is non prescriptive, but ‘open to a multiplicity of cultural expressions.’ In this



fashion, I tend to understand that the forms of feminine presented in *Off-center Femininities* are not by any means necessarily 'female' subjectivities. They are inclusive of work investigating sexuality and/or gender as aspects of identity formation inextricably related to other aspects such as ethnicity, and specific in its insistence on messing up binary structures of sexual difference. These works do not offer 'positive images of women to reverse masculine stereotypes, nor do offer a critique of patriarchy or the male gaze.'(7)

The critical interventions into the notions of femininity I traced in these representations seem to take their cue from Abigail Solomon-Godeau's incisive remark: 'The notion of femininity seems a concept increasingly unstable, challenged on one hand by a rejection of gender binaries and proliferating categories of sexual identity, challenged on the other for its hopelessly relative and culturalist definitions.' My goal is to shed light on processes through which artists work to create beautiful representations (or environments) in order to show the complex femininity formation – the *parafeminist* subject – articulated via a multiple and relational feminine subjectivity – whose manifestations are present in this show. I believe that is the place where subversion lies.

During the period of post-socialist transition Serbian artist Milica Tomic wanted to embody an anti-fascist resistance heroine. When asked by a typical lifestyle glossy magazine to be photographed for a cover – she staged a photo of herself with the title *Belgrade Remembers* (2001) on the Belgrade main street, hanging from a lamppost. She evoked the anti-fascist resistance activists who were hanged in 1941 by German troops, while Belgrade citizens walked down the street not paying attention to

the dead bodies hanging above their heads. By inhabiting and appropriating the dying woman's perspective, the artist seeks to return that disinterested gaze, and, in 2001, points to her own time. This is the time when Serbian nation built a nationally-pure separate country upon Yugoslavia's dissipation, and renounced to the heritage of anti-fascist resistance, closely linked to communist pasts new regime, that wanted to forget. Tomic invokes it purposely, in an act of resistance to collective amnesia. What would be read in the socialist era as a pro-regime action, in 2001 can only be read as a critical comment on the forgetfulness and ethical numbness of her fellow citizen. Tomic's seductive outfit can also be interpreted as a critique of high-polished fashion photographs published in the same magazine whose cover she graces. While her beauty can lure the viewer, the directed gaze of a hanged woman will most probably deny his/her pleasure. Tomic chose to speak from the position of the wound, from the 'blind spot' of the dead. Her dead heroine possesses the affectation of the made-up persona needed to be alluring on the cover of the magazine making her transgression ever more visible. The presence of the cleavage and her gaze turned right at the viewer marks the strategy of shifting power from a desirable model to an unbearable revenge of the victim.

The *Evil Girl* project by Ana Nedeljkovic is conceived as 'the process of repetition of a predefined and recognizable simplified female figure in black and white in different contexts, spatial settings, media, materials and techniques.' On the one hand she deconstructs and subverts the stereotypes of her everyday culture. On the other hand, this project should be regarded as resistance within the system performed by the violent and self-ironic

being that is empowered by playing with her personal symptoms.

In Jelena Tomasevic's photograph titled *I love Montenegro* (2003), a corpse of a well-proportioned, model-like young woman lies stiffly on her back in the woods. In a tight miniskirt, with her bare legs spread, and red-painted toe nails, her head is covered with a T-shirt emblazoned with words 'I love Montenegro' that serves only to deny the viewer a glimpse of the victim's identity. Again, as was the case with Tomic's 'heroine,' Tomasevic here willingly plays the victim. The created situation brings this photograph closer to performance territory, where the body-in-representation is also present. Tomasevic is present to demonstrate how national identity can be (literally) suffocating. The very title *I love Montenegro* borrows the logo from and the slogan of the Italian brand Moschino (*I love Moschino*) to bring into focus the fashion-obsessed consumerist culture that has been aggressively interjected in the country in the state of transition. At the same time, a corpse (which can be read as a sexualized life-size doll) brings into play the image of a woman-object in a drastically patriarchal society.

Jelena Tomasevic's recent series of paintings titled *Joy of Life* (2004-2006) represents male and female figures that hover in a disjointed, post-utopian universe. The figures are not really engaged in any of the activities—they are merely posing as replicas from fashion magazines. Female figures in high heels, dressed in cool urban outfits insinuate ominous actions in which violence is only suggested. They signal the advent of the late capitalist culture of the spectacle—as a represented version of the world, which pushed itself to a dead-end.

Sinisa Ilic's photograph *Ministry of Pain* (2006-2007)

borrowed its title from the novel by Croatian author Dubravka Ugrešić. It was made as a part of performative piece *Actress (work) in progress*, which deals with problems of economic transition, global capital, migration, and human trafficking.

Sanja Zdrnja's series of photographic self-portraits entitled *Tear Objects* includes seven objects (made of polished aluminium) that were derived from the artist's face. The artist took casts of her face, choosing rounded surfaces whose fluid form traces curves of the face. In the action of 'recasting' the objects onto her own face, Sanja puts them on the part of the face which they came from – creating in this way a form that is by its nature contrary to prosthesis. This is a nice addendum – unnecessary, but organic decoration to the natural form. By stressing the metallic quality of the very object, on these photos Sanja's image also gets a heightened shine.

Never or Next Time (2007), a collaboration between Milena Putnik and Nevena Popović, thematizes the notion of creative interaction. Their multilayered juxtaposition of figures suggests that new meanings can be reached by the process of active viewing.

My goal was to show that these artists are not only as relevant in their own countries in which they actively participate in un-doing monoculture, but their exploration of boundaries can have significance within global culture as well. These women artists are indeed self-positioned on borders, while constructing contemporary feminine identities in their culture. Thus, exploring art practices in the Southern and Eastern boundaries of Europe that incorporated experience of disintegration of both the former and the socialist project – sheds light on the formation of feminine identities in the processes of



fragmentation ('balkanization'). These practices brought also to attention the existence of manifold differences in feminine representations within larger European, and ultimately, global context.

1. Bojana Pejic, 'An Empty Pedestal: Between Freedom and Nationalism,' in L. Hoptman and T. Pospiszyl (eds), 'Primary Documents: A Sourcebook for Eastern And Central European Art since the 1950s' (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2002), p.334.
2. Ibid.
3. Jonathan Crary, in N. de Oliveira, N. Oxley, and M. Petry, 'Installation Art in the New Millennium: The Empire of the Senses' (New York: Thames & Hudson, 2003), p.i.
4. Phoebe, Hoban, 'We're Finally Infiltrating', 'Art News', February 2007, p.113.
5. Carol Armstrong, 'Artforum', January 2007, p.87.
6. Amelia Jones, 'Self/Image: Technology, Representation, and the Contemporary Subject' (London and New York: Routledge, 2006), p.213.
7. Ibid.

Igor Španjol (Slovenia)

Virtual Curator?

I'm really glad to participate in this event, Continental Breakfast. I was wondering what I should say here today, so I tried to contextualize my everyday practice in Moderna galerija in Ljubljana. Maybe some of you don't know that our museum is closed at the moment, for renovation. At the same time we made a proposal of splitting our institution into architecturally and conceptually two different parts, dedicated to the twentieth century and to the contemporary art, but this idea was not accepted by the Ministry of Culture. So in the next year and a half, we are going to work without a programme and a clear prospective of our future work. That's the reason I decided to entitle my speech 'Virtual Curator?', because sometimes I really feel like non existant but on the other hand we can say that in the time when art practice is becoming more fluid and unmaterial, people dealing with contemporary art from a curatorial point of view and from an institutional position are becoming constantly forced to reconsider their work and somehow make it more material and concrete and to give more sense to their everyday work.

The main part of the discourse that has been developing alongside the use of new media technologies in art refers to the problems of the gallery display of new media technology- or internet-based practices. On the surface, these problems may seem to be merely new or not so new manifestations of the old issue of the museum representation of avant-garde art practices, but at least in case of media art, the discourse seemed to entail something more: communication between protagonists

was an essential feature and component part of the art practice. Since media art was not as much about later institutionalisation as direct blending with the art system, the critical theoretical consideration of the medium in relation to art history and its contemporary institutional instruments, which accompanied the birth and growth of media art, represented a specific quality and a constituting element of this art practice.

Numerous projects about the museum display of media art – festivals, conferences, essays, commentaries, polemics and actions – still emerge either on or through the internet. The greatest contribution to the development of media art was among mailing lists made by Nettime and Rhizome. There also exist two special lists for the issues of production, display and archiving of the new media (media art, interactive installations, CD-ROM's, digital video, etc.): CRUMB – Curatorial Resource for Upstart Media Bliss, and CREAM – Collaborative Research into Electronic Art Memes. The first important printed publication dedicated to the problem of museum display of media art – in fact, a selection of texts, most of which previously existed only on the net – was published at the crucial point in history when so called net.art had just become part of the official history of the supreme art institution: the Venice Biennial. The catalogue 'Net.art per me' is the document of a display and part of an art project at the same time. It was edited by a pioneer of net art, Vuk Ćosić, as one of Slovenian representatives at the Venice Biennial in 2001.

In the introduction, Ćosić sums up major problems of the display of his work: 'I have exhibited my net.art pieces in a variety of venues, and in very many different settings. Sometimes the display was reminiscent of the office, sometimes the work was shown offline, and sometimes

technologically complex and expensive setups were created to host net.art. And rarely did it work. Possibly the problematic detail is that whatever you do in a gallery in order to show net.art pieces (already this expression is thoroughly wrong) you will decontextualize it, and lose the spontaneity of free browsing.' The world wide web is not only a tool and material, but also the setting of media art and there, the on-line context is simply understood as the content of an artwork. In addition, artists invariably emphasise the importance of the intimacy of the connection with the computer, which is unique and therefore unsuitable for a gallery. Such art's home is the net and for this reason, a great deal is lost, particularly from those works in close affinity to the 'search engine net.art' trend, when they are captured in the somewhat artificial CD-ROM medium and then, bereft of their original web context, are exhibited as an artefact in a gallery. But on the other hand, due to the supreme and prestigious status of the art institution and its valorised archives (according to the theory of Boris Groys), an art museum display remains a completely relevant form of media art presentation (particularly of its CD-ROM side). Naturally, the institution must accept the truth of what is taking place in contemporary art trends, which means that the white gallery cube must in a certain sense open up and redefine itself as a multimedia centre of contemporary art. This entails the introduction of the necessary hardware and communication links which would facilitate a suitable presentation, life and enactment of media art. Contemporary media art also demands a series of changes at the symbolic level and at the level of signification. In more developed centres, even net curators are expected to select works in the conventional meaning of the word,



thereby saving the visitor's time and facilitating orientation in and navigation through the infinite number of websites, which include design and self-promotion that are often declared art. According to Peter Weibl – his controversial exhibition project 'net_condition' from 1999 is considered the most ambitious attempt at the art diagnosis of the social conditions in view of the development of the internet, while ZKM Karlsruhe is a paradigmatic example of a specialised media art museum – this is only one of the four basic principles of curating media art. In addition, the curator can also be a producer who based on his or her theoretical findings, orders a new work and develops new intermedia formats in the virtual (net) museum, which are not possible in a traditional museum. But above all, 'the first task of a curator working on the web is to find out the criteria of what work is only adequate for the net and to develop criteria for works that are non-local. Most of the artworks in history are locally bound, which means the spectator and the artwork itself share the same space. Even with media works this is important – in a media installation you share the same space. For the first time with the net, the spectator and the work are dislocated, separate; they don't share the same space. It is important to look for works and the criteria that are appropriate to this condition.'

In short, the issue for curators is no longer whether to exhibit media art or not, but how to do this. From the museum point of view, the issue of the intimate nature of the works does not seem to be an obstacle for the collective experience and spectacle of a gallery display or inclusion in a permanent collection. After all, even though the 'Dead Christ' painted by Andrea Mantegna towards the end of his career, was intended for private devotion

and contemplation, it has been successfully displayed by the Brera of Milan for several centuries. When they first emerged, museums were intended for the research and presentation of art and, to be honest, they were never meant to abide to the demands of artists. Although they still try to dictate what art is, contemporary art museums follow current art production and become involved more and more often. New technologies and media art invariably influence practically all museum activities. Usually, there is a renegade in every major museum, whose interests make him or her focus on new media art. Such renegades were for example Steve Dietz at Walker Art Center in Minneapolis – its exhibition space on the net is Gallery 9 – and Jon Ippolito at Guggenheim. Julie Lazar, who in 1997 founded a new media department at The Museum of Contemporary Art in Los Angeles, warns us: ‘When curators who exhibit new media art have no formal art historical background, or at least experience with, other media like photography, film, video, radio, sound, graphic design, or performance, etc., connections to the progressions of artists’ ideas risk getting overlooked or lost. The situation is further complicated because new media art creation, and conceptual strategies are also being derived from a much wider arena including engineering, biology, behavioral science, politics and so forth. No art is made in a vacuum. Curatorial practice in new media art – especially at such a critical time – shouldn’t depend upon only a curator’s immediate response, reaction, intuition, and guesswork. To be more responsible curators need to be better informed of – and better versed in – these diverse histories, theories and converging practices. Think of the kind of time that involves!’

Definitions and types of museums, on-line collections,



research and exhibitions, the concept of the virtual and characteristics of digital media, issues of discourse and generating new knowledge are tackled by Steve Dietz in his text 'Cybermuseumology', in which he says that today, the socialisation of cyberspace is of key importance in the evolution of a museum: 'To guard against the tendency of the museum toward the mausoleum – or temple for acolytes only – we need to figure out how to make the physical space as interactive, multimodal, associative, and responsive (intelligent) as walking into a Web page among the real things.' It is a difficult, awesome and nevertheless interesting and fascinating task indeed.

