

Politicization of Friendship

Moderna galerija, Ljubljana

POLITICIZATION OF FRIENDSHIP

Bojana Piškur

In the history of philosophy as well as theory of art there exists a variety of works based on the idea of friendship. The core of present interest in friendship goes beyond friendship as mere closeness, affinity, affection or some consensus of opinion. It implies a broader political dimension and consequently a certain tension and malaise. The exact nature of this dimension, the way it manifests itself in relation to friendship and, last but not least, the way it affects art, are questions that both this text and the exhibition seek to answer.

The exhibition itself evolved from the premises of so-called participatory art of Eastern Europe and Latin America, which are here brought to a significantly different level. Claire Bishop has described participatory art in these geopolitical spaces in the period from the 1960s through the late 1980s as the artists' desire for a more subjective and intimate aesthetic experience, which is no longer perceived as political, but instead as existential and apolitical, dedicated to the idea of individual freedom and imagination.¹ The thesis

1 Claire Bishop, *Artificial Hells: Participatory Art and the Politics of Spectatorship* (London & New York: Verso, 2012).

about art being apolitical is quite problematic, to say the least. The exhibition *Politicization of Friendship* therefore attempts to encompass certain aspects of “participation,” for instance collective artistic production, solidarity, interaction and collaboration between artists in different parts of the world where the art system was not only underdeveloped, but also completely indifferent towards alternative artistic practices. Some of the typical characteristics of Eastern European and Latin American spaces² and their understanding of collectivity and collaboration include informal alternative art spaces, apart-art, art collectives, collective creativity, self-organizing, “self-historicization,”³ etc.

However, our point of departure is not the history of theater or performance art, where theoreticians typically tend to locate the beginnings of participatory art, but primarily ruptures in various areas of knowledge, or “the new politics of knowledge,”⁴ that have occurred since the 1960s. Such ruptures produced different discourses – not only the discourse on madness, sexuality, history and a variety of scientific discourses, but also the discourse on art. They all derive from an attempt to dispense with the conventional habits of mind and received ideas in each established area, or in other words, from the need to uncover the relations between knowledge and power.

2 In addition to projects from these spaces the exhibition includes also projects from the United States, Japan, Finland, and Spain.

3 Zdenka Badovinac, *Avtentični interes* (Ljubljana: Maska, 2010).

4 Mladen Dolar, *Kralju odsekati glavo* (Ljubljana: Krtina, 2009).

In his essay “Politics of Friendship,”⁵ Jacques Derrida discusses friendship as a political concept with a fundamental role in public life, suggesting that many aspects of the political can be explained by examining the apparently intimate sphere of friendship. According to Derrida, however, only friendships based on usefulness and benefit can be considered as being political. Viktor Misiano’s text “Institutionalization of Friendship,” which refers to the 1990s and the special role of friendship between artists from Ljubljana and Moscow, could be read within the framework of Derrida’s thesis, as it essentially deals with friendship in terms of its potential strategic value. But something different is at stake in Misiano’s text, namely the specific characteristic of friendship as a form of social relation with no presumed permanent interaction. No part of such friendship is imposed from outside; it consists primarily of each individual’s choice or some sort of “ethical form of Eros.” The story of friendship is thus not merely a “story of meetings” and “serial solidarity,” but also, in Misiano’s poetic words, “a discovery: discovery of the Other and at the same time of the Self.”⁶ Giorgio Agamben’s take on this particular “discovery” could perhaps go as follows: “To recognize someone as a friend means not to be able to recognize him as ‘something’. One cannot say ‘friend’ as one says ‘white’, ‘Italian’, ‘hot’ – friendship is not a property or quality of a subject.”⁷

5 Jacques Derrida, *The Politics of Friendship* (London & New York: Verso, 2005).

6 Viktor Misiano, “The Institutionalization of Friendship”, 1998, available at: <http://www.irwin.si/texts/institutionalisation>.

7 Giorgio Agamben, “The Friend”, *What Is an Apparatus* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009), 31.

What therefore interests us in our case are not so much the subjects of friendship, but rather the procedures of friendship, which stem from the following questions: What can friendship achieve? What shifts can occur, in both artistic-formal and political terms, if friendship begins to create new ways of interpersonal relating and new structures of being? What is at issue is not just the political potential of an artwork or its emancipation from the representational regime, but politicization as desire, which “deploy[s] its forces within the political domain and grow[s] more intense in the process of overturning the established order.”⁸ In short, desire as the driving force of exploration, which surfaces at some fundamental encounter at the junction of politics, art, philosophy, etc. Since we perceive this as being akin to madness, we have consequently included madness in our exhibition. Here, of course, we speak of that particular kind of madness that is a creative principle, of something that creates a paradox, all the while escaping control.

When friendship is based on desire, it does not fall under the imperative of collaboration, nor does it constitute some kind of temporary or seeming community or strive towards a specific goal. Rather, it is about “truly dissensual politics,”⁹ in which encounters between singularities create the condi-

8 Michael Foucault, “Preface”, Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus, Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000), xii.

9 Charles J. Stivale, *Gilles Deleuze’s ABCs, The Folds of Friendship* (Baltimore: Parallax, The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2008), 7.

tions for the production of thought. But not just any kind of thought: what we have in mind is the production of thought of a special order, when two or more people are “capable of taking upon themselves the difference and making it generative.”¹⁰ Moreover, encounters of this sort constitute venturing into unknown territories, taking risks that could lead to something new, understood as an experience of intensity, as a rupture with the commonplace. Friendship therefore can’t simply be equated with collective spirit and collective work. The way friendship is conceived and understood here, it can only mean some kind of rigorous existence, extreme in terms of singularity, gestures of revolt and their inherent potential. Friendship is thus a form of emancipation, not in the sense of political correctness, consensus or search for some universal truth, but as a constant discovering of what we are and what we become in the processes of friendship. These questions are both essentially political, calling for a decision that does not come easily, hence demanding a significantly different engagement in the here and now.

10 Alain Badiou and Slavoj Žižek, *Hvalnica ljubezni*, (Ljubljana: Analecta, Društvo za teoretsko psihoanalizo, 2010), 29.

Participating Artists, Groups, Projects

Roberto Barandalla & Darío Schvarzstein

Jože Barši

The Beehive Design Collective

Ivan Cardoso

Juan Downey

La Escuela de Arquitectura de Valparaíso

Galería Chilena

Group Material

Group of Six Artists

Minna Henriksson

Roberto Jacoby

KURS (Miloš Miletić & Mirjana Radovanović)

Madness in the Eighties – the Anti-Psychiatry Movement in Slovenia

Manga Rosa

Roberto Mardones

Tina Modotti: Farewell to Photography

Andrei Monastirsky (Collective Actions)

Museo de la Solidaridad / Museum of Solidarity, Santiago, Chile

The OHO Group

THE PLAY

Zoran Popović

The Real Estate Show

Benet Rossell

Škart

Josip Vaništa (Gorgona)

Yugoslav Surrealists and the Politics of the Impossible

Roberto Barandalla and Darío Schwarzstein

A Glorious Disaster (a Chronicle of an Intervention on Republic Square), 2012



We were convinced that we had to re-build the international surrealist movement.

A Glorious Disaster revisits, more than 30 years later, the journey of the Argentine art collectives Taller de Investigaciones Teatrales – TIT (Studio for Theatrical Research, 1976-1982) and Grupo de Arte Experimental Cucaño (Experimental Art Group Cucaño, 1979-1984) to São Paulo, to participate in the *Alterarte II* event held at the University of São Paulo (USP) in August 1981. During the trip, they met with members of the Viajou Sem Passaporte (Traveled Without a Passport), a group formed by students of art at the

A Glorious Disaster (a Chronicle of an Intervention on Republic Square), 2012
video, color, sound, 30'

Audiovisual production based on the film material filmed in São Paulo and Buenos Aires in 1981 (Sergio Bellotti, Eduardo Nico, Adrián Fanjul and Roberto Barandalla) and interviews made in 2012

Production: Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía

Courtesy: Roberto Barandalla

USP. These three collectives, which drew on an intense exchange of artistic proposals, had in common a critical stance towards propagandistic art and socialist realism. In their interventions they sought to underscore the power of imagination and collective creativity and to provoke disruptive or disturbing situations in urban areas as a way of questioning what was considered normal in a period marked by secrecy and the violent repression of leftist activists in Latin American dictatorships. Linked to Trotskyist organizations and surrealism, the groups demanded revolutionary art and the creation of an international movement.

The most important event of the *Alterarte II* festival was not one officially scheduled. Instead it was an action carried out by TIT and Cucaño, aided by members of Viajou Sem Passaporte, and entitled *The Plague*, inspired by Antonin Artaud's theater of cruelty. On the morning of Sunday August 16, 1981, they went to Republic Square in São Paulo, where there were a lot of pedestrians and a craft fair. There they put on a simulated mass poisoning of a group of tourists, throwing up in different parts of the square, which triggered a collective psychosis among the public, perplexed by the scene. Taller de Investigaciones Cinematográficas – TIC (Studio for Cinematographic Research) filmed the intervention. The police and an ambulance arrived on the scene to help the “poisoned people,” but the farce was soon discovered, leading to the detention of the local artists and the deportation of the Argentinians. *A Glorious Disaster*, created by Barandalla,

then a member of TIC, reconstructs these events, combining footage filmed during the trip and partially confiscated by the police, and present-day testimonies of several of the “poisoned” artists.