T. Melih Görgün, Mahir Namur (Turkey)

Sinopale 1. The Sinop Biennial

Sinop is situated on the Turkish coast of the Black Sea, it's a small, isolated city with 20.000 inhabitants. Although it is geographically isolated, it is an interesting city because of its geo-political importance, historical background, rich cultural heritage, beautiful nature and educated inhabitants. It is the closest point to Russia, so it has been used for many years during the Cold War as a NATO basis which had very important effects on the daily lives of its inhabitants for many years. Sinop is known with its prison, which is located within the historical Ottoman shipyard, in which many well known intellectuals were imprisoned. That is why the prison-museum now belonging to the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, is visited by thousands of people every year, although it is an empty building.

Melih grew up in this tiny city, moved to Istanbul to study, made a career, became a professor of art and design and built his international network. Then he decided to go back to share what he could gain in the meanwhile with his hometown. His idea was to start up an international art movement which should be a gate to the rest of Turkey, to the region and the rest of the world intellectually which aims in long term cultural, social and economical development of the isolated small town. So, in August 2006, with the aid of his existing local and international network, he initiated Sinopale, Sinop's first biennial of contemporary arts. It is planned by a group of artists and cultural actors and implemented collectively with the local community which makes the difference of Sinopale from Istanbul Biennial. It is a kind of a civic action which takes place in several locations spread out to the town, mainly concentrated in the prison building, that I mentioned before.



Parallel to the liberalization of the Turkish economy in the eighties, the contemporary arts scene started to change hands through the investments of the private sector . Many banks and big industrials opened their own art galleries, culture centers or founded orchestras. As the private sector was investing more and more into the culture sector, the state preferred to stay passive instead of competing with the brand new private organizations even shrinking the existing infrastructure by i.e. closing the state galleries which existed in every city. This kind of a privatisation-like policy ended up with the centralization of the contemporary art scene in big cities especially in Istanbul, where most of the private companies are located and with the lack of infrastructure and support for the individual artists, artist groups and grass roots organizations.

Melih and I are both the representatives of the European Cultural Association, which is an NGO struggling to strengthen the civil society in order to help to counter-balance it with the government and private by means of networking and cooperation of cultural actors at local, national and international levels. Sinopale is also such an attempt to build a local synergy activated by international artistic and intellectual contributions. As Sinopale is not solely a show but includes the involvement of the local community in the production process of the art works and the whole event, taking local objects and subjects as basis, it has the function to activate the local creative and intellectual potentials. The curator has here a very important role: to create such processes which do not present imported views but encourage to reform the local objects and rethink on the local subjects.

Mahir Namur

We define Sinopale as 'a platform where the knowledge is produced, shared and transformed' The 'collective production model' of Sinopale enables the 'host community/audience to add a value to the artistic product by its contribution to the creation process in different ways and forms. Artists are expected to decode the information on the city of Sinop and its memory and transform it into an artistic work:

- Alparslan Baloğlu (Turkey) handled the subject of endangered bio-diversity by its work 'What happened to Hacı Kadın chicken?' (a special chicken species of Sinop).
- Theatre director Emre Koyuncuoğlu and film director Tobias Hering (Germany) handled the subject 'imprisoned society' in their interactive performance 'Komun-ikasyon' with 11 performing artists invited from different cities of Turkey. They used the texts of imprisoned intellectuals in the historical Sinop Jail, in which the art work was performed.
- By his action 'Re-cycling', Tamas Oszvald (Hungary) questioned the meanings of 'belonging'. He toured the city with a hand carriage full of soil asking the citizens what it means for them. Related to the nuclear plant project which is on the agenda of Sinop, he points out the fact that the city belongs to its citizens.
- In her three days performance '3 Departures' Monali Meher (The Netherlands) defined each day another state of her being in the prison: an individual, a woman and a mother.
- For the performance in which she hanged herself from her strands to the prison ceiling, Nezaket Ekici (Germany) worked with a hair dresser and a tailor from Sinop.
- By his work named 'I hear voices' Antonio Riello (Italy) turns around the situations of being outside and being

inside by means of placing a sound installations (Airport, Nursery School, Football Match, Home Party) to the prison cells.

- The exhibition 'Global Cemetery Local Plant' curated by M. Sinan Niyazioğlu showed the perspectives of ten graphic designers to the danger of the nuclear plant which is planned to be built in Sinop.
- Sinopale has been curated by T. Melih Görgün in cooperation with Beral Madra (BM Contemporary Art Center) and Vittorio Urbani (Nuova Icona, Italy). Sixty-two artists from Germany, Austria, Belgium, Georgia, Holland, Japan, Italy, Iran, Hungary, UK-Wales and Turkey.

T. Melih Görgün

1. 'I hear voices', sound installation by A. Riello
2. 'Atropos', performance by N. Ekici



Branko Franceschi (Croatia)

The Culture Hero

I shall open my contribution to the 2007 Continental Breakfast Conference in Venice by stating that I subscribe to a rather conservative standpoint concerning a role of a curator. For me the curator is a mediator, withstanding the hot spot in between artist(s) and public. The major issues of the present day curatorship are ethical. By this I do not want to dwell on the proverbially low performance efficiency pestering Eastern European cultural institutions, which can also be simply played down to a basic question of responsibility i.e. to whom is the curator responsible to? Coming from a non-for-profit cultural scene, I harbour no doubts. I would dare to oppose what seems to be the general consent on how the curator is responsible to everyone, especially the artists, and I would stress a rarely mentioned opinion that the curator is primarily responsible to the public. We have to bear in mind the difficult aspects of this position. The curator is not to provide what the public either expects or wants to enjoy but, on the contrary, the curator has a difficult task of working on public's continuous progression. This premeditates a capability to feel, find out, explore and present those subconscious, unspoken or suppressed needs that usually are recognized within artistic community and expressed in artistic creation, prior to their becoming part of a public cultural sphere. Following that course does not make the curator popular in public view. On the contrary it often results in gaining a reputation of a provocateur. Pursuing this path the curator not only justifies his/her existence, but also that of the artists, and is thus of the biggest

service to the latter. If this seems far-fetched altogether, a bare reason why the curators should be responsible to the public lays in a fact that the public is financing the cultural production and thus feels, and lately started to demand as well, to receive something in return.

As a fine example of what and how it can be done, I shall remind you of a project 'Woman @ crossroad of ideologies' organized by HULU Split (Croatian Association of the Visual artists of Split) and curated by colleague Ana Peraica. She got a chance to present it on the Continental Breakfast symposium. However, to comprehend this project's extraordinariness one should be familiar with the specific cultivation of idealized Mediterranean machismo that deeply marks all the spheres of a cultural context in her hometown, a Dalmatian capital of Split. There is no place where this exhibition would make more sense.

In the practice of a curator of non-for-profit institutions, the responsibility and the borders of what is ethically correct, differs within the diverse contexts. For instance, though collaborating with commercial galleries is unacceptable within a context of (over)developed art market, it is more then welcome within a context of insufficiently developed one. This is plausible only if we agree that a functional art market and commercial art galleries are important, or even the key elements of a balanced art sphere, marked with diversity of public and private initiatives in production, presentation and consumption. As you are certainly aware of, the Eastern and Central European cultural context is extremely imbalanced in this respect, since on one side it fosters mastodon non for profit cultural institutions and illegal art market, while on the other side it perpetuates a notorious reluctance to create a favourable financial frame for facilitating the proliferation of legal private

initiatives. As a result, the visual artists are more and more represented by the Western galleries, which eventually increase the existing imbalance. So, I have taken as my personal responsibility to help emergence of the private initiatives in Croatia, through the advice, recommendation and international networking, no matter if it concerns collecting, commercial galleries or any other form of involvement that includes both vision and broader benefit. The Polish example of fast growing private commercial galleries like Foksal Gallery Foundation, Raster and others that successfully present local artists at the international art fairs and have established themselves as internationally influential institutions, is an indisputable indicator how private initiatives dynamize the public sphere.

Coming back to my curatorial practice, when given a chance to direct a museum institution of a regional center after 18 years of curatorial practice in a small avant-garde gallery in the capital, my first impulse was to pay attention to the needs of public and those creating the cultural strategy of the city. A need to host a high profile international biennial event, though never clearly stated, was immediately obvious. That need comes from a tradition of the Biennial of the Young Artists of Yugoslavia that has been held by The Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art in Rijeka ever since 1961. In 1991 the Biennial simply died off due the sequence of wars dissolving the state of Yugoslavia. As a collateral consequence, 16 years later we are still trying to return the works to the artists to whom they belonged. It is a logistical and legal nightmare, since we have to export works that have never been imported. So far we have managed to return the works to all the countries of former Yugoslavia, except Macedonia. Regarding the actual event it was clear



that the new one should have a regional impact, which posed a rather tricky question as to a targeted region. Eventually, considering the overall strategy of Croatia towards European integrations I have made a decision to use an existing initiative of the Quadrilateral, the semi-diplomatic project that bonds countries of Slovenia, Italy, Hungary and Croatia. Curiously enough, these countries, during the course of the last century and in the diverse variations used to be a part of the same state, sharing a same cultural identity. The bonds were broken due to the series of wars and today there are few or none cultural co-operations, along with insufficient information on the contemporary art production. A general concept of the Biennial proposes that four curators conceive a theme and select four representatives of their respective countries, summing sixteen artists/art groups for each edition. By the consent of curators Igor Španjol, Giuliana Carbi, Janos Sugar and Branko Franceschi the first edition was focused on relativism as a key feature of a contemporary era. The curators of the second edition Nevenka Šivavec, Sabina Salamon, Rita Kalman and Vittorio Urbani have settled upon a theme of the culture hero denoting the ethical decline.

'The culture hero is neither a vocation, nor a disease, which is a probable reason why nobody never systematically engaged in standardization of that status, although the culture hero existed in ancient native mythologies as an inventor, a revolutionary, a clan founder, sometimes a trickster or a semi-god. We are left with a question – who is the culture hero today?

In any case, proclamation of the culture hero is an extremely democratic act, since s/he is chosen by majority. An individual can have his/her hero who, as a rule, remains

anonymous, outside the collective memory. The culture hero is a social category and a cultural phenomenon that can be observed at both national and global level. BQ_2 has a chance of deepening the theme of the culture hero, presuming that social conditions in each of four neighbouring countries (Hungary, Italy, Slovenia and Croatia) generate other and different heroes.

There is no doubt that the hero is endowed with virtues, and seen as such even if s/he wins thanks to a trick or a fraud. Her/his acts are not necessarily good in themselves, neither is s/he immaculate. The hero can be a cynic. An admirer and practitioner of irony. A total tramp. BQ_2 will show whether the culture hero belongs equally to male and female sex, and whether s/he can be associated with a notion of heroism, taking into consideration s/he is ridiculous even when believed to be sacred. Regarding that a figure of the culture hero causes satisfaction, providing a chance to the people, and is efficiently parodying and ironising, we agree that a role of a subversive agent is amongst the crucial ones because the fall of myths, that was taught of as a matter of fact, has not actually occurred yet. While postmodernism proclaimed itself an era of death of history, originals and authorship, today we witness the strengthening of positions within a political-ideological power system. We are forced to admit that leaders and preachers entirely successfully fit into everyday myths, most probably for a need of transcending it.' (Sabina Salomon on behalf of the curatorial team).

To represent the concept curators have selected Ines Krasić, Ivan Fijolić, Kristina Leko, Siniša Labrović for Croatia; Fabio Mauri, Elisabetta Benassi, Paolo Ravalico Scerri, Antonio Riello for Italia; Alenka Pirman, Tomaž Tomažin, Mark Požlep, Dragan Živadinov & Dunja Zupančić for Slovenia

and finally Gábor Bakos & Imre Wéber, Two-tailed Dog Party (Magyar Kétfarkú Kutya Párt), Emese Benczúr, Hajnal Németh for Hungary. We are cordially inviting you to the opening on October, 15th 2007 at the Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art in Rijeka.

It would be interesting to see how the visual artists define cultural heroism in the days when they fill the covers and pages of fashion magazines as witnessed in a summer issue of 'Uomo Vogue' dedicated to the millennium buzz created by Venice Biennial, Documenta and Münster synchronicity. With division mirroring the pyramid of artistic fame and success visible in a number of dedicated pages or columns, the heroines and - mostly - heroes of the contemporary art world sell the fashion in attempt to sell themselves. It is obvious, the visual artists are not as slick and sexy as confronted models, but surely they managed to be as superficial.

Janka Vukmir (Croatia)

The Art of Attitude

I can start by saying that yesterday I was quite surprised by how much we were talking about the art market. Most of the curators present here today come from Eastern European countries and existence of contemporary art markets on these territories is still a dubious one. It is only slowly emerging and is not easy to analyse its size, influence or value in a big picture. As well, dubious is the presence of Eastern European artists and curators on the general art market, however some are visible and by now they are visible for some time already. In accordance,

ambitions to be present and ambitions to develop markets are vivid and present, obviously. Also, what happens is that artists feel the pressure of their own potential presence on the market, and try to create in a collectible way.

So, we spoke a lot about money and about fund raising as well. But what has struck me is how we never really discussed the value we really or wishfully offer to this market. I heard the word value only once during the whole day yesterday - and it was connected with national value, which really surprised me again.

I think that the values which art is bringing nowadays to public are one of the most important parts of the job of curators. This is our main responsibility as I understand the job of taking care about art.

I would like to tell you two stories.

Two days before coming to Venice I met a lawyer in Zagreb. I told him that I was going to a conference, that it was about curatorship and that I was still thinking about what to say and that I should have written an essay. I told him as well that I had decided that I shouldn't write anything because I find how art is getting immaterial and so maybe I should have followed the trend. Then he looked at me very surprised and he told me that the same thing happens in law, and how lawyers don't write anymore their legal opinions as they used to, now they dominantly just direct their clients in order to follow current trends. So we discussed the fact that the world is becoming in many ways always more immaterial, without tangible products, and how art has become a series of events and has become something in the flux.

Then the same night, a bit later, I came home after the opening of an exhibition and on the TV I saw a report about some huge event saying how many nations were going to be represented, how many people would have participated, who was coming, who wasn't coming, how many caterers had been employed, how much food would have been consumed, and so on. It all sounded like preparations for the opening of the Venice Biennial, but of course it wasn't, it was a G8 meeting.