Jože Baršič

Michel de Certeau

The Practice of Everyday Life

Translated by Steven Rendall

University of California Press,

Berkeley, Los Angeles, London,

1988

Contents

Preface to the English Translation ...ix

General Introduction ... xi

Consumer production ... xii

The tactics of practice ... xvii

PART I: A VERY ORDINARY CULTURE ... 1

I: A Common Place: Ordinary Language ... 1

“Everyman” and “nobody” ... 1

Freud and the ordinary man ... 2

The expert and the philosopher ... 6

The Wittgensteinian model of ordinary language ... 8

A contemporary historicity ... 12

II: Popular Cultures: Ordinary Language ... 16

A Brazilian “art” ... 16

The proverbial enunciation ... 18

Logics: games, tales, and the arts of speaking ... 21

A diversionary practice: “la perruque” ... 24

III: “Making Do”: Uses and Tactics ... 29

Use, or consumption ... 30

Strategies and tactics ... 34

The rhetorics of practice: ancient ruses ... 39

PART II: THEORIES OF THE ART OF PRACTICE ... 43

IV: Foucault and Bourdieu ... 45

Scattered technologies: Foucault ... 45

“Docta ignorantia”: Bourdieu ... 50

V: The Art of Theory ... 61

Cut-out and turn-over: a recipe for theory ... 62

The ethnologization of the “arts” ... 64

The tales of the unrecognized ... 68

The art of thinking: Kant ... 72

VI: Story Time ... 76

An art of speaking ... 76

Telling “coups”: Détienne ... 80

The art of memory and circumstances ... 82

Stories ... 89

PART III: SPATIAL PRACTICES ... 91

VII: Walking in the City ... 91

From the concept of the city to urban practices ... 93

The chorus of idle footsteps ... 97

Myth: what “makes things go” ... 102

VIII: Railway Navigation and Incarceration ... 111

IX: Spatial Stories ... 115

- “Spaces”and “places”... 117
 Tours and maps ... 118
 Marking and boundaries ... 122
 Delinquencies? ... 129
 PART IV: USES OF LANGUAGE ... 131
 X: The Scriptural Economy ... 131
 A “modern” mythical practice ... 133
 Inscriptions of the law on the body ... 139
 From one body to another ... 142
 Mechanisms of incarnation ... 144
 The machinery of representation ... 147
 “Celibate machines”... 150
 XI: Quotations of Voices ... 154
 Displaced enunciation ... 156
 The science of fables ... 159
 The sounds of the body ... 162
 XII: Reading as Preaching ... 165
 The ideology of “informing” through books ... 166
 A misunderstood activity: reading ... 167
 “Literal”meaning, a product of a social elite ... 170
 An “exercise in ubiquity,” that “impertinent absence”... 173
 Spaces for games and tricks ... 174
 PART V: WAYS OF BELIEVING ... 177
 XIII: Believing and Making People Believe ... 177
 The devaluation of beliefs ... 178
 An archaeology: the transits of believing ... 180
 From “spiritual” power to leftist opposition ... 182
 The establishment of the real ... 185
 The recited society ... 187
 XIV: The Unnamable ... 190
 An unthinkable practice ... 190
 Saying and believing ... 192
 Writing ... 194
 Therapeutic power and its double ... 195
 The mortal ... 197
 Indeterminate ... 199
 Stratified places ... 200
 Casual time ... 202
 Notes ... 205

The Beehive Design Collective

Mesoamérica Resiste, 2013



Mesoamérica Resiste (Mesoamerica Resists) is a recent project by The Beehive Design Collective, an all-volunteer, nonprofit organization founded in 2000 in Machias, Maine, employing graphical campaigns as educational tools and used by political organizations to create and communicate stories of resistance to corporate globalization. The collective uses graphics to explain complex systems that shape our world today, presenting history in a way different from what we are commonly used to hearing through the channels managed by the hegemonic powers and illustrating concrete examples of how economic policies are manifested in the world. *Mesoamérica Resiste* is the latest project in a

Part of the poster *Mesoamérica Resiste*, 2013

Courtesy: The Beehive Design Collective

trilogy that revolves around globalization in the Americas, and which saw its start in 2001 with the graphic *Free Trade Area of the Americas*, followed by *Plan Colombia* a year later.

For the realization of *Mesoamérica Resiste*, the Beehive Collective volunteer activists (or “bees”) worked for nine years, creating graphics, doing research and interviewing local communities on trips to Mexico, Colombia and Panama, to bring out into the open the social and economic impact of the so-called Mesoamerica Project (formerly known as Plan Puebla Panama, announced in 2001). The plan foresees the integration of a part of the southern region of Mexico with the countries of Central America, Colombia and the Dominican Republic, in order to pave the way for private foreign investment in these regions. These investments include creating monopolies over natural resources such as oil, the construction of highways, dams and power grids to open up export channels, and the creation of *maquiladora* plants serving large corporations known for their largely deplorable conditions, for employing children and pregnant women, and for destroying the environment.

The *Mesoamérica Resiste* campaign is a collective effort involving discussions about the devastation of local economies and communities affected by the neoliberal integration plan – shown on the poster in the image of a colonial map of a Spanish conquistador, portraying a top-down look of the region – as forms of resistance and solidarity displayed in the large image of the graphic. These posters are collaborative

and anti-copyright tools to promote awareness, strategic actions and the construction of social movements, with the aim to “cross-pollinate the grassroots” and strengthen the ties of solidarity in educational encounters facilitated by bees in the affected groups and communities.

André Mesquita

Ivan Cardoso

H.O., 1979



H.O., 1979

sound, color and b/w, 35 mm film transferred to video (Betacam SP and DVD), 13'

Courtesy: Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, Madrid

H.O. summarizes in thirteen minutes the essence of the work of Brazilian artist Hélio Oiticica. It is a portrait of the artist in which a number of his *parangolés* can be seen, and the artist can be heard talking about his work: “If I knew what these things were, they would no longer be an invention. Their existence makes the invention possible.” The *parangolé*, as described by Oiticica, is a new experience between the plastic object and the viewer, a formless sculpture in which, through a spontaneous relationship with the wearer, the artist opens up a whole range of experiences. The subjects themselves, called “participants,” are the ones who give a function to the object and, as they appropriate the work’s content, see a multiple reality based on a return to the popular, to ecstasy, dance, movement, the body.

H.O. is constructed like a collage that mixes archive photographs of Oiticica in La Mangueira with short sequences of his *parangolés* experiences from the 1960s. The soundtrack accompanying the images consists of clips of Oiticica talking about the *parangolé* concept (“It would not be a new order of color manifestation in space, but a new form in which other orders appear”), a poetry text by Haroldo de Campos and a selection of music ranging from samba to “Sympathy for the Devil” by The Rolling Stones. Ultimately, it constitutes a document of the wide and diverse interests of the Tropicalist movement.

Cristina Cámara Bello

(Text published at the Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía website)

Juan Downey



Fresh Air, 1972

documentary photograph of the performance

photo: Juan Downey

Courtesy: Marilys Belt de Downey, New York

Satelitenis is a video that Juan Downey made between 1982 and 1984 in collaboration with the Chilean artist Eugenio Dittborn and the Chilean filmmaker Carlos Flores. A play of exchanges, a video experiment, a conversation that traveled three times from Santiago in Chile to New York and back.

Conversations by way of letters – between Juan Downey in New York and Eugenio Dittborn and Carlos Flores in Chile – are reminiscent of the audiotaped oral accounts used as carriers of correspondence with relatives and friends in political exile during the years of the dictatorship in Chile.

By means of these voice recordings friends, mothers, children, brothers, and comrades would recount what was happening in their social and private lives as well as political events. A record-

ed whisper, on the thin audio tapes, would travel by airmail to the hands of its recipients. In the foreign country, these aural letters were received and listened to as sound cards. The recorded voice has the intimacy of autobiographical confession, and the tape is a record of time and the emotion in the voice sharing and revealing epistolary confidences. Dittborn's and Flores's audiovisual accounts traveled abroad as audiovisual postcards. Documentary recordings show the grim cultural panorama of Chile. Downey, for his part – by way of correspondence – sent back pictures from New York, edited onto and in continuation of the audiovisual recordings from his friends in Chile.

This exchange of audiovisual letters adds to and alters the individual layers in a collective current. The different voices and images edited to infinity form part of the feedback discourse developed in the work, which proposes the renegotiation of the positions of the observing subject and the observed.

In *Satelitenis* we are talking about tennis, the game that moves across the net that divides the court in an exchange of rules and spaces horizontally confronted: I send the ball flying to you and you send it back to me. From the geographical and political insularity of the Chile of the 1980s, Dittborn and Flores sent their melancholy letters to artists in New York and what came back in return was fresh air. Downey's concern about Chile, his homeland, and the polit-

ical processes the country and Latin America in general had to contend with from the early 1970s, is apparent in his activist works in which he denounces internationally the cynicism of the military dictatorship and the way it concealed reality in the press and on television, such as, among others, *Make Chile Rich* (1970), *Map of Chile* (1973), *Chile 1974*, *In the Beginning* (1976), *Corner* (1985), *Chile si Junta no*, *Rewe* (1990), and *Chicago Boys*.

In those years he was very active on the art scene in New York, becoming involved in participatory art projects and communal societies, from an approach to systems as a reflection on nature and culture. Among such projects is *Fresh Air* (1971-1973), made together with the Chilean artist Gordon Matta Clark, on the streets of New York.

As a technological means, the portable video camera was a symbolic and critical tool for Downey, which allowed destabilizing the hegemonic relations between the observing subject and the observed. Maintaining a multicultural vision, Downey tried to break up the vertical position of cultural and social colonialism by means of circuits and networks of horizontal communication that technology made possible.

Isabel García Pérez de Arce

La Escuela de Arquitectura de Valparaíso / The Valparaíso School of Architecture



The First Amereida Journey, 1965
Magallanes y Antártica Chilena, Chile
photograph taken on July 4, 1965

Courtesy: Archivo Histórico José Vial Armstrong, Pontificia Universidad Católica Valparaíso

In 1953, a group led by Alberto Cruz and the poet Godofredo Iommi founded the Institute of Architecture at the Catholic University of Valparaíso.¹ This action initially involved a complete transformation of the previous school of architecture with new ideas and content. Initially, another component of the conceptual structure was given equal prominence: research and links with science.

In the process of determining principles or laws that would transcend pure arbitrariness or visibility in formal production it became apparent that it was necessary to introduce the practice of design as an attitude basically aimed at integrating the methods of scientific research.

This coincided with the views held then by Tomás Maldonado, with whom the group was in

¹ See Pérez Oyarzún, Fernando. "The Valparaíso School". *The Harvard Architecture Review*. Volume 9. 1993.

contact in the early years. On the one hand, there was some direct contact between members of the Chilean group with the Argentinean group of concrete art. And on the other, and a little later, the contemporary experience of the Ulm School came to their attention, from a distance, through visits and alumni – especially Max Bill’s proposal to “overcome the use of science only as a regulatory method of art.”

In 1965, with their first journey across America, the fundamental concept of the project of architecture centered on poetry conclusively came together. The initial poem, *Amereida* (1967) – The Aeneid of America – broached the question of language and proclaimed the importance of traveling to teach “that words are foreign to the things they name.”² It also defined a position of independence from the existing knowledge and recognition of one’s own abilities to generate knowledge from one’s place in the world: “to emancipate ourselves and to rid the present of all suspicion of imposture, we are tomorrow starting our journey across America.”³ *Amereida* supports abandoning scientific approaches, proposing the word as the vehicle of observation – which is now an act of introspection – and poetry as the creative, productive origin of architecture. It bestows on poetry the ability to capture and transcend phenomena, and it is then that the poetic word gives rise to the new and the original. As language came

2 *Amereida. Volumen primero*. (First edition 15 May 1967). 2nd edition. Talleres de Investigaciones Gráficas. Escuela de Arquitectura. Universidad Católica de Valparaíso. January 1986. pp. 45, 77.

3 *Ibid.* p. 111.

to lend scientific activity its role of theoretical coherence, attention was placed on the ability of poetic language to give meaning to the creation of a work of architecture, which tangibly characterized the group’s designs.

Starting from the assumption of poetry as the basis for the creative act of design and a strong phenomenological position, the group dedicated itself for years to teaching architecture and primarily to developing works in the “Open City,” the experimental field the group established in 1970 as the Amereida Cooperative.⁴ The existence of this permanent laboratory gave wider expression to certain operating conditions that transformed into positive alternative solutions, which allowed for more comprehensive conceptions of the problems and inspiring a new association between professional practice and the status of knowledge, between research and practice, avoiding the terms of formal language, eluding the everyday, aiming to transcend merely “doing” in order to transform it into originality and poetry.

Horacio Torrent, PhD

Horacio Torrent, PhD, is an architect, critic, historian and Professor of Architecture at the School of Architecture at Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile.

4 See especially: Pendleton Jullian, Ann. *The Road that is not the road and the Open City*, Ritoque, Chile. MIT Press. 1996.

Galería Chilena

To Be Political It Has to Look Nice was an exhibition project realized by Pablo León de la Barra together with Beatriz López at apexart in New York over October and November of 2003. The project aimed to present a series of cases of contemporary art production in Latin America to question what was understood as “Latin American art.” The curator’s aim was to highlight where the political and the aesthetic intersected in the works of a group of artists or art collectives from the 1990s, with a view to emancipation from precon-



Galería Chilena with the President of Chile Eduardo Frei-Ruiz Tagle
 Photo taken by an official photographer at Palacio La Moneda, Santiago, Chile
 September 1998
 Courtesy: Galería Chilena: Felipe Mujica, Joe Villablanca, Diego Fernández

ceived stereotypes concerning art production in the region. Among the invited artists and collectives were El Chino Ediciones, Eduardo Consuegra, Day to Day (Carolina Caycedo, Mauricio Guillen, Helena Producciones, Larregui-Laguerre, Olho Sao Paulo, Papi Paga Productions (Miguel Calderon), Sebastian Ramirez, Pedro Reyes, Los Super Elegantes (Milena Muskitz and Martiniano Lopez-Crozet), Javier Tellez, El Vicio and Galería Chilena.

Pablo León de la Barra’s curatorial concept was to develop strategies of survival subject to topics of “the cheap and the informal,” “the serious and the ironic,” related to the cultural, linguistic, and geographical origins of the invited Latin American artists. For the project, the exhibition space took on the form and dynamic of a tropical and anarchist social club. The convergence and exchange of the collectives and the exhibits combined into constellations without a defined center. Some of the artists worked in their home cities in Latin America, others produced work in places they had adopted as home.

In Santiago de Chile, Galería Chilena (Galchi) was founded by three young local artists aged between 24 and 27: Diego Fernández, Felipe Mujica and Joe Villablanca. It opened as an independent art space on December 13, 1997, with a 24-hour exhibition on the top floor of a house in a residential district of Santiago.

The political climate in 1990s Chile was marked by the then relatively recent neoliberal model. In this context, cultural

circles saw some art galleries of a largely commercial and decorative nature. Life in those early years of democracy was governed by a timid culture of consensus, which evolved from the process of democratic transition, following the end of the Pinochet military dictatorship (1973-1989).

The earlier art scene of the late 1970s and the 1980s, during the military dictatorship, left a profound mark on the generations of artists that followed, as a strong, almost mythological precedent of works realized on the margins of society and in resistance to oppression, discursively entirely committed to politics and human rights. The artists who began working in Chile after the end of the dictatorship had a phantasmagoric impression of the recent past and of the crucial moments that had led to the arrival of democracy.

Galchi appeared on the scene in a country that had been institutionally dismantled. In that context, the artists defined this newly-independent space with a complex formulation, opting not to engage in institutional critique. Instead they worked to create a space to broaden the scope of the narrow cultural debate in Chile, and to conceive new models of institutions and circulation of artists in Chile, as well as new imageries in the new local setting, in which the space of the institution and the space of the margin took the form of decentered centers.

Internationally, artists were faced with the complex phenomenon of globalization. Faced with this new map, Galchi appeared sporadically, renewing its themes and redefining it-

self with each appearance. Under the label of Galería nómade / Nomadic Gallery, it set up temporary spaces and places as part of a discursive strategy.

One of the constants of Galería Chilena was to promote its aesthetics and discourse through a parody of itself. The public image of Galchi is a logo with the initials GCH written in a heart. This representation reflects the emotional aspect of the enterprise and at the same time refers to the Crimson Grasshopper character, Chapulin Colorado, the Latin American antithesis of the superhero model represented by Superman.

Although Galchi presented a front of enthusiasm typical of art spaces that defined themselves as “alternative”, based on the model of the cultural industries of capitalism, Galchi deliberately gave prominence to the contradictions between its intentions and its appearances on the scene, critically and productively representing the typological cultural model and its impossibility in Chile. By the same token, the idea of “failure” formed part of the themes of the exhibitions and the conceptual strategy of Galería Chilena. Also Galchi’s participation in the *To Be Political It Has to Look Nice* show in apexart in New York in 2003 was based on these strategies of collaboration and networking with other independent spaces and artists and of its mode of operation and ideology.

Isabel García Pérez de Arce

Group Material

The People's Choice, 1981

The People's Choice Art Exhibit.



"... but what is it supposed to mean?"



The answer to this and other similar, often posed questions will be answered by the very people who ask them. The visual content of the show will be almost entirely up to the community, who will be invited to submit the artwork that they have in their homes. It will be for and about their opinions, their ideas and feelings towards art, artwork and the people who make art.

Group Material (1979-1996) was formed by 13 young artists in 1979 in New York. During the conservative Reagan administration, this art collective produced interventions, exhibitions, and projects addressing issues such as democracy, mass culture, consumption, alienation, gender, and the AIDS crisis in the United States. The collective is historically important for its reflections on the relations between contemporary art and political activism, as well as for the discussions around forming and engaging different art audiences, alternative concepts of curating, and producing exhibitions as a community activity.

In July 1980, the group rented a storefront at 244 East 13th Street on Manhattan's Lower East Side and set up a headquarters for their meetings there: a hybrid space between a non-commercial gallery and a community

The People's Choice (Arroz con Mango), 1981

Courtesy: Julie Ault

center, where they organized exhibitions, arts education classes, lectures and film screenings. Opening an unorthodox gallery in New York was a strategy used by the collective to bring their curatorial method, later described as “painfully democratic,” closer to the neighborhood residents – workers, non-artists, students and other people who passed by on a daily basis.

One of the most successful projects at the venue, which enabled Group Material to question the traditional models of art collections and cultural production, was *The People’s Choice* (later named *Arroz con mango*), staged in January 1981. With the help of neighborhood children, group members went door to door inviting local residents, mostly of Hispanic descent, to give them objects not usually found in a museum or in a conventional art space, but that were important to them, to their families and friends. Group Material thus assembled a collection of children’s drawings, photographs, religious statues, dolls, craft artifacts, PEZ candy dispensers, amateur paintings, and reproductions. Installed in the gallery space and occupying its walls, these objects informally represented a visual and material narrative about the residents of a community.

André Mesquita

Group of Six Artists

It was a group of friends: Boris Demur, Željko Jerman, Vlado Martek, Mladen Stilinović, Sven Stilinović (Mladen's younger brother) and Fedor Vučemilović. They started to organize their exhibitions in public places. Rather than waiting for someone to invite them to make an exhibition, they themselves found venues in which to exhibit their work, bypassing the traps set by the art institutions. In the mid-1970s they organized exhibition-actions in Zagreb: on the city beach along the bank of the River Sava, in the old town center, at the University; in Belgrade, in Venice, once on a beach at the Adriatic coast, and elsewhere, spontaneously, as a loose association of artists realizing their ideas by appro-



An exhibition-action by the Group of Six Artists on the bank of the Sava River in Zagreb, 1975
photo: Fedor Vučemilović

priating a new type of exhibition context. They set up their works, which often ran contrary to the prevailing aesthetic and ethical norms, on the grass, laid them down on the road, they projected slides and films on the walls of houses... and performed actions which disturbed the public. The creative territory of these artists was broad and seemed to be expanding daily.

What I remember most from the time of the exhibition-actions by the Group of Six Artists is the spirit of constant rebellion: rebellion everywhere and in all its aspects, varying according to the occasion.

It was important to break down the many rules and regulations inhibiting people, to get rid of the value judgments fettering artistic creativity, to enable a work of art to assert itself and test its own merit. With their sudden, mostly one-day exhibition-actions, the Group of Six Artists adopted the style of guerrilla warfare, the tactics of constant disturbance. This was a resistance full of critical spirit and imagination, simultaneously derisive and joyful. At the time these very young artists resisted all forms of ideology, and each of them waged his battle in his own way.

(...)