What I have in mind by telling these stories is that, basically what you hear about those events is the all same, and maybe also what there really happens is very similar, just the content is different, but modalities change in the same ways.

I would like to underline that I believe how art is very political activity, and how it can be found everywhere between culture and politics. Culture is, from my point of view, not only what we consider art and art production, but it also includes things like law and politics and so on. And it is immaterial, and it is as what I was trying to describe with these two examples, moving in common, simultaneous and parallel trends.

So the question posed here is what are we doing by curating? If we understand curating as taking good care about art, and showing art implies showing good art by some relevant criteria chosen, how do we manage that task in order to advance or at least keep the expected standards?

Really, sometimes there's no material to curate or sometimes there's no art object you have to transport. So, what are we in fact dealing with? It might be useful to

think about it more often.

I think that we are dealing with attitude, and this is what we curate, this is what art works have grown into. And thus, I think, our responsibility grows.

It is a kind of morality towards what is going on, towards art production or world of market and finances. I tried to make this idea clear first of all to myself. I tried to look at the art world for the last thirty years and for a long time nobody discussed properly the fact that this immateriality was growing and ways in which it happens.

Historically and traditionally accepted art works were objects.

During shifts of 20th century, we got used to the fact that they might be sometimes hard to read at first sight, but it is for our generation of curators already a habit or at least, a normal thing, to deal with art works which are not of a material nature.

There was in literature and in practice enough said about material characters of video art, of performances, of all time based arts, site specific art or about the nature of works which are installed in each new space or new exhibition in a new way, as well as of works which change or disappear during course of time, either during the exhibiting time, or later. We got used to look at the documentation of actions, performances and happenings, too.

More recently we got used to take documentation materials of many kinds as art works, although their esthetics could be discussed, their form could be discussed, as well as their artistic qualities in widest possible range of analysis.

Of course virtuality brought new changes. But things didn't stop there, it just made us more used to the fact that art is happening somewhere else and that presentation of art is more and more about re-presentation and that there is some space left in between re/interpretation of presentation.

In addition to that, when European politics changed in 90ies and politics in the whole world found a new balance, the artists too started to produce works that were reflecting changes, and for some reasons, art works became social acts. Take as an example the Austrian Pavillion in Venice a few years ago where a group of artists gave free English and German lessons to Albanians, if I remember well, in Macedonia or Kosova or so.

I agree with Peter Weibel who stated then that as we once got used to a concept and accepted it as an art work that we could get used to social acts as artworks as well. Also, I agree that social acts can be a piece of art but I don't think that art should be expressed by language courses for people who speak another language. I have a lot of doubts about it. Furthermore, art requires excellence in my understanding of art, and being a language teacher requires some other skills, excellence possibly included. But artists teaching language is making quality of both things done additionally questionable.

At the same time, art which we were recognising as interesting was always asking questions, provoking, trying to move things forward in public perception and was questioning everyday habits of understanding the world. This has started centuries ago and is not the product of 20th century, it is implied in art. During recent political

changes of Europe, for some reason art started to be very often a kind of follower of politics and puts itself in place of politics. Even more, it promotes the morality of politics within art, and there is a common saying that proclaims that politics is a whore. Is art now too? And what about the curators then?

One of the questions Giuliana Carbi asked was about how much an exhibition can add to personal formation and education. Well, in the above case, you can get a bit knowledge of another language. But to make things more serious I honestly have to admit that I have no idea of how to answer this question. I don't know how to formulate a description of my own personal educational formation in a systematic way even if I think that my answer to this question may be a positive one. It leads us to the role of presentations of art. Presentations of art are public matter. Once in public, a creation can be perceived as art, not before. Majority of art presentations are linked to institutions of all kinds. Even the most unofficial presentations need audience to become public. So institutions of exhibition of any kind and mediators and creators of those exhibitions, artists and/or curators have an immediate public responsibility in what they do. Audience in its plurality might not take the encounter with art as an educational issue, but on personal level, encounter with any creation must bring some change to a person. This is why the role of the curator and his/her attitude is as important as the attitude of the artists and as important as attitude promoted by art work. And if we imagine an exhibition of attitudes, and audience coming to visit the show, we need to think of what individuals in the audience can learn from the attitudes exhibited.



Currently the message is something like: follow or replace the social role of politics. But as the role of politics and its character is known to everyone and coined in earlier mentioned saying, this is not bringing anything new to the audience in general or individuals and it makes education dubious, and then it makes the role of art attitudes dubious too. This is where curators have to start thinking again.

Breda Beban (Serbia/UK)

imagine art after

imagine art after is a multi-stage exhibition for internet, gallery and broadcast about the proximity of art and life against the backdrop of the contemporary world. Focusing on individual artists, the project explores how creative practice is invested with the insecurities triggered by the tension between migration and the geopolitical notion of the local.

All participating artists come from one of the countries whose people submit most applications for making a home in the UK. The project is produced by Index Arts. The curatorial team comprises of Nina Pearlman, Eline van der Vliet and myself.

Taking place every five years, imagine art after will become a regular feature of the contemporary art world. Each edition of imagine art after occurs in three stages.

- 1st stage features an internet dialogue, hosted by Guardian Unlimited, between artists who are geographically

separated but culturally related. For the purpose of imagine art after's current edition, seven London based artists were coupled with an artist from their country of origin. See www.guardian.co.uk/imagineartafter for online dialogue and exhibition. All artists are given flat fees, are supplied with necessary equipment (including cameras) and translators when needed.

- 2nd stage is commission and production of new projects which were instigated during or immediately after the dialogue stage. The majority of the projects selected for commission reflect on the profound impact the dialogue had on artists.

- 3rd stage is an exhibition of five imagine art after projects at Tate Britain, London with ongoing media sponsorship from Guardian Unlimited. (The current edition will be staged from 5 Oct 2007 – 6 Jan 2008).

The imagine art after team hold that when we wish to explore the dynamic between issues related to the process from motivation to expression with the intention of reaching beyond the 'Esperanto of the contemporary art world', such an interrogation must involve an exploration of the method as well. Issues related to selection criteria and the curatorial process itself are hence brought into question particularly with respect to large scale exhibitions that are frequently asked to serve as tests of our contemporary existence through sampling a range of cultural products. Therefore, instead of striving to resolve the conflict of inclusion and transformation imagine art after's objective is to ask how can we negotiate the movement from one to the other. We must strive to develop methods which enable us to produce systems that are porous and flexible.

imagine art after therefore employs the notion of a curator that parallels the roll of a creative producer in independent film and television. This method is drawn from my independent filmmaking practice. As curator/creative producer I guide the overall creative progress of the show from incision to exhibition. Given the multi-stage nature of the project, this process involves selection of artists which resembles the process of casting, guiding the artists during the online dialogue stage, coaching artists in developing new work, overseeing individual productions and designing project's final outcomes, staging and distribution.

This curatorial strategy strives to allow for movement beyond systems that employ either nostalgic expressions of art made politically or identities which are branded. Just like in my own work, as a curator/creative producer I am interested in a shift towards projects which are representative of something that is strongly felt on the edges of bigger stories about politics, geography and love.

Projects selected for exhibition at Tate Britain:

- Finding Grandma's Garden; two-screen film for gallery and a book

Artists: Violana Murataj (Albanian living in Tirana) & Denku Hyka (Albanian living in London)

Collaborative project by Hyka who left and Murataj who stayed in Tirana. While performing a detective work on both the city of Tirana and Hyka's emotions, the project engages with the archaeology of memory and the social and psychological impact of the movement of people.

- Kaabiyesi: Courts of Influence; series of photographs
Artist: Olumuyiwa Osifuye (Nigerian living in Lagos)
Series of eight diptychs about the role of Oba kings, traditional rulers within the context of current governmental practices in sub-Saharan Africa whose position is often an ambiguous hybrid of tradition and modernity.

- Self-Portrait with Aunt and Rebecca; two-screen film for gallery

Artist: Estabrak (Iraqi living in London)

Film about Al-Ansari coming out as lesbian within the context of her traditional Arab family who, in line with Muslim religion, believe that being gay is an unredeemable sin.

- To Live; series of paintings

Artist: Addisalem Bezowork (Ethiopian living in Addis Ababa)

For the purpose of imagine art after Bezowork continues to make serene paintings about the everyday life of women in her native country.

- Rooted; series of photographs

Artist: Senayt Samuel (Ethiopian living in London)

In an attempt to explore how photographs shape memory and to regroup the scattered elements of personal history, Samuel returns to Ethiopia, a country she left when she was a teenager.

Eva Fabbris (Italy)

Curator: Marcel Duchamp

Dear friends and colleagues, being here is a honour and a pleasure. First of all, I want to thank Giuliana Carbi for inviting me and all of you for you interesting and passionate speeches. I'm very honoured, also, because I'm here not to talk about my personal experiences as a curator, but to tell you Marcel Duchamp's experiences as a curator. With my speech I propose to look into the past to find suggestions, ideas and examples that I think could be useful for our remarks based on the questions asked by the Forum.

The curatorial activity of Duchamp represents not only a past, not only an elsewhere (because I'm going to tell you some events that took place in France and in the United States), but also the idea of a tight contiguity between a curatorial practice and the main artistic feature of Duchamp himself.

Duchamp is always called into question as the one who, in the last century, debates and overturns in the most radical way the relationship between the work of art, the viewer and the exhibition context.

Of course thanks to the famous invention of the ready-made, that clearly plays on this three poles.

But also in his two main works, *La mariée mise a nu par ses célibataires, même* and *Étant Donnés* the poetic elaboration of themes as the viewer's gaze and the exhibition context is fundamental. And then, the *Box-en-Valise*, a portable museum of almost his entire production, is a real work of art made up of an act of self-display. So I think it's clear and well known: one of the focus in

Duchamp thought was the idea of putting something in exhibition and thinking about the fact that someone is going to 'encounter' this thing in exhibition. Duchamp was the one who said 'the onlooker is as important as the artist'. But in 1949 he also talked about this topic in very romantic and intriguing words, when he expounded the theory of the aesthetic echo on the occasion of the Western Round Table of Modern Art in San Francisco, also attended by Mark Tobey and Frank Lloyd Wright. He used unexpected metaphors, for those who only saw him as a detached ironic artist. Let me read you his exact words: 'art cannot be understood through the intellect, but is felt through an emotion presenting some analogy with a religious faith or a sexual attraction - an aesthetic echo' and more: 'the 'victim' of an aesthetic echo is in a position comparable to that of a man in love, or of a believer, who dismisses automatically his demanding ego and, helpless, submits to a pleasurable and mysterious constraint'. Love, religion, submission, irrational systems of knowledge on which the encounter between the work and the viewer is based. Duchamp plays with these systems in his works and in the meantime, in exactly the same periods of his artistic career, he designs surroundings in which this encounter could take place.

The analogy Duchamp made between the mechanics of the aesthetic echo and a sexual attraction finds its visual and poetic expression in the Large Glass, with its themes of voyeurism, desire, exaltation, and submission, that are the same themes that recur in *Etant Donnés*.

At the end of the 30's Breton asked Duchamp to join the Surrealists in the attempt to create exhibition spaces as surrealists in themselves, as the works they want to show. That's interesting for us, since nowadays the overlapping

of the two different roles of the curator and of the artist is a quite common practice, with its theoretical statements and so on. But what about an era in which the curators didn't exist? In the Manifesto of the first of a series of exhibitions that Duchamp 'curated' for the Surrealists, in Paris in 1938, he was indicated as 'générateur-arbitre.' (generator arbitrator) He created the 'central grotto' (fig. 1), a space the visitors entered after the Dali's Taxi Pluvieux and after a long corridor inhabited by such feminine mannequins, every one designed by an artist. The central room of the gallery was transformed into a sort of cave with the ceiling covered with empty coal sacks stuffed with paper so the viewers thought they were under a darkened and dangerously heavy false ceiling. The floor, instead, was covered with grass, leaves and ferns. Then in the four corners of the room there were four double beds. The smaller paintings were hanged on four revolving doors in the middle of the room. And everywhere there was a coffee smell coming from nobody knew where. There was only a brazier in the centre of the grotto with a lamp inside, and this was the only fixed weak font of light provided. Duchamp, together with Man Ray, designed the enlightenment system for the night of the opening: as you can see every spectator had a flashlight to explore the grotto (fig. 2). There's two different sides from which I'd like to comment on this 'environment'. The first one concerns the story of the exhibitions, a story that actually hasn't been written yet. What happens here, with Duchamp and the Surrealists, is that the mood that regulates and steers the poetics of an avant-garde became a real space. As it was dripped out of a Surrealist painting. The other side of this event I want to remark upon with you, is the relationship of the display with the world of the

Large Glass, with the crucial themes in the Duchamp's main works. Because I think it's in this balance, between art history and display history, between personal poetics and awareness of the importance of the impact of the work in the viewer. I think it's in this balance that the example of Duchamp could be useful for our time, in his capability of introducing sensitivity towards the works he exposed and intense interpretation of the exhibition space.

In this Surrealist display Duchamp put subtle references, hints that speak about the elements of the *Large Glass*, and more in general about his poetics of the viewer's desiring gaze, poetics that we will find again in *Etant Donnés*. For example the coal, remember the coal sacks on the ceiling. We know from the *Notes* that Duchamp wrote on the *Large Glass* that the Bachelors (the masculine elements in the above part of the Glass) feed on coal. And then, the beds, places for love and eros par excellence, that Duchamp wanted Luis Quinze Style, the same uncommon style of the feet of the Chocolate Grinder. And more, the aroma of the coffee, could remind us of the Coffee Grind. But the most explicit elements are the flashlights, that make visible what a viewer is looking at with their beam of light, and that transform the viewer into a voyeur who goes around looking for works hidden in the dark. In my opinion, this a great example of an early reflection on how a viewer acts in a particular space as in the one of the gallery.