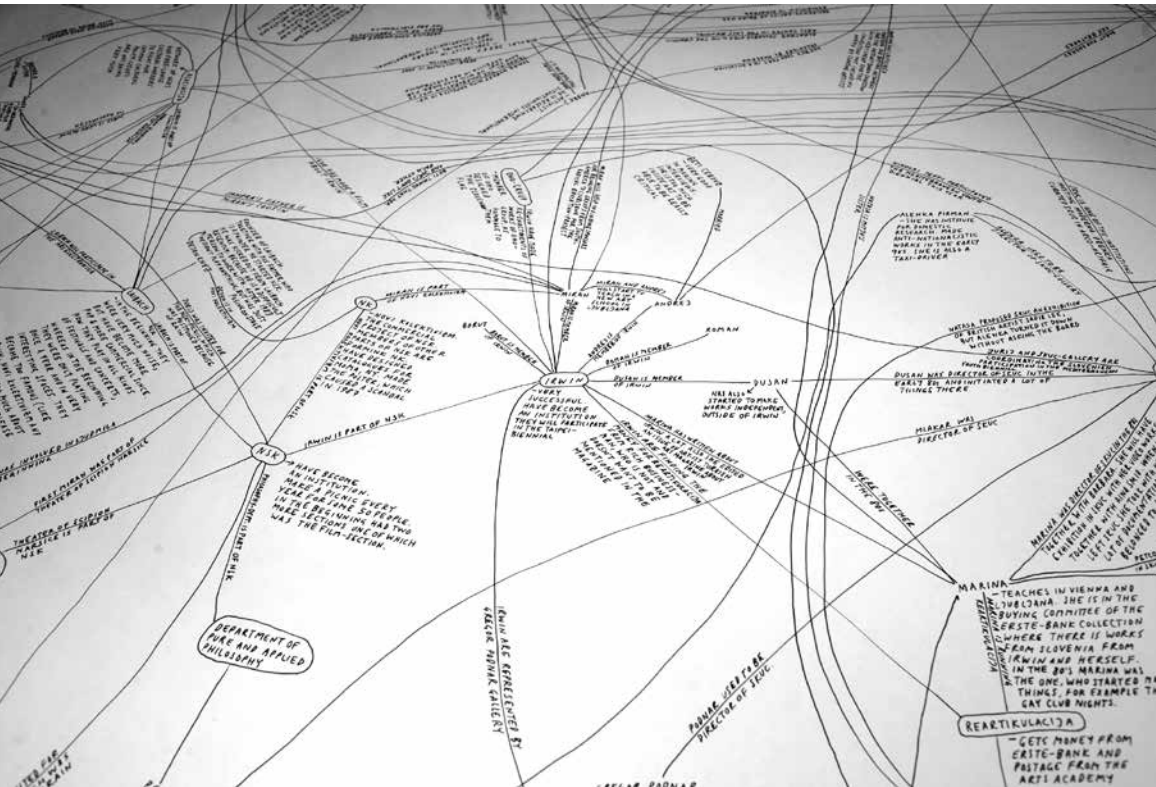
To change life, to change art, not to submit to any requirements or rules of the system, to any inherited conventions in art: this was, in brief, the romantic desire of all of them. The street was thus a place of many challenges. They were able to

communicate with the public through their art as it was created, with actions representing their way of life. Art was not, for them, a profession, and their exhibition-actions were not simply presentations, material manifestations of their work. With their works made of disposable materials, put together carelessly, intended for exhibiting on the pavement, and with their behavior they were clearly a threat to the traditional concept of art. And even if they were unable to topple it, they could at least shake it up. They opened up the way for themselves with their 28 exhibition-actions. Primarily these exhibition-actions signified a rebellion: the conquest of space and the seizing of the freedoms that were their due. This was something that could not be reversed. They laid bare their positions as artists and highlighted their moral standpoints.

Branka Stipančić (excerpt from a longer text)

Minna Henriksson

Zagreb Notes / Ljubljana Notes / Belgrade Notes



The sequence of works with the word *Notes* in the title and claiming to depict the art scene of three ex-Yugoslavian capitals followed a drawing that I composed in Istanbul in 2005 entitled *Istanbul Map*, and preceded the *Helsinki Map* of 2009, which was the last and final work in the series.

The three drawings – *Zagreb Notes* in 2006 during a residency hosted by the Miroslav Kraljević Gallery; *Ljubljana Notes* in 2008 in a residency with Kapelica Gallery, and presented again as a poster with a print run of 3,000 in an exhibition at Moderna galerija, also in 2008; and the *Belgrade Notes* in 2009 at the Kontekst Gallery – were each produced by invitation of the hosting institution. I accepted each invitation because I was

Ljubljana Notes, 2008
Kapelica Gallery, Ljubljana
photo: Miha Fras

interested in knowing these art scenes better, from which many interesting artists, art groups and artistic movements had emerged. Doing research for a map was a good way of doing that, and provided me with an opportunity to stay in a city for two months, during which time I actively sought out artists and representatives of art institutions, carefully listening to their ideas and opinions about the scene.

It is obvious that these maps do not provide an accurate image of the respective art scenes that they claim to represent. That is, in part, due to the fact that they only describe that brief period in which I was a visitor in these cities, and raise issues talked about and recorded at that specific moment. Similarly, I was not using scientific methods or relying on any textual sources; instead my sole source of material was what people with whom I got into conversation chose to tell me, which was of course then filtered by my perception and memory. Also, we cannot deny that the institutions that hosted me had an influence on what I heard and whom I met – even though I was quite self-sufficient in navigating the scenes. But these maps are made with a clear awareness that they are not even trying to be accurate and factual; as a result it is entirely possible that there exist many instances of two or more contradictory pieces of information within the same diagram. By reproducing all the complaints, interpretations, gossip and suspicions they serve to describe a phenomenon, the very existence of such a gossip-driven discourse in these contemporary art scenes, which in turn has a major impact

on the (professional) productions coming (in)to the public view in each respective scene.

Minna Henriksson (born 1976, Oulu, Finland) currently lives in Helsinki. She has studied art in Brighton, Helsinki and Malmö, and worked in many Southeast European cities, as well as lived in Istanbul at a number of times since 2003. She is interested in both making visible and disturbing power and its manifestations through (her) art.

Roberto Jacoby

The Soul Never Thinks Without Images, 2010



The Soul Never Thinks Without Images, 2010

Courtesy: Roberto Jacoby

The Argentine artist and sociologist Roberto Jacoby has a long history of work where the motor of the action is collaboration between people. Creating networks of artists and the help of friends are recurrent elements in some of his experiences, such as creating “experimental communities” and new concepts of life. Invited to participate in the São Paulo Biennial in 2010, Jacoby again put into practice some of these propositions, using the space of the biennial for the main political debate taking place in Brazil at the time: the presidential elections.

The Soul Never Thinks Without Images was an installation created by Jacoby featuring large-scale photographs of two then presidential candidates – José Serra of the Brazilian Social Democracy Party (PSDB) and Dilma Rousseff of the Workers’ Party (PT). The photos were

put up on the wall, above a platform with microphones and chairs, and conceived from the outset as a base for Rousseff's campaign. Jacoby then formed an "Argentinean Brigade for Dilma" with friends and, during the first days of the exhibition, staged discussions, silkscreen and radio workshops, magic shows, research, and the creation of T-shirts and badges.

Soon after the opening of the exhibition, in September 2010, the Biennial Foundation had the photographs of the candidates papered over, claiming it had not known that Jacoby's work was actually a political campaign "in support of the PT candidate," taking recourse in the Brazilian law that prohibits any kind of propaganda in spaces regulated by the State. The artist in turn said that the work was a fictitious campaign and that all the materials had been sent to the curators before the show. Rather than an action promoting the PT candidate, *The Soul Never Thinks Without Images* became a site for provoking attacks and reactions of the Brazilian right against Rousseff, a site of conflict and dissent, of discussion and opinion that questioned both the nature of the art system and conventional political representation. Thus Jacoby again managed to demonstrate his maxim published in a manifesto for a work realized back in 1968: "Art' has no importance. It's life that counts."

André Mesquita

KURS

(Miloš Miletić and Mirjana Radovanović)



KURS was established by five artists in 2010 in Belgrade. Our artistic activities revolve around and are directed at public space, primarily through painted murals. We focus on topics related to problems faced by cultural workers, artists and students, and critically address historical revisionism and the precarization and flexibilization of labor. In our production we combine archive materials and contemporary context, underscoring the topicality of certain themes and bringing them closer to the public.

Struggle – knowledge – equality2, 2014
photo: Nenad Nikolić



Madness in the Eighties – the Anti-Psychiatry Movement in Slovenia

Exhibition project by Sonja Bezjak (Muzej norosti / Museum of Madness, Trate), Ana Curk, Katarina Ficko, Vito Flaker



“If you’re mad you get sent to Hrastovec. That’s the dumping ground of Slovenia’s psychiatry and society as well. Society disposes of people from the margins it no longer wants in its midst by depositing them far away, so they can no longer be seen or heard of.” (From the founding manifesto of the Committee for the Social Protection of Madness, drawn up by the participants at the young social researchers’ camp in Hrastovec in September 1988.)

The movement evolved from the feeling of hopelessness the young volunteers got in Hrastovec. If one is capable of at least partial empathy with living in the black hole of human existence – living in a total institution, where time stops, where everything is predetermined,

Ship of Fools, 1989
photo: Frenk Fidler

and where harboring any desire, hope, or plan is pointless – taking action is a must.

A few students and assistant professors of social work got together and did crazy things in order to protect madness from the society that excludes it. They danced Indian dances around the fire and cowboys chased Indians in Hrastovec, just as psychiatry captures lunatics to put them behind walls. But the Indians managed to get away and burn down Hrastovec – even if only a scale model of it – thus resisting oppression. Subsequently, madness was taken from Hrastovec to Maribor, where pie throwing served as the test to determine who is afraid of lunatics. Later, they brought madness to Ljubljana as well, and sailed down the Ljubljanica river on a ship of fools. They even attempted to get the lunatics out of Hrastovec by plane, but the plan failed – not even their successors were successful. There are still almost 700 lunatics living in Hrastovec, and the 1980s dictum still holds true in Slovenia: “If you’re mad you get sent to Hrastovec.”

The movement did not problematize madness, but society’s attitude to it. Madness is one of the creative principles and a driving force, and should be protected as such. Collective by nature, it becomes tragic when a person is stranded alone with it.

The movement started at the time of “new civic movements” in Slovenia and connected to similar groups elsewhere in

Europe, descendants of Basaglia, Laing, Cooper, Deleuze and Guattari. It referred to the tradition of anti-authority camps (Rakitna, Črni Mrav) and connected with groups of critical humanist psychologists and social workers; like other such movements, it operated under the auspices of the Union of Socialist Youth of Slovenia.

The group managed to raise at least some degree of public awareness of the problem of total institutions, of confinement and exclusion, and its members went on to organize help and support in the community. The past decade saw something like a breeze of change blow through the institutions, which began to transform and move outside, but it is only now, almost thirty years on, that deinstitutionalization is becoming a bona fide national policy.

The Committee for the Social Protection of Madness showed not only that friendship, trust, and a common idea are prerequisite for bringing about change – that the goal of change can only be conceived in a social context – but that change is only possible if friendship is struck up with people who are completely excluded and isolated. There are far too many of the latter in Slovenia, but at least they’ve got some friends.