I would like to go back to the beginning of Duchamp's curatorial career, in another situation very fascinating for us. In New York at the end of the 1910's, there were very few galleries, but some very powerful collectors deeply interested in European contemporary art, especially after the great success de scandal provoked by the Armory



Show in 1913. The MOMA will open in 1929, the Museum of Non-Objective Art, the first step towards the Salomon Guggenheim Museum, will open in 1939. But certainly starting from the 1910's an idea was circulating, the idea of the need for situations in which this new art could be known and possibly understood by people.

Can we consider this situation a warning sign of the contemporary art system? Maybe it's too early, there was no market, no fairs... but I think, once again, it's interesting taking a look at what Duchamp and his American friends were doing about that.

In 1920 Katherine Dreier, a German collector, founded the Société Anonyme. Her intention was to found the first museum of modern art ever. The President was Marcel Duchamp, inspiring friend and advisor for Dreier, and Man Ray was the secretary. Man Ray was the one that invented this Dada name for the institution, that Dreier wanted to name The Modern Ark. Man Ray, had just came back from his first trip to France, where he read in a lot of shop signs the expression Société Anonyme, that is incorporated in French. He thought it was a really fascinating expression to name a small group of people devoted to the knowledge of art, and Duchamp agreed.

The opening show grouped sixteen works of art in the seat of the Société Anonyme, an apartment on the last floor of a building on 47th Street in New York: the artists were Van Gogh, Brancusi, Gris, Villon, Stella, Duchamp, Picabia, Man Ray and others. Duchamp decided the setting up of the show: the wood interiors that characterized the apartment were painted white and the wallpaper was substituted with white wax cloth; the floor was covered with stripped and soft grey rubber. The lighting, set up by Man Ray, was made up of a homogeneous blue light. It's

an atmosphere, a really characterized place. Also if there's not other objects that create an holistic sensation in the viewer (as it happens, for example, in the 1938 surrealist show in Paris), this display could be considered one of the starting points for a trend in exhibitions. I mean the idea of creating a space in which art can be understood in a dynamic and participative way, a model that loses against the institutional white cube, finally beloved also by lot of artists for its neutrality. I saved for last the most strange and interesting detail of the display: Duchamp covered the frames of all the paintings with strips of white lace paper. I think it dressed the paintings as brides (fig. 3).

In the same year he was at work on the *Large Glass*, reflecting on the masculine, the bachelors desiring a bride. Reflecting on the spectator falling in love, submitted by a work of art, maybe. Once again I think Duchamp creates a short-circuit between a display and his poetics. I think it's something really personal, he didn't want the spectator to know about the possible relation with the *Large Glass*, but he wanted to put his curatorial activity inside the world of his main work, as he more famously did playing chess.

The last example of Duchamp as curator I want to tell you about, let us know that he didn't need necessarily to transform the space to design a show and that in a sense he was a curator by trade. He organized and set up Brancusi's three first solo shows in the USA, in 1926, '27 and '33. He was a close friend of Brancusi's, he was the one who paid the taxes when the Rumanian sculptor wasn't at home in Paris, he helped him with the collectors, they spent some holidays together: they were good friends. When the Brummer Gallery from New York and Chicago asked Brancusi for a solo show, he asked Duchamp to organize it! This time (more or less in a

similar way for each of the three shows) the result was absolutely pure. Duchamp created a studied neutrality: he played only with normal light, very bright, he decided the colour of the walls, grey for the first two and white for the last one, and inside this neutrality he displayed asymmetrically the sculptures. For the first show in 1926 Brancusi too was in New York, so he probably supervised Duchamp's set up of his works and he had to be pleased with the result, since he asked Duchamp to organize his subsequent show in Chicago in 1927. Brancusi wasn't present at the hanging and the opening of this second show, but Duchamp wrote him very detailed letters with precise description of the display. This show too probably satisfied Brancusi, who asked again for Duchamp's help for the 1933 exhibition in New York. Once again Brancusi remained in Paris and Duchamp wrote him letters and sent him plans. But this time something went wrong: probably the sculptures were too close to the walls and Brancusi thought they hadn't enough space. But Duchamp had to display them close to the walls because of their weight, since the gallery was on a third floor. Duchamp explained to Brancusi this logistical problem, but the sculptor in all probability didn't accept this kind of explanation and thought the show wasn't good. The letter in which Duchamp describes the last version of the display is the last proof of their friendship. After that no more letters, no more meetings...

One of the topics proposed by the Forum concerns the capability of the curatorial practice to have real impact on cultural values, mentioning the possibility for the exhibition to supply tools for the formation of the individual. I think with Duchamp we had the opportunity to take a look at a period that represents the origin of these questions.

We stayed for a while in the core of the very Modernist need to connect art with life, we explore places in which this connection becomes actual, physical; we discover attitudes, relationships and situations concerned to this need. If Roger Buergel, the director of this edition of Documenta is right when he says that the only way to end post-modernism is to consider the Modernist period our Classicism, I think taking a look in this Duchampian past could be useful. Not to consider it an actual model, not to try to re-build something that is gone, but only a possibility of behaviour towards the idea of exposing.







1. Josef Breitenbach, 'central grotto', 'Exposition Internationale du Surréalisme', 1938, New York, Ubu Gallery
2. Unknown photographer: visitors at the 'Exposition Internationale du Surréalisme', 1938, New York, Zabriskie Gallery
3. Unknown photographer: a painting displayed at the 'First Exhibition of Société Anonyme', 1920, Yale, Beinecke Library

Daniele Capra (Italy)

Against the Aesthetics of Funny

The recent explosion in commercial galleries of teenager pop art that supports a childish vision of the world is now celebrated by art magazines. Day by day museums and exhibitions are getting user friendly, more coloured, easier, funnier. Is art becoming an entertainment for kidults?

Risus abundant in ore stultorum (Latin motto)

I'd like to talk with you about a trend that we can see both in museums and commercial galleries in Europe and United States. We can define it as an *aesthetic of funny*, which involves two different aspects of contemporary art: i.e. visiting the museum and the art works.

In my opinion this idea is now so widely diffused because of a new type of adult who has the attitude to be strictly a childish consumer. This type of people is generally called *kidult*, that is a fusion of the two words *kid* and *adult*. A kidult is a middle aged person *who enjoys being a part of youth culture and doing or buying things that are usually thought more suitable for children*, according to the definition we can find at Wikipedia. A kidult is probably a person who suffers of a light form of *Peter Pan Syndrome* linked with an immature hedonistic and narcissistic lifestyle. The word appeared first in the 80's and is now largely diffused in the Anglo-Saxon world but could be appropriate for all the advanced economic countries. A kidult doesn't belong to any social category and can be considered as a crossover.

- About the museum

There is a new way of visiting museums and exhibitions hold in public spaces (particularly in the countries with a

developed museum system and competition among cities and institutions for increasing the number of visitors). Now the experience of art is easier, as I said before *user friendly*, thanks to educational departments and sophisticated settings of the works. The main aim of the organizers and curators is that visitors should have a relaxed and funny experience, spending their free time just like going to the cinema or playing bowling with friends. Every visitor should not feel any difficulties or stand in awe of the art works: they are supposed to have a nice and pleasant time, and no personal effort is required. So people learn a little but in easy and comfortable way (and probably they suggest their friends to do the same or show off their visit to other people).

Even if educational departments try to get closer visitors and works (paintings, videos, sculptures or installations) actually we can describe this type of approach as passive, because visitors have not a so deep cultural experience if we considered that many of them leave without buying the catalogue or the guide edited by the curators. So often the experience of an exhibition finishes at the exit, or actually at the shop full of calendars, postcards, posters and a huge amount of useless art objects that we called merchandising. So now visiting the museum is more or less similar to the experience of a children spending a day in the class trip, that is a funny thing but quite useless. In this way museums avoid their cultural projects and try only to increase the number of people who pay the ticket for the admittance: the visitor isn't considered as the main character of the cultural enterprise but as a customer (in USA this is more evident because many museums of modern and contemporary art belong to foundations). In my opinion culture should not be linked with the profits

of institution as museums, which can be considered only as public investments in the long run and not a cultural entertainment for tourists *annoyés*. We don't need to *amuser les bourgeois* but enlarge the audience and make people think. Is this so difficult?

- About the artwork

A kidult or person with Peter Pan Syndrome is probably attracted by contemporary art, which is considered *cool* or *glamour* and often provides funny images. There is a lot of *easy* young pop artist born between 60's and 80's that seem to have a large successful reputation in commercial galleries, especially in USA, UK and Western Europe (as the well known Takashi Murakami, Yoshitomo Nara, Neil Farber and all the Royal Art Lodge, or here in Italy Laurina Paperina). The style of their work reminds us the mangas, the cartoons, the comic strip, i.e. the visual experiences of the childhood. We are not here discussing about their artistic or creative talent but analyzing the reasons why they are so estimated also by professionals, as art critics, journalists and collectors.

A tour in different galleries or in the main art fairs in the past five years (e.g. Miami, New York, London or the Far East) can give us an important point of view. Middle aged collectors like this pop works, which is not so appreciated by older people who find paintings, sculptures or installations more suitable to their taste. So we can easily divide the people who buy this kind of works according their ages and we see that probably the main buyers are around fifty. Moreover since 2000 all the contemporary art magazines have dedicated at least a cover to one of the biggest artists, supporting critically their work. What does it mean?

In my opinion that means we are perhaps in a situation

in which this pop tide provides works for collectors who need a funny aesthetics, that makes them feel as young teenagers, with works easy to see and not *engagées*. This can be considered only *art for art's sake*. Perhaps if we ask them about Marxism in art theory they will answer that is a strange and *funny* speculation of Groucho Marx ...

Ivana Bago (Croatia)

A Case Study: Galerija Miroslav Kraljević, Zagreb

Despite the fact that contemporary art has long overcome modernist dogmas that define art as an autonomous and unreachable object awaiting its contact with the audience inside the protected space of the white cube - and despite the decades-old visions of uniting art and life, taking art (for a walk?) out onto the streets, outside the frames of art institutions - the experience of working in a contemporary art institution often reveals that it is still difficult to reach a greater 'outside', to establish communication with more diverse audiences and create the desired 'outposts', interactions etc. Instead, there is often the impression, especially for us working in smaller environments, that art's "final consumers" are mainly identical to those who produce it. Since 2005 and under the new direction of the curator Antonia Majača and the new gallery team, with the significant shift in program conception and a different approach to thinking about an exhibition space, Galerija Miroslav Kraljević has been investigating the possible ways of negotiating with this – although ultimately and admittedly never fully negotiable, state of the closedness of the art system within itself. Taking the approach that could

be characterized as what Jonas Ekeberg defined as 'new institutionalism', the gallery has been seen as an ongoing site of experiment and its observation in which, producing and presenting art projects and events is always at the same time questioning and redefining the role, positions and possibilities of the institution itself and its relation towards immediate social reality.

Galerija Miroslav Kraljević has a unique history and position within the Zagreb art scene. Founded in 1986 by, and located in the premises of the over half-a-century old INA oil company - one of the major Croatian national corporations, now in the process of slow but steady privatization, it was founded as one of the spaces for the INA Workers' Arts Club, in line with the socialist model of not only making culture accessible to the workers, but also making the workers themselves producers of culture (while, at the same time, achieving a welcome element of control over part of workers' free time). Members of the Fine Arts section of the INA Arts Club exhibited their 'Sunday paintings' there, along with organizing other exhibitions by well-known Croatian artists, working mostly with traditional media. Branko Franceschi, now director of the Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art in Rijeka, Croatia was appointed gallery manager in 1987 and has, until 2005, succeeded in transforming the gallery from a conventional workers' arts club space into one of the most lively and relevant contemporary art spaces in Zagreb, presenting the most up-to-date and progressive art practices in the local context, but also establishing collaborations and exchanges with international artists and institutions.

Inheriting such legacy, the new gallery team from 2005 onwards, began its conception of the future program by questioning what - after the span of 20 years of the gallery's active and acknowledged existence and within present frameworks of social, political and cultural constellations, can the next, or another, step be. Taking into account not only the more specific context of G-MK but the general layout of what is being produced, what is lacking or is over-produced in the local art scene, G-MK took several new approaches to thinking about a gallery space. One point was to, instead of merely present works by individual artists, go into production of new art projects, developed from the very beginning in collaboration of the artists with the gallery curators. I will only briefly refer to a couple of projects, that are part of program of new G-MK productions and that have, again, stemmed from this need of self-questioning but at the same time looking out, giving in to the insecurity and uncertainty as to what the possible role or function of an art institution in today's society should, and is able, to be.

The project *Neighbourhood*, conceived by Ana Bilankov and Antonia Majača, in the form of a student workshop, was the first project presenting the gallery's new curatorial and programmatic orientation and was, accordingly, conceived as a 'coming out' of the gallery into the immediate surrounding of its city neighbourhood. Located in a predominantly service and business oriented area in Zagreb, near one of the major town markets and across the street from an old, abandoned liquor factory, the gallery is surrounded by cafés, restaurants, hairdresser's, car mechanic's shop, marketplace, etc. whose services the gallery's staff regularly used, but never returned the

service as the neighbors weren't accustomed to visiting exhibitions. Deciding to define the gallery as just another service provider in the area, the students visited the neighbors, making video interviews in which the neighbors were answering questions about their awareness of the gallery's existence and function, their own habits of visiting exhibitions, as well as their own ideas of what they would like to see in the gallery, that would make them members of the audience. At the exhibition opening, conceived as a social event where the gallery staff, the regular arts crowd and the neighbours all meet, their wishes, as well as the recorded videos, were exhibited, along with a raffle in which the neighbors offered their products or services, such as free hair-do, massage, or a dinner at the restaurant, as prize to competing audience members.