Katarina Ficko, Vito Flaker

Manga Rosa

Outdoor Art, 1981



During the political opening up of the Brazilian military regime (1964-1985), which began in 1974, social movements, workers, artists, musicians, poets and graffiti artists once again came to occupy the streets at a time of social and aesthetic experimentation with new languages. In São Paulo, subcultural manifestations of this process were marked by the beginnings of the punk movement and the formation of the first urban interventionist collectives in the city, like 3Nós3 (3Us3, 1979-1982), *Viajou Sem Passaporte* (Traveled Without a Passport, 1978-1982) and *Manga Rosa* (Pink Mango, 1978-1982). The practices of these interventionist collectives,

Outdoor Art, 1981

Interventions by: 3Nós3, Alex Vallauri, Centro de Livre Expressão, Jorge Bassani, Manga Rosa, Mario Ramiro, Hudinilson Jr. and *Viajou Sem Passaporte*

São Paulo, 1981-1982

Courtesy: The Jorge Bassani Archive

which the press dubbed “independent” or “marginal” art at the time, demanded different places to work and create outside the commercial art circles, a form of DIY artistic activism that strained their relations with the dominant representational institutions.

Already then, the cityscape of São Paulo was marked by great numbers of advertising billboards lining the streets, invading people’s everyday lives. Following an analysis of the sites used for advertising, ways of disseminating information in the ads, and the possibility of creating alternative readings of the media, the Manga Rosa group, formed by young students of architecture, managed to secure a billboard located in a central area of São Paulo. In August 1981, they started the *Outdoor Art* project, inviting artists and art collectives to make their interventions on that billboard. The project demonstrated an alternative use of the medium, displaying on it a different work every fortnight. Manga Rosa put up a tropicalist version of the flag of Brazil, with a drawing of the sun (which was the hallmark of the group), banana leaves, and a text by the poet Torquato Neto: “The first step / conquering space / there is a lot of space / occupy and get along.” The 3Nós3 group made an intervention with red plastic that unfolded at the corners, partly covering the advertisements in the adjacent panels and interfering with reading of the slogans. In November 1981, the collective Centro de Livre Expressão – CLÉ (Center for Free Expression), composed of members of 3Nós3, Viajou Sem Passaporte, Taller de Inves-

tigaciones Teatrales, and independent artists, suspended a small chair in front of the blank billboard that read “From two to four” in reverse. Every day during the pre-set time, a member of CLÉ would sit on the chair and joke and chat with the passersby. Pedestrians and motorists waved and smiled, while others wondered at the “human billboard.” In addition to the opportunity to use the city as a support for their artistic actions, these initiatives also serve to reveal the affinities between the groups that built bonds of friendship and mutual support among its members.

André Mesquita

Roberto Mardones

Instant City, 1971



In 1971, the ICSID (Council of Societies of Industrial Design) Congress was held at Cala de Sant Miquel, a bay on the north-west coast of Eivissa (Ibiza), away from the usual urban venues. In the context of Franco's dictatorship, dominated by repression, censorship and lack of freedom, Eivissa was still a relatively unspoiled environment, sparsely urbanized. Thanks to the intellectuals and artists who had settled there since the thirties (Hausmann, Benjamin or the architects from GATCPAC), avant-garde and transgression coexisted with a rural culture, very tolerant of visitors and capable of reconciling opposing aesthetic and social tendencies. Placing the event on a beach gave

Instant City, 1971

single-channel video, color, sound, 23 min 23 s
MACBA Collection. MACBA Consortium
Courtesy: MACBA. Museu d'Art Contemporani
de Barcelona

it the feeling of intimacy and camaraderie that the organizers had intended. (...)

A series of events relating design to other media were also organized. One of the most successful was *Instant City*, a project based on current research on the use of new materials such as plastic, especially in inflatables. Although these materials had originally been used only for military purposes, by the sixties they were being applied to everyday life and leisure. *Instant City* was created to provide accommodation for students attending the Congress. Carlos Ferrater and Fernando Bendito, both students of architecture at the time, established themselves as an Ad Hoc Committee and drew up the Instant City Manifesto, together with Luis Racionero. The manifesto, which was distributed worldwide, defended participation as a way of building a city based on work as a means of communication.

Instant City rejected, on ideological grounds, the city as a space that conditions the behavior of its inhabitants. It was also in favor of collective work being inseparable from leisure, in order to create new forms of coexistence based on creativity. For the opening of the Congress a dinner, in the form of a multicolor ceremonial, was organized by the artists Antoni Miralda, Jaume Xifra and Dorothée Selz, in collaboration with Carles Santos and an orchestra. These Ceremonials were ritual parties where the décor and colored food had a central and transgressive role, contrary to the rigidity

of established social conventions. Artists and the public participated as equals. The ICSID Congress in Eivissa was an experiment in socialization, an example of how communal work, vitality, intellectual reflection and leisure can be used to promote dialogue, and of how imaginative proposals can be created to structure new models of behavior. Roberto Mardones attended the Congress and filmed various events and actions.

Teresa Grandas

(excerpted from “Utopia is Possible. ICSID. Eivissa, 1971”, MACBA, Barcelona, 21. 6. 2012 - 20. 1. 2013; MACE, Ibiza, 22. 3. - 31. 8. 2013)

Tina Modotti: Farewell to Photography

2

Cosa dirvi di me, della mia vita? È una vita
 assai ~~variosa~~ movimentata (non fosse altro per tutte
 le corse in Metro) ma già sapete che lo preferisco
 a stare a tavola. To. non è qui, già è il
 nostro destino pare, questo; ma ci scriveremo
 spesso e ~~avviciniamo~~ abbiamo sempre il pensiero teso
 a quando ci rivedremo.

Come sta la piccola, non più piccola figliola?
 È Am. ? Spero abbia meno da fare ~~da~~ ^{che} quando
 ci vedremo le ultime volte.

Tenso alle lulle chiacchierate assieme, al buon
 caffè (più buono perché lo si beveva assieme), ed
 al fonografo (trasformato in una volpe - Feli. conosce
 tutte le storie) e penso alle gambe di To facendo
 girare al suono di una Rumba. Speriamo
 farci avere delle altre serate assieme, qui o là, o più
 là ancora, non è vero? Un affettuoso abbraccio a
 voi tutti e a Feli. vostro d'ora

In a letter to Edward Weston written in 1925, Tina Modotti, one of the most important women photographers of the 20th century, spoke about the dichotomy between art and life: she found she was putting too much art in her life – and did not have much left to give to art. The following year she spoke about the “tragic conflict between life which continually changes and form which fixes it immutable.” Her awareness of this dichotomy was soon to assume another, political dimension. When she joined the Mexican Communist Party in 1927, she first tried to synthesize in her photographs the demands of political activism and her high aesthetic standards (while at the same time insisting that her goal was not to produce art but honest photographs). She took monumental shots of social motifs, using her experience of composition based on the New Objectivity, to photograph the emblems of the revolutionary movement. After her expulsion from Mexico, the conflict between her photography and her political work increased. She was offered a photojournalism job in Berlin, but she did not feel aggressive enough; moreover, the compositional and aesthetic principles she associated with the scope of her Graflex camera were in her view incompatible with the dynamism of photojournalism.

In 1930, she assumed a prominent function with the International Red Aid (MOPR) in Moscow, which soon entailed going on confidential clandestine missions throughout Europe. Prior to that, she had been offered the job of the official Communist Party photographer in Moscow, but declined

the offer. Complete dedication to her revolutionary political work allowed her to not compromise in any area of her life; she often stressed that it was not possible to do two things at once – therefore it was either politics or photography. In his memoirs (in which he patronizingly marginalized her part in politics), Pablo Neruda wrote that she threw her camera into the river upon arriving in Moscow. In fact, she *did* try to sell her Graflex camera shortly after her arrival. But when she and her partner Vittorio Vidali left Moscow for Spain late in 1935 (as organizers of International Red Aid, becoming immersed in military work after the outbreak of war), and were told to take all their belongings with them, Modotti left all of her photographs behind – *and* her camera. Her biographer Margaret Hooks comments: “The only things she left behind in Moscow were the last vestiges of her past: her photographs and her camera.” In that period, Modotti’s war song was “The Internationale”, calling on people to make a *table rase* of the past; a decade earlier, however, she had written that for her, life was always sad, because she felt the past even in the present. “Mine must be a spirit of decadence, (...) I feel that only by living in the past can we revenge ourselves on nature (...).”

Thus her farewell to photography became a symbolic act: Tina Modotti did not try to overcome the dichotomy between art and life with the illusion of blurring the line between them, but by underscoring this boundary: by leaving not only her photographs in Moscow, but also her camera, she made her separation from photography conclusive, and consequently, her photography untouchable.

The family in whose safekeeping she left her photographs and her camera was that of a Slovenian-born revolutionary Ivan Regent (the family name they used in Moscow was Matteo), who also worked for International Red Aid for a while, even serving as the head of its agitprop operations. The Regents made friends with Modotti immediately upon their arrival in Moscow in January 1931. Ivan Regent was an old friend of Vidali's and his political mentor in their youth in Trieste. In Moscow, Ivan, Malka, and Mara Regent stayed at the Soyuznaya Hotel, next door to Modotti and Vidali. "The daily evening get-togethers with Vidali and his wife were our only pleasures," wrote Regent in his memoirs. And Vidali described these encounters filled with banter, music, and dancing as "our innocent (?) orgies." Publicly displayed for the first time at the *Politicization of Friendship* are documents recording this friendship that came at such a pivotal time in Modotti's life; in her last letter to Weston, written at the time she first met the Regents, she said that she almost felt like a different person in Moscow.

The exhibited letters date from 1936 and 1937 and have survived as part of the legacy of Ivan Regent, kept by the Archives of the Republic of Slovenia in Ljubljana (they have been published, annotated, by Miklavž Komelj in the journals *Likovne besede* and *Perimmagine* in 2009). Three manuscript letters by Tina Modotti, dated February, March, and April 1936, were written at a time when she is generally believed to have been in Spain, although she explicitly states

in one of them that she is writing from a café in Paris. In that volatile historical situation she must have been on the move a great deal, and several documents point to the conclusion that she spent considerable time at the International Red Aid head office for Western Europe in Paris. The letters were written in haste and refer to matters of immediate interest, such as her things left behind with the Regents (obviously more than just her photographs and camera), but are nonetheless of great importance, since so far very few of her letters from the 1930s were known. Certain phrases hint at their former meetings and also indicate the nuances of her relationship with Vidali (with typical humor she calls him both "my bear" and "my gentle (?) half (?)"). Vidali's letters from that time are more eloquent: he describes the revolutionary spirit with euphoria (as a "Moscow man" he reacts to anarchist excess with: "This is all very nice, but not being able to take part in it myself is... humiliating!") and on occasion with coarse humor. The last exhibited letter was written by Modotti and Vidali together in 1937 from the Spanish civil war. They wrote each on one side of the same piece of translucent paper, so that their writing shows through. Among other things, Modotti writes: "I feel content and fulfilled to be a cog in this wonderful motor that is the Spanish people in their struggle for freedom."