The project *Exchange – or, what we didn't know about amateurism* by Ana Hušman was based on similar relational principles of establishing interaction between the artist, the gallery, and the social groups that normally do not participate in the world of contemporary art. Ana Hušman centred her research on the history of the gallery, or rather its transformation from a gallery within the mentioned INA Workers' Arts Club to a high-profiled contemporary art venue, focusing the project on those whose work is ignored in the contemporary art world: amateur artists, 'Sunday painters,' in this case members of the INA Arts Club, exploring both their personal stories and pointing to more general conclusions about the relation of the concepts of amateurism and professionalism in the cultural sphere in the local context, where many well known and 'professional' artists are, strictly speaking, 'amateur' artists, as they are not able to survive from making art.

Some other new program lines that were established as long-term program features are: a program of lectures and discussion, putting emphasis on discursive, rather than merely exhibition potentials of an exhibition venue; initiating workshops with students, we have tried to include younger generations of future artists, art historians, etc. into active participation in projects and the gallery activities; we have established the first long-term artist residency and exchange program in Zagreb was initiated, a network of regional collaboration established, etc. all that in no more than 55 m² space, with minimum staff, financial and space resources, and during the course of one and a half year. In a way, listing such things always sounds like a banal advertisement and reduces the complexities behind the process into a list of self-promotion



notes, but the restructuring and rethinking G-MK has truly been a process in which all potentials were used to their fullest extent, and more, in order to see what can be done, and in what way.

On a more general level, however, it seems that the whole young and non-institutional cultural scene in Croatia is functioning in a way of constantly reaching beyond its limits, in – or better, in spite of a system where the stable structures of financing, infrastructure and cultural policy have not yet been successfully established in the cultural sphere. However, still the new strategies, new cultural policies and contents, emerge precisely in the independent sector, mostly consisting of 'small', but exceptionally active associations, which often lack even the basic spatial

infrastructure – unlike the large city and state owned institutions, which survive by inertia, living on their safe political and financial state subsidies and the remnants of their old and reliable, but also unproductive and inadequate labour structures. In this respect, independent initiatives, such as Galerija Miroslav Kraljević, and many others, function both as criticism and a corrective, since they are able, despite the limitations within which they must function, to overcome the frameworks that determine them, 'making up' for the lacks and failures of official cultural policy (or rather, the lack of a clear cultural policy or vision) and the corresponding institutions not only by their 'cultural' programmes, but also by permanently encouraging the discussion on the 'institutions that we need' and their involvement in the sphere of cultural policies. In this situation, the consideration and re-actualization of strategies of institutional critique on the side of the artists, and new institutionalism, on the side of institutions, in the local context are by no means merely an echo of parallel developments on the international scene, but a genuine expression of the need for reflecting and acting according to the existing socio-political and cultural frameworks.

1. Lara Badurina, 'Work in Progress', public debate, 2006
2. Ana Bilankov and Antonia Majača, 'Neighbourhood'

Maria Vassileva (Bulgaria)

Are Museums in the Position to go Beyond their representative Functions?

In his essay devoted to the curatorial work after Harold Szeeman David Levi Strauss from Bard College reminds us that in the Roman Empire the title of curator was given to officials in charge of various departments of public works: sanitation, transportation, public supplies of oil and corn, care of the aqueducts, etc. In this sense control, governance and functioning of a big city could be seen as a big curatorial project. The more transitional the situation in this city is the more experimental curatorial ideas, connected to it, are. In this moment Sofia is such a place. The city predisposes the ruling 'curators' to take decisions and to act in a way we consider priority only to art curators. This people deal with the city and its representation with such a freedom and extent, that it is often hard for the citizens to realize whether their life is real or virtual. The city looks like a not very well-arranged museum and the real life starts behind its invisible walls. I will give an example of a 'curatorial project' connected to the representation of the city of Sofia through photos on the official web-site of the Sofia Municipality. On the first place, they would like Sofia to be seen as a calm, peaceful place, a land with many churches. On a second place, they imagine the city as place under control where there are rules, law and order. That's why very important place have the official buildings – the presidency, the council of the ministries, the parliament. On a third place what would make city attractive are the museums – the gallery for foreign arts, the archeological museum, the national

art gallery. The choice of the municipality excludes all this movables as people and cars. Their vision about the city is very solemn, festive, monumental and not quite alive.

Now I will try to describe only a small part of the authentic image of Sofia and I chose the part connected to two different layers of the rapid capitalistic development, so typical for the recent years.

We can speak about two levels of capitalism in the city – lower and upper. The lower level are all attempts of the ordinary people to survive trying to find every single possibility to feed their families. Some of them open small shops in the basements, in the small cellars in the blocks of flats in central part of the city or in the car garages in the suburbs. The owners win some money from the rent and the merchants secure their monthly income. We all know these places as crouch or knee shops because you have to crouch or at least to bend down to buy your cigarettes or sweets. These are also known as places where you can buy illegal and cheaper alcohol and cigarettes, so they are very representative as an illustration of the first capitalist stage.

The upper level are the big businesses, the international corporations that invade the city with their aggressive advertisement and ugly office buildings.

Now I would like to switch on from the city as a museum project to the museum as a city mirror. I will speak about the Sofia Art Gallery – the museum where I work, which is by the way established and financed by the same municipality to be its official face and to represent in a museum like way the power and order of this social and political structure.

Several years ago we started different cultural policy far from official museum exhibitions. We decided to organize

more temporary exhibitions instead of having a permanent one. Actually we took the stand of the citizens than to the officials organizing exhibitions that speak about the real image of Sofia and not about the fabricated by the ruling figures one.

I could mention now only one example – the exhibition 'Urban Tales' which I curated in 2006 trying to show the vision of contemporary artist of their home place. The works are dedicated to the city of Sofia. What they express is the authors' reactions to the dynamic changes going on in the city over the past ten years. In line with the great social disturbances of a 'society in transition' the face of the city is changing every day, every hour, every minute. The artists express their attitude towards what is happening. Sometimes they are critical or nostalgic, sometimes ironic or exaggerating. The means of expression, i.e. photography, painting, video, net art, installations etc., signpost the expanded territory of our art over the past 15 years. What the works share in common is the willingness for a dialogue concerning the present and the future of the city we live in.

Sofia Art Gallery possesses a rich collection of works dedicated to the capital dating from the beginning of the 20th century to the late 80ies. They show how the nostalgically romantic vision gradually transforms and makes room for the urban utopias. It is curious enough to trace how the artists see the city of Sofia at present. Their visual commentaries, though inspired by reality in this particular case, often sound unrealistic like fairy tales. And fairy tales can often be scary. Thereby comes the name of the exhibition 'Urban Legends'.

I would like to present in particular the series by Luchezar Boyadjiev called Billboard Heaven. The artist himself

describes very well his project and also expresses the main idea of the exhibition: 'This is a cycle of images is an exploration of the visual logic of neo-capitalism. It represents a vision of the possible future of the urban environment and visual interface of one neo-capitalist city, the city of Sofia, Bulgaria. Neo-capitalist societies originated from the late totalitarian version of socialism to be found in the eastern European countries of the former Soviet Block. Its 'progress' is marked by processes of redistribution of public wealth and 'normalization' under the pressure of EU membership. Neo-capitalism is capitalism without a bourgeoisie; a consumer society without consumers (at least not yet). The development of neo-capitalist cities is marked by the appropriation of public space by private interest.

All these features are seen in the interface of Sofia, a city where you can put up anything, anytime, anywhere, as long as you can pay... In a neo-capitalist city, the economic aspects in the life of the society overpower political ones; the market suppresses the civic agenda; the visibility of business and consumption eats up the visibility of reflection, contemplation, or representation of anything other than consumer identities. In fusing material surroundings with the advertising context, I have taken these processes to their logical visual conclusion.'

With projects like this one I am trying to lead our institution beyond traditional expectations. Here are some of the steps in this direction: on a first place, this is introducing of contemporary art into museum policy; on a second - promoting new artists who bring fresh blood and spirit. I believe that at one point museums should act as galleries, as alternative spaces if you like them to be vital and contemporary. Museum curators now are mediators

between cultural traditions and values, today's artists and students from the Art Academies. It is not anymore an institution that should work only with established artists and that has nothing to do with young artists for example. On the opposite, as I see the institution, it should be very close to the cultural mainstream. Museum curators should balance between collection and art production. Should participate in decision making processing in cultural politics; taking time in engaging with contemporary art and its contents and discourses; should work with and train young curators. Museum' curating is an alternative to official 'curating' of the governmental or municipal institutions which serves other goals and dreams. Nowadays - or at least in our situation - curating in a museum means more than just keeping an historical point of view and showing art works from the collection.





1. Luchezar Bioyadjiev, 'Billboard Heaven', 2005 (ink-jet print, 60x80 cm)
2. 3, Fridtjof Nansen St., Sofia: Crouch (Klek) Art Basement Project, Institute of Contemporary Art

Vasja Nagy (Slovenia)

Autonomous spaces of social and artistic activities in Slovenia

In a society often happens that some kind of spaces are formed and they tend to function outside or beside the official system. Of course it is impossible to imagine a space that is totally outside and independent from it but a great deal of autonomy can be established in certain circumstances as well. What I find important in this case is not the rebellion against the system, but to act independently from its initiatives and programs. When such activities spread among a certain number of individuals that share similar interests it can be regarded as some kind of disturbance, interference to the dominating policy. This happens especially if this activity tries to reach broader public space. But mostly the content is not so important to the authorities as the act and fact that some autonomous activity is taking place as a wound somewhere in the body. A wound that really reflects what a society has been neglecting or oppressing for some time. The autonomy lays mostly on truly individual initiative to act and live according to one's own personal needs and ethics. As a consequence this people are strongly motivated to neglect the apparatus of the system and some of the official values that support it. Autonomous spaces somehow tend to exploit a part of the system's benefits and struggle against some other effects on the other side but always filling a gap that has formed in functionality of the society and its rigid institutions. Dominating authorities understand autonomy as an attack to them because it slips from a direct control and

provokes voluntary, social, non-profitable attitude, which is surely not of interest to the institution of capital. In this short essay I would like to present three different kinds of autonomous spaces of art production that are open to public. The first one is a permanent settlement in abandoned structures in the urban tissue. The story begins somewhere at the very beginning of the 90's when Yugoslav national army decides to move out from the center of Ljubljana, Slovenian capital. By that time has formed a group of artists, intellectuals, musicians, etc, who felt a huge shortage of spaces intended for usage by various kinds of cultural activities. According to negotiations with authorities some of the military structures in Metelkova Street should have solved this problem after the army would moved out to urban periphery. But things changed quickly and after Slovenia gained independency in 1991 the Yugoslav army left the country leaving deserted structures behind. In 1993 those structures still remained empty so activists from the *Mreza za Metelkovo* (Network for Metelkova) association took action and squatted the place after the authorities started the demolition. Spontaneously many young people broke in and started to organize concerts, performances and other events in order to prevent the structures from being changed into dust. First thing that had happened then was that the city cut off water and electricity supplies which brought to decrease of strength and a short time of relative inactivity. Despite the troubles some people kept on with their activity and in 1996 a fresh generation moved in and the place gained a huge popularity among students and other young people. Until today there has been constant activity and many NGO's have headquarters there, but the future of the space is still uncertain.

In Maribor, second biggest city in Slovenia the story was different. Similarly an abandoned former military bakery was decided to be meant for youth culture by city council in 1993. Since for some time negotiations gave no results, a group of people moved in and started to use it. They founded an association, which brought to present institution of *Pekarna Magdalenske Mreze* (pekarna is a Slovene word for bakery). The city never encouraged the activity of the institution but it never did anything against it as well so it was possible to develop a well-organized institution that takes care for various activities and tends to become some kind of youth cultural center. The second form of autonomous spaces is a private association of individual artists who share some common understanding of official art policy in the country. *Muzej premoderne umetnosti* (Museum of too modern art) was the result of the rejection of paintings of Oliver Marceta by an eminent gallery in 1998 with the explanation that his work is too modern. The idea of too modern art grew into a theoretical concept that was developed by the above mentioned and his colleague Bostjan Plesnicar. The concept was based on statements saying "put together incompatible elements in the manner of shocking", "the right idea in the right moment is a guiding force of too modern art", "the formal definition of too modern art can't exist, because every artist participates in his own manner and contributes to the variety of the movement" and "only too modern artist can recognize if there is any sign of too modern art in work of another artist". In 1999 they invited other too modern artists to join them and in addition to the movement and the museum they started to build up a collection of too modern art. The museum found a physical space when Tomaz Drnovsek decided

to offer his empty stall to be used as a gallery by artists involved in it. Until today a number of exhibitions and events were organized there.

The third form is based on a research that was done by a group of students coming from different fields and dealt with abandoned spaces in urban tissue. The informal group called TEMP located a considerable number of such degraded zones in Slovene capital city but the biggest one, former bicycle factory *ROG* is situated in the center of the city and has been abandoned for more than 15 years. The group developed the idea of a temporary solution for the unused structure. They tried to establish a dialogue with the authorities of the city which are the owner of the structure but with no success. In March 2006 a group of activists, not just TEMP, started temporary occupation of the space. Huge halls were intended to be used as artistic and social spaces. The usage was based on common consent and individual responsibility for the whole. At that time more than 150 young people started to clean up the place - tons of material were removed. But regardless the squatters declared that the occupation was temporary until the city offered a better solution for the abandoned factory, the story of *Metelkova* from the 1993 repeated. Neither neighbourhood nor the city authorities would dare to let the young people to have a place where can be freely productive. Obviously they believe it is better to have a deserted and decaying zone full of waste material than an alive social structure that produces relations and builds up local identity. Still in June 2007 it is impossible to negotiate for electricity. Water supplies somehow were not cut off.

THE AUTHORS

Ivana Bago (1979, Croatia) graduated in History of Art; in 2005 she completed the one-year programme Course for Curators at the SCCA-Institute for Contemporary Art-Ljubljana, where she is currently participating in the research-based project 'Laboratorium'. She currently holds the position of curator at the Galerija Miroslav Kraljević-Zagreb (www.g-mk.hr). She is also a member and a curator at the Zagreb-based independent curatorial collective 'Kontejner, bureau of contemporary art praxis' (www.kontejner.org).