In addition to the letters the diploma that the Red Aid Frunze District Committee gave to Ivan Regent in 1935 is also exhibited. It serves to illustrate the thesis formulated

by Slavoj Žižek in his *Plague of Fantasies* on the subject of monumental statues of the Soviet New Man placed on public buildings as on pedestals: “The paradox is that had anyone in the Soviet Union of the 1930s said openly that the vision of the Socialist New Man was an ideological monster squashing actual people, they would have been arrested immediately. It was, however, allowed – encouraged, even – to make this point via architectural design... again, ‘the truth is out there’.

What we are thus arguing is not simply that ideology also permeates the alleged extra-ideological strata of everyday life, but that this materialization of ideology in external materiality reveals inherent antagonisms which the explicit formulation of ideology cannot afford to acknowledge: it is as if an ideological edifice, if it is to function ‘normally’, must obey a kind of ‘imp of perversity’, and articulate its inherent antagonism in the externality of its material existence.”

The diploma combines the organization emblem, hands reaching out through the bars of a prison cell, and an image of Stalin – with the obviously intended association of Stalin as one who would help prisoners. But during the reign of Stalin’s terror his likeness above the hands of prisoners represented a horrifying aspect of Soviet reality. This ambivalence acquires a special dimension when considered from the vantage point of the actions of Yelena Stasova, head of the International Red Aid. In *The Road to Terror*, J. Arch Getty and Oleg V. Naumov published an unusual document dated 9 November 1937. In it, Stasova reports to the Commission of Party Control on the great number of political immigrants

that have recently been arrested in the Soviet Union, which has left their families unprovided for. In accordance with its mission – to help political prisoners and their families – Red Aid has consequently immediately begun to organize help for them. But the local Soviet authorities opposed this. Stasova, a woman so principled that Lenin nicknamed her Comrade Absolute, asked the Control Commission for instructions on how to proceed.

Miklavž Komelj

Andrei Monastirsky (Collective Actions) *Losung (Slogan)*, 1978



Andrei Monastirsky's name is associated primarily with the Collective Actions group (E. Elagina, A. Makarevich, N. Panitkov, S. Romashko and others) established by Monastirsky in 1976, which focused on conceptual performances. The Collective Actions classical performances followed a uniform dramaturgy. Monastirsky and his companions used to arrange a special group of spectators, who took a train to a railway station in the suburbs of Moscow, from where they headed to a large field, hemmed in by forest on all sides. The field served as the stage for the majority of the Collective Actions performances, conducted in the form of esoteric rites. The audience was requested to compose a written description

Losung (Slogan), 1978
16 mm film on DVD, 4' 26"
Moderna galerija, Ljubljana

and interpretation of the performance upon its completion. Then Monastirsky would arrange gatherings of the performance practitioners and spectators in his Moscow flat for further theoretical discussion of the created works. These discussions were documented, took the form of a text, and were “filed in the folder” of the corresponding performance. Subsequently, all the files of the Collective Actions performances were issued as a separate publication (*Journeys to the Countryside*, Moscow, 1999). The detailed scenarios of the Collective Actions performances, which were first made public in this publication, finally clarified the original intent of the group activities. It became apparent that the audience could observe only a portion of the works, and the salient events happened outside their field of vision. This method was underpinned by the sophisticated theory and special terminology created by Monastirsky and his adherents (“blank action,” “side vision,” “blind spot line,” etc.). All these esoteric terms were summed up by Monastirsky in another special edition (*Dictionary of Moscow Conceptualism*, Moscow, 2000).

Viktor Misiano

Museo de Solidaridad / Museum of Solidarity Santiago, Chile

The Polyphonic Museum of Salvador Allende

On stationery with Documenta 5 letterhead, dated December 8, 1972, Harald Szeemann, the curator of that year's mythical edition of Documenta (one of the world's most important exhibitions of contemporary art, which takes place in Kassel, Germany every five years) typed a letter to the artist John Baldessari: "Mario Pedrosa, the Brazilian art critic and

museum curator, has gone to Chile in order to found there a museum of solidarity between the artists and the experiment of the country, Chile.

Some 600 works of art have already arrived in Chile, among them Miró, Calder, Vasarely

Stella. Mario Pedrosa has asked me to send his quest to artists of Documenta 5 and the painters and sculptors known to me, in order to help create an activity for this museum of solidarity by means of works of art and the creation of a collection, which alone would justify the construction of a new building. I would be grateful if you could support this project with your thought and your assistance. With best regards, Harald Szeemann."

Below, in the same letter, now postmarked California, USA, the artist John Baldessari, incorporated the text: "Dear Mario Pedrosa. Please let me know what I can do to aid in the creation of your museum and how I go about it. Sincerely yours, John Baldessari."

On stationery with the letterhead of the Institute of Latin American Art, the Faculty of Fine Arts of the University of Chile, Mario Pedrosa wrote to the North American art critic Dore Ashton, collaborator and member of S.I.S.A.C, who lived in New York: "Did I tell you that Harald Szeemann, in reply to my letter, wrote 405 artists of Documenta V to ask them to cooperate with our museum? I was surprised at this reaction. If you like it I will send a copy of this list to you. Many, of course, of the artists are in The States, and some were already on your list. Of course, many of these names are of minimal or conceptual art. Now a big number of them are writing me to enquire about the museum. The idea of calling Szeemann came from De Wilde and J. Leymarie. Love to all you from, Mario Pedrosa."

Dated November 29, 1973, a letter sent from Dusseldorf to Mario Pedrosa, addressed to the Museo de Arte Moderno de Ciudad de México, reads: "Dear Mr. Pedrosa; during a meeting



photo: Dejan Habicht

Courtesy: Museo de la Solidaridad Salvador Allende

in Berlin some days ago I learnt through Harry Szeemann that you arrived from Chile in Mexico. He told me that you are trying to bring all art objects belonging to the Museo de Solidaridad in Santiago de Chile to Mexico. Harry Szeemann pointed out that this will be a very difficult enterprise. Therefore, I have sent you a telegram to your present address to declare our solidarity with your initiative and your endeavors in the respect. I do hope sincerely that it will help your situation. With best wishes, Sincerely yours, Dr. Katharina Schmidt.”

Museo de la Solidaridad (1971-1973), or the Museum of Solidarity, is a singular case of reconciliation of the conflicting coupling of art and politics. In this institutional and artistic project, the drive of the ideological discourse of President Allende seemed to organically coincide in the context of works with artistic reflection of the early 1970s in different parts of the world.

Although the genealogy of the Museum was clearly rooted in the process of the development of the Chilean Socialist project and its symbolic representation in both its internal organization, i.e. the measures of institutionalities, and internationally, it was supposed to project an image of the successful development of the project of People’s Unity in Chile. The case of the Museum suggested the opening up and plurality of the state, and aligned with the direction of polyphonic actions and imagery of the model Chile was experiencing in those years. Words like *solidarity*, *experimental*, *fraternal* and *revolutionary* from President Allende’s appeal in his “Letter to Artists of the World” resonated and were interpreted in local cultural contexts of the early 1960s as well as in broader, global processes,

shaping in the artistic imagination the possibility of creating a utopian model adapted to social changes and linked to experimental museology to bring art closer to new audiences.

Numerous artists were interested in the idea of the Museum and invested their desire in this common though diverse imagery, as can be seen in the letters of intent to participate in the project and also in the records of donations of works to the Museum of Solidarity. Some of these works managed to arrive before the military coup of 1973, and some could be found and recovered in the years after it.

This first stage of the Museum of Solidarity (1971-1973) shows the creation of a network of people from the world of culture who contributed works, ideas and connections toward the shaping of this fantasy of a museum that was not hierarchical but transversal and polyphonic.

The momentum to build this network for circulating aesthetic and political ideas and imagery was generated by the agency of Brazilian art critic and historian Mario Pedrosa, who was part of the Chile Solidarity Committee, organized by the state with the support of President Salvador Allende. In this way, the model of the Museum of Solidarity operated organically in both areas, its ideological function coming from state politics, and its polyphony of voices from the work of artists, curators and architects who shaped the possible and at the same time improbable script of this public and international museum for Chile.

Isabel García Pérez de Arce

The OHO Group (Marko Pogačnik, David Nez, Milenko Matanović, Andraž Šalamun)



On the way to the Zarica Valley, 1969
photo: The OHO Archive
Moderna galerija, Ljubljana

The intimate sphere of the members of OHO and the broader social and cultural dimension of the group's work overlapped, connected by their aspiration toward a harmonious synthesis, or rather, a medial form between the two; also the name of the group was arrived at in this way. The bonds between the artists grew even stronger after 1969, when what had been the looser OHO movement became a tight-knit group of four artists: Marko Pogačnik, David Nez, Milenko Matanović, and Andraž Šalamun. What came to the fore in this stage of OHO was the increasing need to test the solidity and the activities of the group as such (rather than its individual members), to the point where the members sought proof of the group's autonomous creative will in the projects, and consequently, of the sense of their own individual creative work. The place of the potential (and foreseen)

fifth member of the group could thus be taken by OHO itself, in accordance with the concept of reism, which saw things as autonomous subjects. This unusually intense strengthening of bonds could also be understood as an attempt at communal or collective thinking.

The featured projects all deal with OHO as an autonomous entity by exploring the relation between OHO itself and its members. This relation is the basis for forming a collective body that tests the differences and relations between its members, and also the differences between “within the group” and “without the group”. In *OHO group man*, individual members were selected to represent the dominant position, which was the embodiment of the group nature of OHO, from equal starting positions by employing play as a democratic form of selection that does not assume responsibility. The *Intercontinental project Europe – America*, on the other hand, tested the coordination between members in telepathically communicating to produce a diagram of lines, forming an independent pattern of possibilities. Similarly the actions of “guided walking” recreated their unison into a single OHO body. An exercise in concentration, focusing on rhythm (the hearts of the group members beat in the same rhythm), on perception and clear selection in the direction of the chosen dominant point. *We are... We work... We live... We offer OHO* – these are the representational diagrams for the Aktionsraum Gallery. Tucked away in a folder, they seem like promotional material, and OHO itself as packaging for new

ideas, messages issued on behalf of some product or reason or idea or person or even institution. Also the typographical structure of the OHO sign is similarly elaborate: it shows the archetypal division of roles between the four members and the alogical structure of the square and the circle and their synthesis, a medial form that can transform the shapes of the given world. Transformation follows the self-abolishment of the group and the formation of a new, more intense social core of the Šempas Family, a point where art should finally become one with life.