Breda Beban curator and creative producer of 'imagine art after'-Serbia/UK, is an artist and a creative producer whose work reaches beyond the mainstream. Her production can be defined as genre crossover, using fiction, documentary, instalation and photography. Focusing on what is strongly felt on the edges of bigger stories about politics, geography and love Beban's work discovers contradictions triggered by instability of knowledge and dislocation of power.

Daniele Capra (1976, Conegliano Veneto-Italy) is an art critic and a music teacher. He graduated in piano and worked in the press office of the Teatro Comunale of Treviso, dealing with opera, ballet and classical music. Since 2004 he has been a piano teacher and a journalist for the contemporary art magazine 'exibart'-Florence (www.exibart.com).

Maja Cirić (1977, Serbia) graduated from the Department of Art History, Belgrade University; postgraduate studies (MA) within the framework of the Alternative Academic Network; she currently enrolled in PhD studies at the

Department of Art and Media Theory at the Art University of Belgrade. She is a freelance curator and received the ArtsLink Independent Projects Award (2007) for the exhibition 'Beyond Theory, Sushi ArtSpace', San Diego, California. Curator of the Serbian Pavilion at the 52 Biennale of Venezia, 2007 and curator of the 'Negotiating places/installations in the public space, BELEF, Belgrade Summer Festival 2007. She is a founder of 'Upgrade! Belgrade' (www.upgrade.beocity.com) and is a member of the AICA.

Eva Fabbris (1979, Italy), independent art historian. She is researching the exhibitions curated by Marcel Duchamp. She collaborates with 'Mousse magazine'. She translated in Italian the Eighties and Nineties section of 'Art Since 1900' by R. Krauss, H. Foster, Y.-A. Bois and B. Buchloh.

Branko Franceschi (1959, Zadar-Croatia), art historian, Croatian pavilionis curator for the 52a Biennale. Since 2004 he is the executive director of the Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art in Rijeka-Croatia (www.mmsu.hr). During his career he has curated numerous exhibitions, written numerous contributions to daily press, art reviews and periodicals, TV and radio broadcasts, etc. and has initiated and coordinated residencies and cultural exchanges between Croatia and USA and Great Britain. Member of AICA (Board of AICA Croatia), ICOM, CIMAM, DPUH, Advisory Committee of ArtsLink.

Melih Görgün (1962, Sinop-Turkey) is an artist and lives and works in Istanbul. He graduated from the Marmara University, Faculty of Art Education; MA, Istanbul Technical University, Institute for Social Sciences; PhD,

Mimar Sinan University, Institute for Social Sciences. Since 2003, Professor at the Mimar Sinan University, Faculty of Fine Arts, Istanbul. Among his curatorial activities: 2001, 2003, 10th and 11th Asian Art Biennale: curator of the Turkish Pavilion (Dhacca-Bangladesh); 2006, 'Sinopale'-1. International Sinop Biennial (Sinop).

Beral Madra Turkish art critic and curator directing BM Contemporary Art Center (since 1984). She coordinated the 1st (1987) and the 2nd (1989) Istanbul Biennale and curated exhibitions of Turkish artists in 43rd, 45th, 49th, 50th and 51st Venice Biennale. Since 1984 she has organized solo and group exhibitions of local and international artists in her art center and in other official art spaces in Istanbul. She is representing Istanbul scholarship of Berlin Senate since 1995. She is founding member and art advisor of Diyarbakir Art Centre and founding member and president of AICA-Turkey. Recent exhibitions: "Check in Europe", European Patent Office, Munich, June-July 2006; advisory curator for Sinopale, August 2006; 'Neighbours in Dialogue', exhibition for the Collection of ars Aevi, Sarajevo, March 2007. Recent Book: 'Neighbours in Dialogue' Editors: Beral Madra/Ayse Orhun Gültekin, Norgunk Publishers, Istanbul, 2007. Projects: BM-SUMA, Visual art Center, Opening September 2007; Continental Breakfast Symposium, Istanbul, 14-16 September, 2007.

Vasja Nagy (1972, Postojna-Slovenia) in 2003 obtains the professional title of curator and in 2002 the university Degree at the University of Ljubljana. In 1996-1997 attends The Course for Curators of Contemporary Art (Center for Contemporary Arts, Lubljana). Since May 2001 is employed as a curator for Contemporary Art in Obalne

galerije Piran. In 2004-June 2006 he has been involved in a student gallery, Galerija Zapor, in Koper, holding the position of Art Director and Curator of exhibitions.

Mahir Namur president of the European Cultural Association, Istanbul-Turkey.

Santa Nastro (1981, Naples-Italy) graduated and acquired a Ph.D in art critic at the Accademia di Brera, Milano. She is curator and published on 'Exibart', 'Arte Cairo', 'Corriere della Sera', 'Segno' and 'Espoarte'. She is the goodwill's referent for contemporary art projects as well as the planning of the first contemporary art Italian Festival (Faenza). Goodwill is a Bologna-based agency of strategic consulting for fundraising, corporate and private philanthropy, fundraising oriented communication, territory planning connected to the advanced cultural district model.

Ana Peraica (Croatia), independent curator and theorist, Split-Croatia. She graduated in Philosophy and History of Art in the field of logics; post-academic researcher of theory and new media of the Jan Van Eyck Akademie and attendant cultural analysis PhD courses. Focusing since the very beginning on networking (Oreste, Venice Biennial, Syndicate and Nettime mailing lists), new media (selector of Split Film festival; ISEA Helsinki-Stockholm-Finland) and critical theory (Springerin-Austria) her approach to curatorial practice can be described as crossing barriers of elite-popular culture and networking of information as well.

Igor Španjol (1972, Senj-Croatia) studied sociology of culture and art history at the Faculty of Arts of the

University of Ljubljana. He has been involved in video art since 1994. He has been collaborating on different media art projects and worked as programme coordinator at the Soros CCA Ljubljana. He is a curator in the Moderna galerija Ljubljana/Museum of Modern Art (since 1999). He has lectured on media art and has regularly been publishing articles and essays on contemporary art magazines (*Texte zur Kunst*, *M' Ars*, *Zivot umjetnosti*) and annual catalogues of the Skuc Gallery. He is a contributing editor of *Deloskop* magazine.

Marko Stamenković (1977, Serbia) curator 'Art-economy', Belgrade-Serbia. He is an art historian, critic and curator based in Belgrade (Serbia). His current activity revolves around the issue of contemporary art curatorship, focusing on themes such as: the status of curatorial practices in the post-socialist condition, cultural implications of EU enlargement, methodologies in terms of organizing exhibitions in the context of globalization, critical positioning within the global sphere of art production, and discursive projects dealing explicitly with political, social, and economic features of contemporary art and art system.

Jovana Stokić (Belgrade-Serbia), Belgrade-born, New York-based art historian. She is currently writing her doctoral dissertation on issues of feminine self-representations at the Institute of Fine Arts, NYU. She is the curator of the Kimmel Center Gallery at NYU, and a frequent contributor to *NY Arts Magazine*, in which she edited a section on women artists titled 'Off-Center Femininities' (March/April 2007). She curated the exhibition 'Off center/femininities regards from Serbia and Montenegro' at Kimmel Center,

New York University in March 2007 and the show will be travelling to California State University gallery in Sacramento California in September 2007.

Maria Vassileva (Sofia, Bulgaria) lives and works in Sofia. MA from the National Art Academy, Sofia. PhD from the Institute of Art Studies, Sofia. Acts as curator, art critic and art historian. Chief curator at the Sofia Art Gallery. Founding member of the Institute of Contemporary Art-Sofia. Curator of the women's group 'The 8th of March'. She curated a number of solo and group exhibitions with Bulgarian and international artists. She published several books on modern and contemporary art and a number of essays and articles in catalogues, magazines and newspapers.

Nebojsa Vilić (1962, Veles-Republic of Macedonia) MA degree in history of art from the University of Belgrade; Ph.D. in history of art from the University of Belgrade. Professor at the SS. Cyril and Methodius University, Skopje; tenure professor at the UKIM University of Skopje; visiting professor at the UKIM Faculty of Fine Arts. Member of Macedonian section of AICA; 1994-1998, director of the Soros Centre for Contemporary Arts-Skopje; editor-in-chief of 'Concrete Reflection. Journal of Peninsular Topics', Skopje; member of the Council for Culture, Minister of Culture, Republic of Macedonia.

Janka Vukmir, art historian, Zagreb-Croatia. Co-founder and director of the Institute for Contemporary Art Zagreb and editor in chief of 'Radionica' magazine.

THE PROGRAMME

CONTINENTAL BREAKFAST. OUTPOSTS 2007
Third CEI Venice Forum for Contemporary Art
Curators from Central Eastern Europe

JUNE 7th - 8th, 2007

Palazzo Zorzi, UNESCO Office in Venice

A Continental Breakfast project and a CEI Feature Event; **promoted** by the Trieste Contemporanea Committee; **in collaboration with:** UNESCO Office in Venice-Regional Bureau for Science and Culture in Europe (BRESCE); L'Officina Brainwork Project-Trieste; **with the patronage of:** CEI-Central European Initiative, Regione del Veneto, Provincia di Venezia, Provincia di Trieste, Comune di Venezia, Comune di Trieste; supported by: CEI-Central European Initiative, Regione Autonoma Friuli Venezia Giulia, BEBA Foundation Venice; **with the participation of:** Venice Foundation; Casa dell'Arte-Trieste.

PROGRAMME

Welcome speeches

PHILIPPE PYPAERT project officer, UNESCO Office in Venice

GIULIA DEL FABBRO senior executive officer, CEI Executive Secretariat

GIULIANA CARBI president, Trieste Contemporanea Committee

First session

SIRJE HELME (Estonia),

BERAL MADRA (Turkey) coordinator, Notes on 'Outposts and Hot Spots'

KATALIN NÉRAY (Hungary), The Dilemma of the Contemporary Museum

MARKO STAMENKOVIĆ (Serbia), Transitional Economics & Contemporary Art Institution in the Post-Socialist South East Europe

AURORA FONDA (Slovenia), A simple Part of the Mechanism

NEBOJSA VILIĆ (Macedonia), Shifting of the Curatorial Paradigm or about the Death of some Art Professions

EKATERINA DEGOT (Russia), On Dangers of being Contemporary

Second session

ANDA ROTTENBERG (Poland) coordinator

MAJA CIRIĆ (Serbia), Mind the Gap. Towards a defined Methodology of Curatorial Practice
SANTA NASTRO (Italy), Building a strategic Development: Fund raising for Contemporary Art?
ANA PERAICA (Croatia), woman @ the crossroad of ideologies
JOVANA STOKIĆ (Serbia/U.S.A.), Off center Femininities from the 'Blind Spot of Europe'
IGOR ŠPANJOL (Slovenia), Virtual Curator?
MELIH GORGUN and **MAHIR NAMUR** (Turkey), Sinopale 1. The Sinop Biennial
BRANKO FRANCESCHI (Croatia), The Culture Hero
IARA BOUBNOVA (Bulgaria), Contemporary Art Biennial in Neo-Capitalist Society

Third session

JANKA VUKMIR (Croatia) coordinator, The Art of Attitude
ALENA BOIKA (Belarus), Slightly organised Anarchy as a Model for any Kind of Art Production
BREDA BEBAN (Serbia/UK), imagine art after
EVA FABBRIS (Italy), Curated by: Marcel Duchamp
DANIELE CAPRA (Italy), Against the Aesthetics of Funny
IVANA BAGO (Croatia), A Case Study: Galerija Miroslav Kraljevic, Zagreb
MARIA VASSILEVA (Bulgaria), Are Museums in the Position to go Beyond their representative Functions?
VASJA NAGY (Slovenia), Autonomous spaces of social and artistic activities in Slovenia

Special events

'The most beautiful Woman in Gucha', film by BREDA BEBAN presented at Nuova Icona (Giudecca 454) in collaboration with Nuova Icona and with the participation of Dubravka Cherubini, Branko Franceschi e Vittorio Urbani.

'Continental Breakfast per concerto', 2007

Concert for Palazzo Zorzi, music by PUCCIO MIGLIACCIO
violin Pietro Costantini, drums Puccio Migliaccio, Cesare D'Este

Curator Giuliana Carbi
CEI coordinator Giulia Del Fabbro
UNESCO-BRESCIA coordinator Rossana Santesso
Trieste Contemporanea staff in Venice Giulio Cok,
Franco Jesurun, Emanuela Marassi, Massimo Premuda,
Luca Signorini, Kathleen Volpicelli
Press office Massimo Premuda, Luca Signorini
IT consultancy Giulio Cok
Multimedia consultancy VideoNew Trieste
Translations and linguistic consultancy Kathleen Volpicelli
Proceedings editing Giuliana Carbi, Massimo Premuda
CB logo, graphic concept and setting Chiara Tomasi
Layout and printing Gabriella Colombin and Stella artigrafiche
Trieste
Catering Claudia Sfreddo BARBARIGO S.R.L. c/o Fondazione
Querini Stampalia
A special thank to Ambassador Harald Kreid and ms. Fiora
Gandolfi

THE CB PROJECT

Continental Breakfast Project

Under the patronage:

CEI, Central European Initiative

CB foundation partners:

Belgrade Cultural Centre, Belgrade, SERBIA

BM Contemporary Art Center, Istanbul, TURKEY

Institute for Contemporary Art, Zagreb, CROATIA

LUMU, Ludwig Museum of Contemporary Art, Budapest, HUNGARY

UGM, Maribor Art Gallery, SLOVENIA

Tallinn Art Hall, ESTONIA

Trieste Contemporanea Committee, ITALY

CB partners 2007-2009:

359°-Network for Local and Subaltern Hermeneutics, Skopje, MACEDONIA

DOX Centre for Contemporary Art, Prague, CZECH REPUBLIC

European Cultural Association, Istanbul, TURKEY

Galleria Comunale d'Arte Contemporanea, Monfalcone, ITALY

ICA, Sofia, BULGARIA

Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art, Rijeka, CROATIA

Muzeum Sztuki, Lodz, POLAND

Seven Seven Contemporary Art, London, UNITED KINGDOM

Sofia Art Gallery, BULGARIA

CB partners at local or regional level:

BEBA Foundation, Venice, ITALY

Belgrade City Assembly, SERBIA

Studio Tommaseo, Trieste, ITALY

L'Officina (Brainwork project), Trieste, ITALY

Accomplished CB Activities

- 1. Continental Breakfast Warsaw** – The social relevance of contemporary art in Europe, international symposium (March 26 - 27, 2004 – Warsaw, Poland; organisers: Adam Mickiewicz Institute, Austrian Cultural Forum)
- 2. Warsaw CB Working Group (WG) meeting** (March 27, 2004 – Warsaw, Poland)
- 3. Venice CB WG meeting** (July 10, 2004 – Venice, Italy)
- 4. Continental Breakfast Belgrade** – 45th October Salon, international exhibition (September 10 - October 31, 2004 – Belgrade, Serbia; organiser: Belgrade Cultural Centre, the City Assembly of Belgrade)
- 5. Continental Breakfast Belgrade** – Symbolic and Personal Geographies of Contemporary Art, international conference (September 11-12, 2004 – Belgrade, Serbia; organiser: Belgrade Cultural Centre, the City Assembly of Belgrade)
- 6. Belgrade CB WG meeting** (September 12, 2004 – Belgrade, Serbia)
- 7. Continental Breakfast Trieste** – European Cultures at work, international conference on literature (December 2, 2004 – Trieste, Italy; organiser: Trieste Contemporanea)
- 8. Continental Breakfast: The expanded Map** – Second CEI Venice Forum for Contemporary Art Curators (June 7-8, 2005 – Venice, Italy; organiser: Trieste Contemporanea)
- 9. Venice CB WG meeting** (June 8, 2005 – Venice, Italy)
- 10. Continental Breakfast Ljubljana**, international conference (September 2-3, 2005 – Ljubljana, Slovenia; organiser: Muzeum Ljubljana)
- 11. Continental Breakfast Ljubljana** – Memory W(h)ole, international exhibition (September 3-20, 2005 – Ljubljana, Slovenia; organiser: Muzeum Ljubljana)
- 12. Ljubljana CB WG meeting** (September 4, 2005 – Ljubljana, Slovenia)
- 13. Continental Breakfast Tallinn** – Nu Performance Festival (November 2-24, 2005 – Tallinn, Estonia; organiser: Kunstshalle Tallinn)
- 14. Continental Breakfast Maribor** – Places of Transition,

international exhibition with 4 accompanying projects (December 4, 2005 - March 12, 2006 – Maribor, Slovenia; organiser: Umetnostna Galerija Maribor)

15. Continental Breakfast Maribor in London – Young Artists from Slovenia 46N34 15E38 (December 1 – 18 2005 – London, U.K.; organisers: Umetnostna Galerija Maribor, Seven Seven Contemporary Art London)

16. Continental Breakfast London in Maribor, international exhibition (January 31 – February 21, 2006 – Maribor, Slovenia; organisers: Umetnostna Galerija Maribor, Seven Seven Contemporary Art London)

17. Continental Breakfast Friuli Venezia Giulia 1 – Fuori dal West (Outside the Western World), round table (December 9, 2005 – Trieste, Italy; organiser: Trieste Contemporanea)

18. Continental Breakfast Friuli Venezia Giulia 1 – Chocolate Grinder n° 3 (December 9, 2005 - February 28, 2006 – Trieste, Italy; organiser: Trieste Contemporanea)

19. Continental Breakfast Friuli Venezia Giulia 2 – Pawel Althamer for 'Sculptures in the Park' (April, 2006 – Passariano, Italy; organiser: Villa Manin Centre for Contemporary Art)

20. Continental Breakfast Budapest – a series of lectures (2006-2007 – Budapest, Hungary; organiser: Ludwig Museum for Contemporary Art)

21. Read Art – a meeting on contemporary art publications (April 24-25, 2007 – Zagreb, Croatia; organiser: Institute for Contemporary Art Zagreb)

22. Continental Breakfast: Outposts 2007 – Third CEI Venice Forum for Contemporary Art Curators (June 7-8, 2007 – Venice, Italy; organiser: Trieste Contemporanea)

23. Venice CB WG meeting (June 8, 2007 – Venice, Italy; organiser: Trieste Contemporanea)

24. Continental Breakfast Istanbul: After All..., international conference (22-23 September 2007 – Istanbul, Turkey; organisers: BM Contemporary Art Centre, European Cultural Association)

25. Istanbul CB WG meeting (September 23, 2007 – Istanbul, Turkey; organisers: BM Contemporary Art Centre, European Cultural Association)

THE INVOLVED INSTITUTIONS AND ORGANISATIONS

(brief notes to be continued)

• **Belgrade Cultural Centre** is an institution of culture and art, established by the City Assembly of Belgrade in 1957. Fifty years of enthusiasm and dedication to the highest cultural and social values, coupled with openness reflected in a modern, engaged spirit, have made the Centre an ever-present pillar of the Belgrade cultural scene. Believing that culture has the greatest power to influence the lives of individuals, the Centre has consistently supported and engaged experimental forms of cultural-artistic expression and a critical social dialogue, pushed forward the boundaries of creativity, inscribed new production and organisational standards, developed programmes that were cultivating the supreme values in the sphere of alternative ideas and the educational aspect of its operations. The Centre has never given up its original mission – to promote the highest artistic, cultural and social values and to stimulate the production of top-class creative work. The only things that have changed over time are the forms of doing so, the priority areas and the topics, in keeping with the spirit and the needs of the time.

During the realization of its programs, the Centre collaborates with a number of cultural institutions and organizations in the country and abroad, as well as the foreign

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culture centres and embassies in Belgrade. Many valuable cultural projects testify how successful these collaborations have been; for example, The days of Swedish culture in Belgrade, Art as a mediator – Documenting lifestyles, a Central European project My private Europe, the Festival of Author Film - A View into the World, exhibition About a suitcase in Yugoslavia, music happenings held on streets and squares in Belgrade on 21st June - the International Day of Music...

Besides its traditional programmes and city events (the October Salon), the Centre also supports alternative urban projects (Belgrade Summer Festival BELEF). It carries out and organizes the following musical festivals: International Festival 'Organ Days', International Festival 'The Living Art of the Harpsichord', as well as multimedia project called One Writer's Festival. The Centre serves as a stage for young/talented writers, musicians and visual artists within the Young Artistic Scene. It initiates new programs, such as Culture Periodicals Fair, Child and Culture. It organized the Second International Danube Conference on Art and Culture.

- 2007 was dedicated to the 50 anniversary and it was fulfilled with special programmes among which are the One Writer's Festival/Stanišlav Vinaver; the 48th October

Director Danica Jovović Prodanović

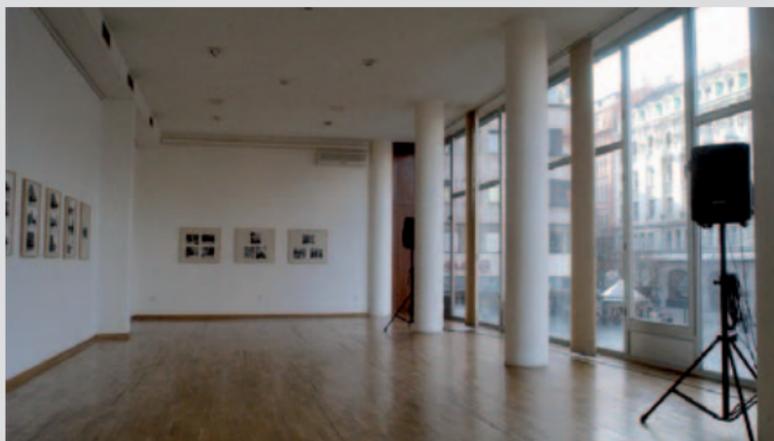
CB referring person Aleksandra Estela Bjelica Mladenović

Salon; photo projects of Gabriel Glid, Ana Adamović, Goran Malić; art project Informel – Zoran Pavlović, ... This year was planned to mark special points of artistic values in Serbian culture (art, literature, music) and to remind the audience what have been the activities of BCC during 50 years of existence and what are its goals in a future. If we have to significant events it should be 48th October Salon, One Writer's Festival/Stanišlav Vinaver, Belgrade Viewed by 10 Belgrade Photographers.

- 2008 will be filled out with traditional programmes such as 49th October Salon, Week of Architecture, World's Poetry Day, international music festivals, ...

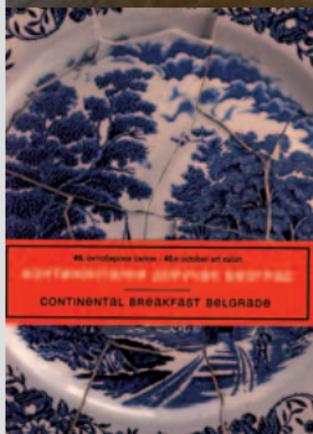
In 2008-2009 BCC will develop together with UGM-Art Gallery Maribor (CB partner from Slovenia), the mutual project 'Dialog' that will involve the artists Anica Vucetic from Belgrade and Ksenija Cerce from Maribor.

**BELGRADE
CULTURAL
CENTRE**



The main room of BCC

'45th october art salon -
Continental Breakfast Belgrade:
cover of the catalogue, 2004



- **The Institute for Contemporary Art in Zagreb** was established in 1993 as Soros Center for Contemporary Art - Zagreb. Since 1998 is registered independantly by 13 founding members consisting of local art and cultural experts.
- the last three significant events organized: 'Radoslav Putar Award' - national award for young visual artists up to 35 years of age (www.nagradaputar.scca.hr); Sven Stilinovic: 'Photocollages' ñ a retrospective exhibition of 35 years of phtotocollages by one of the most significant Croatian artists, organized in Zagreb, Rijeka and Split; 'Read Art' - presentations of publications published by contemporary art organisations in Croatia and neighbour- ing countires organized in collaboration with Continental Breakfast Newtork.
- Forthcoming projects: 'VAL multimedia' - Visual Arts Li- brary DVD publications on Croatian contamporary Artists; 'Radoslav Putar Award' - annual award for young visual artists up to 35 years of age; 'How to start your career' - seminars for young artists and art students.
- The Institute has recently opened in its new premises the study library and reading room for public use. In the library users can find books, catalogues and electronic documen- tation of Croatian artists and selection of international publications from various art scenes.

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• **Maribor Art Gallery - Umetnostna galerija Maribor (UGM)** is the second biggest modern art gallery in Slovenia. It is a governmental institution that has the status of a regional museum. It is situated in the country's second biggest town Maribor, former industrial centre of Slovenia and nowadays in regeneration process establishing itself as an internationally important winter-summer tourist destination.

UGM has a history of 50 years, and during this period it managed to develop a nationally important permanent collection with around 3500 works of Slovene modern art, which include paintings, sculptures, drawings, graphics, installation, photography, mixed media and new media art from the 1950s on until today. In 1999, UGM established the first and only collection of Video Art in Slovenia /due to the excellent collaboration with exclusive donors/ and in this first phase started to collect Slovenian video art to develop the only existing collection of Slovenian video art. It became a reference institution for this media in Slovenia. One of the main objectives of UGM is to collect, preserve, research and present works from its permanent collections as well as acquire new ones to witness its time. Another objective is to introduce interesting and important national and international

M A R I B O R A R T G A L L E R Y U M E T N O S T N A G A L E R I J A M A R I B O R

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visual art to the broadest audience by offering thematic exhibitions, retrospectives, solo exhibitions, international art shows, festivals, special events, workshops, lectures, guided tours etc. In the 1980s UGM merged with the then well established place for contemporary art Razstavni salon Rotovž /RSR/ and today this dislocated unit is a place reserved mainly for presenting new and newest trends of the contemporary visual culture, ranging from classical canvases to net art, design, architecture, photography, sound art, performances etc. Both venues are located in the old city centre and are everything but small; UGM covers over 1000 m² and RSR around 200 m².

Today, UGM comprises of different departments: Permanent Collection Department, Department for Contemporary Art, Educational Department, and Research and Archive Department with relative small team of professionals working permanent (15 persons) and group of freelanced creative professionals that work with curatorial team on project basis.

- Forthcoming projects: Zmago Jeraj, retrospective (29.02 - 13.07.2008, space: UGM); Arteast 2000+, international permanent collection of Modern Gallery of Ljubljana, (space: UGM); Jasmina Cibic (space: specific project in Maribor).



M A R I B O R A R T G A L L E R Y
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(branch of UGM)

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Umetnostna galerija Maribor
photo: Dajman Šavarc

Razstavní salon Rotovž
from the exhibition
Polona Maher / Albano Morandi, 2004
photo: Dajman Šavarc

Places of Transition -
Continental Breakfast Maribor:
cover of the catalogue, 2005

- The **Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art in Rijeka** (MMSU) was founded in 1948. From its very beginning, the Museum has been building reputation of one of the most prestigious visual arts institutions in Croatia. Its programmes included events such as the first group exhibitions of contemporary art in former Yugoslavia, which under the title of "Rijeka Salon" were held from 1954-1963; Biennial of Young Yugoslav Artists 1960-1991; Biennial of Young Mediterranean Artists 1993-1997; a tripartite research-exhibition project entitled "Architecture of Modernism, Secession and Historicism in Rijeka", realized in 1996-2003 period; International Drawings Exhibition, organized regularly from 1968 to the present day and since 2005 Biennial of Quadrilateral. Due to its high standards, MMSU has been entrusted with presentation of Croatian art and artists at prestigious international art events such as: Venice Biennial 1962, 1997, 2007; Sao Paulo Biennial 1967, 2004, etc. From 1990 onwards, MMSU has been responsible for the presentation of Croatian artists at Biennial of Young Mediterranean Artists. MMSU is also a permanent partner site for the residential exchange programmes such as EERE, NIFCA and PS1, exercising a key position in dissemination of information of contemporary Croatian

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art on international level. MMSU collection encompasses over 5,000 artworks, covering periods from the end of the 19th century to present day. The collection will finally be housed in the new Museum, planned to open by 2008. An inspired interpretation of the tradition in modernity, fused with vibrant reality of the contemporary art production, will create a dynamic display for the collection that is bound to drive the public to understand and love the art of today.