Owing to their network of friends and the affective relations between the group members, the group occupied a very specific place in Slovenian art and functioned more intensely than other groups. But how long friendships will last is not possible to determine in advance, nor can friendship be attributed a certain purpose in the sense that it should exist as a construct of desire. Bonds of friendship must exist deliberately but without purpose. Accordingly, the members of OHO based the self-abolishment of the group on a decision to follow their individual creative paths and on their professional involvement in the art system.

Ana Mizerit

THE PLAY

Current of Contemporary Art, 1969



Neil Armstrong was the first man to set foot on the moon on July 20, 1969, during the Apollo 11 mission. That same day, the collective THE PLAY made its own, future-oriented journey. Its members rode a raft, 3.5 meters wide and 8 meters long, made of Styrofoam blocks tied by a rope in the shape of an arrow. In an impromptu trip, the members of THE PLAY embarked on the fragile raft going from Kyoto to Osaka, navigating the Uji, Yodo, and Dojima rivers. The group's hedonistic journey was meant as a critique of the idea of capitalist progress and a rejection of scientific rationalism. The twelve-hour journey along the waterways was not only about blurring distinctions between art

Current of Contemporary Art
1969/7/20/Kyoto → Osaka

In the morning, we went down the Uji river from Tonoshima, Kyoto on a white arrow-shaped raft (3.5 m x 8 m) made of Styrofoam.

We arrived at the east of Nakanoshima in Dojima river, Osaka in the evening.

Courtesy: Keiichi Ikemizu

and life, it also led to experiencing an artistic practice destabilizing conventional routines of everyday life in moments of freedom and leisure.

THE PLAY was established in 1967 in the Kansai region in Japan, which includes the cities of Osaka, Kobe and Kyoto. The composition of the group is fluid and varies according to specific projects, which transforms the group into a catalyst for collaboration between people with different skills and critical dimensions acting outside official art institutions. Every performance of THE PLAY is based on exchanges between participants, producing unique situations of group coexistence. The group tried to repeat its first trip of 1969 during the Paris Biennale in 1971, but only managed to realize the project in 2012, when they again built a raft and sailed down the River Seine.

Zoran Popović

Pretty Good Edinburgh and Surrounding Area, 1973



Pretty Good is an idea about the attractions of boredom. With this film, a few artists and friends – Marina Abramović, Neša Paripovića, Gera Urkom, Zoran Popović, Jasna Tijardović, and our friends Sanja and Žika Gligorijević – living and working together for years, assert boredom as something that gives life back its fullness, fills the gray everyday with colors, and inevitably awakens our awareness of ourselves, objectifies us, gives us play, out of which creativity emancipates.

Pretty Good Edinburgh and Surrounding Area,
1973

film 8 mm normal, color, silent, 18 and 48 film
frames per second (fps), 11' 20"

film still

camera work: Zoran Popović

Courtesy: Zoran Popović

I consider Popović to be the most characteristic representative of Yugoslav independent (not so say indie) film. What does that mean? Firstly, that his films were, for the most part, privately produced; secondly, his genesis as a filmmaker was not part of professional, amateur or alternative Yugoslav trends; and lastly, within the film practice of conceptual artists, he cannot be classified in terms of the local gallery trends dictated by the Italian, French, Dutch, British, or American gallery policies. This is not to say that Popović did not encounter various influences from these areas of film; on the contrary, his specificity lies in the fact that unlike the representatives of the enumerated cinema prohibitions ascetically adhering to the exclusivity of their own systems, he dabbled in everything, making use (as far as his knowledge and production facilities allowed it) of the entire experience of cinema in the broadest sense of the word.

Nebojša Pajkić, Professor of film dramaturgy at the Faculty of Dramatic Arts in Belgrade
About Zoran Popović's films (unpublished text from 1980)

Unlike the official, professional films that reigned in cinema programs in that period [the time in which Z. P.'s films were made, i.e. the 1960s and 1970s], and unlike the films produced at amateur cinema clubs and shown at the then numerous film festivals, and of the new film production later dubbed alternative film, which also had its own, new festivals, the films of Zoran Popović were meant for the world of art. They represented a part of the new artistic practice which abandoned the modernist divisions of art by its medium of realization, introducing new distinctions on the basis of a project's concept and its distancing from routine artistic craftsmanship.

Their clearly defined structure, utmost reduction in terms of production, and the high level of conceptualization made these films, so Vuković, a complete novelty vis-à-vis the then standard types of film works, and consequently, crucial for the history of film, and not only for art that is considered visual in the narrow sense of the word.

Stevan Vuković, October 2012

Zoran Popović (born in 1944 in Belgrade) graduated from the Academy of Fine Arts in Belgrade in 1969, and in 1973 took his master's degree there. His principal sphere of activities is anti-object art.

His media and disciplines are drawing, printmaking, painting, objects, film, photography, performance, installation, text, design, interior design.

The Real Estate Show, 1980



Becky Howland

Flyer for the Real Estate Show, 1979

Courtesy: Becky Howland

Founded informally in New York, Collaborative Projects (or Colab, 1977-1989) was a collective of dozens of artists working in video, painting, sculpture, photography, dance, publishing, fashion, performance and cable television. In 1978, Colab was incorporated as a not-for-profit organization. What was innovative about this collective was its open model of cultural production and its method of organizing exhibitions that promoted the concept of “curating as a work of art,” a goal later followed by Group Material.

In late 1979, a group of Colab members joined other independent artists to plan an exhibition in an empty building located on Delancey Street in Manhattan’s Lower East Side. On New Year’s Eve, December 31, 1979, the artists broke the lock of the abandoned building and illegally mounted an exhibition of works

dealing with property and housing, denouncing the gentrification process in the city. On January 2, 1980, *The Real Estate Show* was discovered, the building was locked by the Department of Housing Preservation and Development, and the works removed. Some of the participating artists created the Committee for the Real Estate Show, and began a public discussion with municipal officials, staged protests, and organized press conferences in the streets, including a visit from Joseph Beuys to the site of the exhibition on January 8. After negotiations with the authorities, on January 16, the artists received permission to use a storefront at nearby 156 Rivington Street, which they named ABC No Rio, for the relocation of the exhibition. Still in operation today, ABC No Rio has become internationally recognized by activists and punks as an important center of cultural resistance.

Benet Rossell

Cérémonials. Film documental sobre festes i rituals realitzats per Miralda, Joan Rabascall, Dorothee Selz i Jaume Xifra / Cérémonials. Documentary Film about Festivities and Rituals by Miralda, Joan Rabascall, Dorothee Selz and Jaume Xifra, 1973



Cérémonials. Film documental sobre festes i rituals realitzats per Miralda, Joan Rabascall, Dorothee Selz i Jaume Xifra / Cérémonials. Documentary Film about Festivities and Rituals by Miralda, Joan Rabascall, Dorothee Selz and Jaume Xifra, 1973

16 mm film transferred to video, color, sound, 19' 18"

MACBA Collection. MACBA Foundation

Courtesy: MACBA. Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona

In the mid-1960s, a group of artists that had met by chance in Paris decided to carry out a series of collective experiences that were to be partly festive, partly ritual, entitled *Cerimonials* (Ceremonials). The Catalan artists Antoni Miralda, Jaume Xifra and Joan Rabascall (with interventions by Benet Rossell, who filmed them), together with the French artist Dorothee Selz, were the organisers of several actions from 1969 to 1976.

The questioning of the aesthetic paradigm that took place during the 1960s shifted towards reconsidering the artistic object and its autonomy, the space where

art happens and the notion of authorship. *Cerimonials* were developed like collective actions that placed the artist and the spectator on the same level as participants. Based on a previously established action plan, they incorporated sensorial experiences in which colour and gastronomy played a fundamental role. Each *Cerimonial* had some colours that determined its components, and coloured food became an offering that was swallowed, thus making the act of participating become an act of destruction, dissolving the dichotomy between ephemeral and lasting, and questioning the very idea of the art work.

The first collective action was *Noir, Mauve + Barbe a Papa* (Black, Mauve + Cotton Candy), which took place at the American Center in Paris in 1969 within the context of the 6th Paris Biennale. It was a criticism of the Vietnam War and racial discrimination, with a temporary transformation of the premises, based on black and mauve colors and allusive iconographic elements. The *Fête en Blanc* (Party in White) took place in Verderonne in 1970. Hans Walther Muller with an inflatable architecture, Éliane Radigue with music and Paco Rabanne with the wardrobe participated in it; Benet Rossell shot the “film en blanc” (film in white). All the organizers did not always participate in the following *Cerimonials*, and from that time onwards, Joan Rabascall broke away from the group. In 1971 they carried out the *Rituel en quatre couleurs* (Ritual in Four Colors) first in Kürten and a short time afterwards at the Parc de Vincennes, on the occasion of

the 7th Paris Biennale, in which several artists participated. Based on the four basic colors, several editions of the festival were organized for children in Chatillon. On the occasion of the ICSID congress in Eivissa in 1971, a party was organized for the opening dinner. Until 1976, several rituals were produced, the last of them being *Situació color* (Color Situation) at the house of the collector Josep Sunol in Barcelona.

It is worth mentioning the individual and differentiated nature of the parallel work carried out by each one of these artists. The fact that they had all met in Paris led to them being called the “Paris Catalans”.

Škart



We thought it was impossible:
One of us a poet, the other a
draftsman. One a punker, the
other uncommitted. One a su-
prematist, the other a realist.

Totally impossible:

One sexually questioning, rela-
tionship-less, the other in casual
relationships.

No chance.

The one characteristic we had in
common was the brave leap our
parents had made – socialism
had enabled them to transcend
their social background and
leave behind their farmer-work-
er families for the big city, to
finish university and set off to
work in the field, raising the pop-
ulation's literacy, in education,
healthcare. They invested them-
selves and their education into
building a new world. So there at

least we had a past in common.
In all other respects – nothing.
From there, from the impossible,
we began to hang out and work
together.
From there, from the impossible,
came also this poem.