Director / CB referring person Branko Franceschi



- The last three significant events organized: 2nd Biennial of Quadrilateral; Body as spectacle (FRAC du Grand Est Collection); Borderline Peculiarities (Marinko Sudac Collection)
- Forthcoming projects: 60th Anniversary MMSU Collection Exhibition; Beyond the Edge – Contemporary Female Artists of India; 17th International Drawing Exhibition – Drawing and Animation.

**MUSEUM OF MODERN AND CONTEMPORARY ART
MUZEJ MODERNE I SUVREMENE UMJETNOSTI**



Installation view, Biennial of Quadilateral 1 - Relativism, MMSU, 2005 (Italian curator: Giuliana Carbi): Alfredo Pirri, 'Untitled', 2005, painted crystal, stone.

New seat of the MMSU with 'Red Empty', Rijeka, 2006, light instalation by Carl Michael von Hausswolff, photo by Sanjin Kunic.

Installation view, Biennial of Quadilateral 2 - Culture Hero, MMSU, 2007 (Croatian curator: Sabina Salamon): Ivan Fijolić, 'INRI Off Show', sculpture, 2007, coloured acrytal, postament with engine, 199 x 83 x 40 cm courtesy Flip Trade Collection, photo by Istog Žorž.

- The **Muzeum Sztuki in Łódź** (Poland) was opened on 13 April 1930 as the first museum of modern art in Europe. Its first collection was established in 1929 as a collective initiative of the ‚a.r.‘ group, which included Władysław Strzemiński, Katarzyna Kobro and Henryk Stażewski. It comprised works by major avant-garde figures of that time such as T. van Doesburg, S. and R. Delaunay, H. Arp and K. Schwitters. Among the most important developments after 1945 were the creation of ‘neoplastic room’ by Strzemiński, major gifts of avant-garde works in the 1950s, British art in 1970s, ‘Polentransport 1981’ by Joseph Beuys, works by artists connected to ‘Construction in Process’ and a collection of American art donated in 1983 after the 50th anniversary project ‘Echange entre artistes 1931-1982’. In 2008 a new building will be open in the ‘Manufaktura’ complex to show the collection on a regular basis.
- The last three significant events (exhibitions) organized: Collection of art of the 20th and 21st centuries. Draft 1: art and politics (27.02. – 13.05.2007); Collection of art of the 20th and 21st centuries. Draft 2: power of formalism (06.09.2007 – 24.03.2008); Museum as a Luminous Object of Desire (05.12.2006 – 04.02.2007).

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The Museum's Building

Katarzyna Kobro,
Spatial Composition (4), 1929



Director / CB referring person Jaroslaw Suchan

• **Seven Seven Contemporary Art** was originally established as a not for profit, artist led organization in 2002. The original, fast moving programme, provided a platform for emerging artists based in East London and beyond. We ran an education programme for Hackney based community groups and education establishments, which also provided work opportunities for artists. We encouraged international projects and formed partnerships with galleries and organizations in Vienna, Rome, Maribor, Slovenia and Hong Kong among others. We organized exhibitions in larger spaces beyond the gallery.

At the end of 2006 we decided to reorganise the gallery. As a result of our experience, networks, location, the evolving topography of the area and a developing art market we decided we would simplify our complex funding structures and attempt to become commercially viable. At the same time we wanted to maintain the ethos and goodwill we had generated over the past five years. We now curate about twelve high quality shows per year, with a balance of, artists whose work is potentially sellable to our audience, and shows featuring experimental work. We continue to maintain relationships with the education establishments we formerly worked with and we are a member of 'Continental Breakfast', a consortium

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of Central European museums and galleries. We are forging new links with galleries in France and Germany and continue to develop our relationship with other London based galleries with a view to presenting joint projects.

- 2007 programme: This year we managed to fit in 11 shows including 5 solo shows from exceptional artists. 'Projecktar' was an international video festival which we projected outwards from the gallery into the street' and included friends from Maribor. 'Salon'07' was an interesting collaboration between ourselves and The Matt Roberts organization. Four curator/gallerists from some of London's best known alternative spaces were invited to give an instant decision on an open submission. Hundreds of artists queued for an opportunity to be included in the salon style hang of over 80 works. We are ending the year with a group show of 5 young artists including recent Goldsmith's graduates. This show has our first reference to the impending Olympics which is already having an effect on life in East London, for example, higher studio rent, disappearing small businesses and useful suppliers, and vanishing allotments. We are astonished to hear that the dreary arterial Bow Road is to be renamed Olympic Boulevard!

- Forthcoming projects: We are starting 2008 with our

Director / CB referring person Alan Bond

first foray into art fairs having been chosen by London Art Fair to take part in their special Art Projects section for younger and more challenging galleries. This coincides with an exiting show at the gallery, 'Dulce et Decorum Est', by Dave Farnham, who constructs light boxes depicting tableaux of war scenes illuminated by fuse wire explosions.

In June we are doing two projects with artists from Central Europe. First of all we are showing drawings by Aneli Munteanu from Romania. She recently had a residency at the Institutul Cultural Roman Londra, who will be sponsors of the show. Following this we are pleased to welcome back Institute of Art production KITCH, from Slovenia with their touring project 'Living on a Border'. The exhibition here will be called 'Permanent Waiting Room' and consist of a photo/video show and round table discussion.

SEVEN SEVEN CONTEMPORARY ART

The entrance and the main room



- **Sofia Art Gallery** is a museum institution established in 1928. Today it possesses some of the richest collections of Bulgarian art: 3500 paintings, 800 statues, 2800 graphics and drawings.

With 1100 square meters of exposition space divided into three compartments the Gallery arranges some 20 exhibitions every year.

In 2000 Sofia Art Gallery initiated a Contemporary Art Archive to collect materials and documents about the work of the most prominent representatives of our contemporary art. Its main goal is to catalogue information about the most active authors, groups, institutions and galleries which have been representative of this art for the last 15 years. There was an exhibition 'Export-Import. Contemporary Art from Bulgaria' organized in 2002 which showed works of contemporary art specially created for large-scale international events. The discussions held around this exposition underscored the need for a serious professional attitude towards the most recent artistic trends on the part of the museums. At the end of 2003 a programme named 'Meeting Point' was launched giving the opportunity to young artists interested in contemporary art to exhibit their works and to have direct contact and dialogue with their viewers. In 2004 a new fund was established – Contemporary Art and Photography, with more than 80 items already. A

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great part of the works there come in thanks to the donative intent of their creators. Each donation is publicly displayed under the motto 'Action: Contemporary Art'. The aim is to emphasize how important it is for the works of contemporary art to go into the museum collection and for the viewers to be educated with respect to their better understanding of this art. Donors: Adelina Popnedeleva, Alexander Valchev, Boriana Dragoeva (Rossa), Ivan Moudov and Dessislava Dimova, Kalin Serapionov, Kiril Prashkov, Kosta Tonev, Krassimir Terziev, Luchezar Boyadjiev, Milko Pavlov, Nadezhda Oleg Lyahova, Nedko Solakov, Nina Kovacheva, Pravdoliub Ivanov, Samuil Stoyanov, Sasho Stoitzov, Stefan Nikolaev.

- The last three significant events organised: shortlist 2007.

Gaudenz B. Ruf Award (18.10 - 18.11.2007)

The Gaudenz B. Ruf Award was created in 2007 by a Swiss national who, living in Bulgaria from 1995 till 2000, got acquainted with its rich cultural life and who is convinced of the artistic potential of this country. The Award aims at promoting and propagating artistic expression in Bulgaria in the field of visual arts and focuses in particular on the younger generation. The Award is granted every year both for young as well as for advanced artists in the framework of a competition.

Krassimir Terziev. 'Background Action' (10.07 - 31.07.2007)

Director Adelina Fileva
CB referring person Maria Vassileva

'Background Action' is a spatial narrative that reconstructs a journey into film making and the imposition of war in a globalized mode of film production industry. It was a three month long journey taken by 300 Bulgarian men, hired by Warner Bros as 'specialised extras' for the filming of the battle scenes of the motion picture 'Troy' (2004). The Bulgarians were hired to represent ancient warriors from the Greek and Trojan tribes in the epic war, described by Homer in the Iliad, which was to be brought to life again by the movie 'Troy'. And as in the 'Iliad', where the entire Book 2 is dedicated to the narration of the alias of the Achaean and Trojan armies hired from all the lands in Homeric world, the 300 Bulgarians were hired along with 1000 Mexican extras to stage that war. The only difference is that they had to battle both sides depending on the filming plans of the day. Most of them made the journey with the idea to see how the movies are made, to see Mexico and to meet the great movie-stars. Some of them hoped they might be picked up and developed in the movie-business. In fact the trip to the movie-world turned out to be a constant shift of the way they perceived their roles. The extras were totally confused by the technique of film-making. From Mexico itself, they only saw a piece of a few square kilometres of desert where the film-set was built and where they spent 12 to 14 hours a day under the scorching sun. The

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stars were severely guarded, if they were ever there. What was left as a memorable experience were the battle scenes that went completely out of control and became very real, with injuries and real blood on top of the emulated make-up, running horses and showers of arrows. So that by the end of the filming, Warner Brother's simplistic vision whereby the extras could be misrecognised as Greeks and Trojans became reality, and they became that ancient warriors in order to survive the actual fights. Just like the warriors from 'Iliad' they brought home their trophies and ransoms in the shape of photos and video recordings. These are the images in focus in the installation 'Background Action'. They stand on a shaking ground between touristic photographs, and documents of hyper-real events and environments. Epic scenes, coming from an ancient world, recreated by perfectly designed sets and costumes are suddenly ruptured by objects, gestures and practices from the everyday world. The combination of these trophy-images with the personal stories of the extras, maps of the production activities and metaphoric figures creates a narrative that questions self-identification in a war staged by globalized film industry that far exceeds the boundaries of the motion picture.

Günther Uecker. 'Mistreated Man: 14 Pacified Implements'
(05.06 - 05.07.2007).

• **Trieste Contemporanea.** Dialogues with the Art of Central Eastern Europe' is a committee of cultural institutions and associations recognized as 'cultural body of regional interest' by the Autonomous Region Friuli Venezia Giulia. It was created in June 1995 with the objective of bringing out the role of Trieste as a hinge between Western Europe, the countries of Eastern Europe and the countries of the Mediterranean area for the creation in Trieste of a permanent observatory on the contemporary situation of art and culture in Central-Eastern Europe.

The Committee has a conspicuous activity of promotion of art, collaborations, co-productions and exchanges on an international level. Initiatives dedicated to visual art, music, cinema, literature, multimediality, theatre, architecture and design have been held in Trieste and abroad.

The focal points of the activity of the Committee can be considered to be the 'Trieste Contemporanea International Design Contest' a biennial event that now attracts the interest of designers from 22 European countries, and the 'CEI Venice Forum for Contemporary Art Curators', another biennial event that deals with the topics of cultural promotion and the exchange of curatorial experiences in occasion of the opening of the Venice Biennale. Both initiatives are carried out under the auspices of the CEI.

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Among the other initiatives that have been created, a very important one is the promotion of young artists that also avails itself of an annual specific tool (Trieste Contemporanea Award for Young Emerging European Artist). Starting from 2003 Trieste Contemporanea proposed to a number of institutions and museums from Central-Eastern Europe the co-production of the international project 'Continental Breakfast' of which the Trieste Committee is presently project-leader.

- The last three significant events organized: '2007 Young European Artist Trieste Contemporanea Award'. 'My Sunshine', a project by the macedonian artist Nikola Uzunovski (December 1st, 2007-February 2nd, 2008); 'Continental Breakfast. Outposts 2007'. Third CEI Venice Forum for Contemporary Art Curators from Central Eastern Europe (June 7th-8th, 2007); 'videospritz #2'. International Video Art Presentation (February 23rd-April 13, 2007).
- Forthcoming project: 'Eighth International Design Contest Trieste Contemporanea', Venice and Trieste 2008.

Visual Art Section Director Franco Jesurun
President / CB referring person Giuliana Carbi



Beral Madra,
Philippe Pypaert,
Giulia Del Fabbro,
Giuliana Carbi



Puccio Migliaccio,
Cesare D'Este,
Pietro Costantini



Massimo Premuda, Kathleen Volpicelli, Luca Signorini

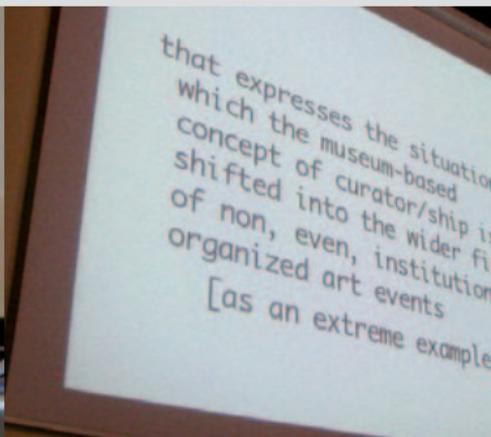
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Maia Cirić,
Anda Rottenberg,
Ana Peraica



Janka Vukmir,
Daniele Capra,
Alena Boika,
Eva Fabbris

Kathleen Volpicelli, Massimo Premuda, Franco Jesurun



Beral Madra and Maria Vassileva



an image from 'The most beautiful Woman in Gucha' by Breda Beban



a general view of the room



Janka Vukmir and Giuliana Carbi





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