škart, Belgrade, June 2014

about the sky and the sea

the sea is guarded by the sky
you can't reach it from
the sky because

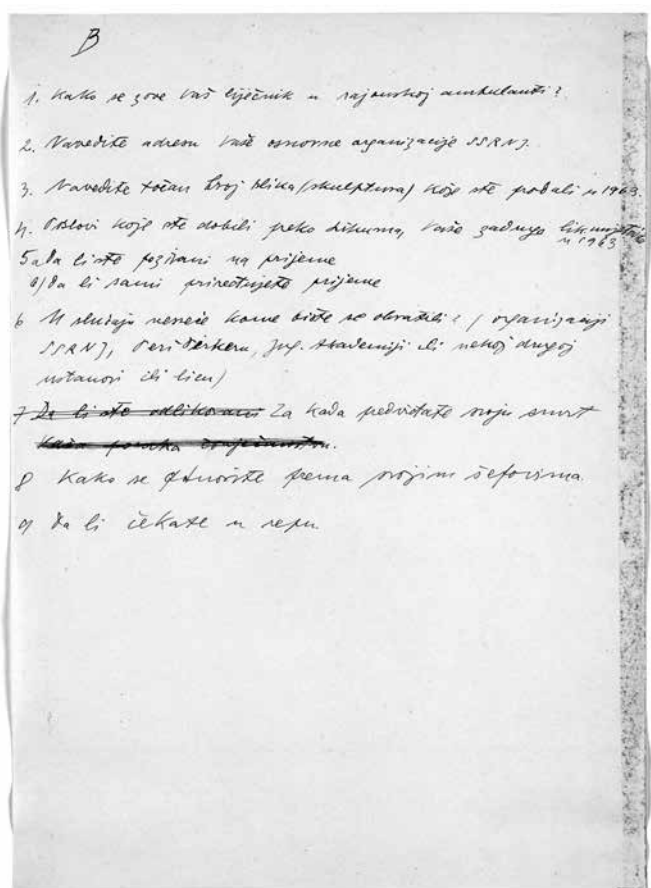
the sky is ripped by the sea
but you can't reach it for
the sky because

(translation: Svetlana Rakočević, london 2014)

(pre-škart. first year of acquaintanceship, Belgrade, 1987)

Josip Vaništa (Gorgona)

Questionnaire B, 1963



Questionnaire B, 1963

ink and colored pencil on paper, 29.8 x 21 cm, 29.8 x 40 cm
Moderna galerija, Ljubljana

The members of Gorgona would get together for meetings so rigidly formal they verged on self-irony. A lot of written communication between the members survives from these meetings (invitations to meetings, concepts and descriptions of projects). An important part of the meetings were surveys or questionnaires, which represented a typical form of collective work. Two such examples are Josip Vaništa's *Questionnaire* (c. 1961) and *Questionnaire B* (1963), dated three years apart. The questionnaires were a welcome form, since the individual members' points of view came clearly across, although the given answers do not indicate an overly enthusiastic interest in participating. In the two above-mentioned questionnaires several questions were posed to six group members, including Vaništa; their answers were subsequently presented in the

form of a table. The questions in the first questionnaire referred primarily to the functioning and the description of Gorgona, e.g.: “The season or month when Gorgona feels good?”, “Is Gorgona boring?”, and also “Definition of Gorgona?”

The questions in *Questionnaire B* are of a more personal nature, ranging from quite practical ones, such as “Please give the exact number of paintings (sculptures) you sold in 1963,” to more metaphysical inquiries, such as “When do you expect to die?” The answers are humorous, sometimes driven to the absurd. The artists did not always provide answers to all of the questions; also Vaništa, who posed them, failed to answer some of his own questions, or else merely responded with: “I don’t understand this question.”

Ana Mizerit

B	test	Julija	Božana	Leber	Čučina	Vani
1.	Što je Gorgona?	Jaka karibina lešini, koja voljeje u znanju.	Ne znam.	Ne znam.	Replid koji me masi.	Ne znam.
2.	U koliko je Gorgona bila zanimljiva u 1963. godini?	Ne razumijem pitanje.	Ne znam da li sam bio.	Tvrdka 3.	Ne znam.	Ne znam.
3.	U koliko je Gorgona bila zanimljiva u 1963. godini?	Ricni.	Ništa.	Nula.	Čuma.	U zampi sec.
4.	Što je Gorgona?	Nisam član koluma.	Ne.	Nula.		Ne.
5.	U koliko je Gorgona bila zanimljiva u 1963. godini?	a) U koliko je Gorgona bila zanimljiva u 1963. godini? b) Ne.	a) Gorgona bila je zanimljiva u 1963. godini. b) Ne.	a) Da. b) Ne.	a) Dobro sam se osjećao u 1963. godini. b) Ne.	a) Nisam. b) Još ne.
6.	Što je Gorgona?	Horuku bitka matkini.	Manji i Tafi.	Julija Krišter.	Što je Gorgona?	Ne znam.
7.	U koliko je Gorgona bila zanimljiva u 1963. godini?	Livak ne čini umjetnik.	Ne gledatim.	Ne gledatim.	U koliko je Gorgona bila zanimljiva u 1963. godini?	Nisam odgovorio na pitanje.
8.	Što je Gorgona?	Šepovki.	Čuma.	Šepovki.	U koliko je Gorgona bila zanimljiva u 1963. godini?	Odobriti.
9.	U koliko je Gorgona bila zanimljiva u 1963. godini?	Ne razumijem pitanje.	Nisam na repu.	Da.	U koliko je Gorgona bila zanimljiva u 1963. godini?	Čuma.

Yugoslav Surrealists and the Politics of the Impossible



Marko Ristić: *Untitled*, 1934/36
collage

photo: Dejan Habicht
Courtesy: Macura Collection

According to André Breton's definition, the surrealist movement insisted on emphasizing the inseparability of Marx's maxim of "changing the world" and Rimbaud's maxim of "changing life"- convinced of the inseparability of the political and the intimate. The surrealist revolutionary program was based on directly tackling the phantasmal parameters determining social reality. For surrealists, friendship was a crucial factor in interconnecting – but they first redefined the notion of friendship. In his review of Milan Dedinac's poem *Javna ptica* (The Public Bird, 1926), the father of the surrealist movement in Yugoslavia Marko Ristić refuted potential rebukes that he was eulogizing a friend: "The elements of this friendship tap into the same human and spiritual source as the elements of this poetry. (...) I am proud that figures in poetry coincide with my friends at this crossroads where life and poetry come together."

When speaking about Yugoslav surrealists, even naming them connotes a political decision. Although today the name Serbian surrealists prevails because the surrealist group was active in Belgrade, we insist on the term Yugoslav surrealists at the *Politicization of Friendship*, because it is historically valid and was in use among the international surrealist movement at the time. Moreover, certain surrealists were instrumental in helping redefine the signifier Yugoslavia, which became the name for the process of social transformation after World War II; one of Ristić's postwar books bears the subtitle *Za ovu Jugoslaviju* (For This Yugoslavia).


Breton once wrote that the phenomenon of surrealism can only be historically understood in relation to World Wars I and II. It is from this perspective that the surrealist movement in Yugoslavia has a special significance in the international context. Although André Thirion included his reminiscences of Yugoslav surrealists in his novel *Revolutionaries without Revolution*, Yugoslav surrealists *did* live to see "their own" socialist revolution; some of them were in fact its most prominent protagonists. Among them was Koča Popović, one of the key military figures in the Yugoslav Partisan struggle in World War II, who became the commandant of the First Proletarian Brigade in 1941, later serving, among other things, as the head of the General Headquarters of the Yugoslav People's Army and Yugoslavia's Minister of Foreign Affairs. In 1972, shortly before he stepped down from all of his functions because of disagreements with Tito, he

declined an interview with a reporter with the words: "I'm a surrealist, don't you see?"

The Yugoslav surrealist group was formed in 1930 when 13 artists (Aleksandar Vučo, Oskar Davičo, Milan Dedinac, Mladen Dimitrijević, Vane Živadinović-Bor, Živanić-Noe, Đorđe Jovanović, Đorđe Kostić, Dušan Matić, Branko Milovanović, Koča Popović, Petar Popović, Marko Ristić) signed the introductory collective declaration in the *Nemoguće/L'impossible* almanac, stating that "a spiritual unanimity exists between us all, regardless of our individual differences, and a permanent alienation separates us from everything that is imposed upon us as spiritual life in our milieu." Founded in 1931, the journal *Nadrealizam danas i ovde* (Surrealism Here and Now) folded the very next year, as the group began to disintegrate due to the different standpoints vis-à-vis the Communist Party's line on the relation between art and revolution. However, surrealism in Yugoslavia was not temporally limited to the existence of this group. Parallels to coincident developments in France were evident from the beginning: Ristić maintained contact with Breton from 1924 on. In the 1920s, surrealist ideas were promulgated by two journals, *Putevi* (Paths) and *Svedočanstva* (Testimonies). On the other hand, the protagonists of the surrealist movement continued to adhere to the surrealist ethics even after the Yugoslav surrealist group no longer existed, and regardless of whether they had at some point disassociated themselves from it. The surrealist approach(es) crucially marked

their subsequent work, and the artists repeatedly focused on surrealism in their self-reflections (e.g. Oskar Davičo and Đorđe Kostić). When the official Yugoslav cultural politics shifted away from socialist realism after 1952, modernism tapped into the spiritual tradition stemming from the experience of surrealism.

Yugoslav and French surrealists collaborated closely for a number of years. One of the more conspicuous results of this collaboration is the questionnaire around desire in the *Nadrealizam danas i ovde* journal. Yet, in Yugoslavia, where under the dictatorship of King Alexander any public action represented a far greater political risk for surrealists than in France (four signees of the manifesto *Pozicija nadrealizma* (Position of Surrealism) issued in 1931 were arrested), surrealism also saw an autonomous development that cannot be reduced to any preset parameters. In its self-reflexive endeavors, surrealism was already also a (self-) critique of surrealism: just the second issue of the *Nadrealizam danas i ovde* journal included a section entitled Self-Critique of Surrealism. In the spirit of “non-acceptance and non-acquiescence” Yugoslav surrealists autonomously confronted the fundamental issues of “resolving human existence in the sense of its shift in a world where any finalism is per se precluded, if not also the finalization of human procedures” (Davičo, Kostić, Matić). Another issue revolved around defining the relation between the individual and the collective in order to consider a revolutionary perspective beyond fetishizing



the social. (In a questionnaire on this, for example, Dušan Matić stressed that a person is social already by existing, adding, however, that he did not believe an individual could not achieve self-realization in a given society). The book *Načrt za jednu fenomenologiju iracionalnog* (A Blueprint for a Phenomenology of the Irrational, 1931), co-written by Koča Popović and Marko Ristić and tackling among others the subject of the “morality of desire,” represents a very ambitiously conceived theoretical surrealist work in the international context. But the book, like numerous other works by Yugoslav surrealists, seems to have remained largely unread. Only a detailed analysis of these works would enable a proper placing of the Yugoslav surrealism in the international context.

The *Politicization of Freindship* presents a number of typical visual works by Yugoslav surrealists, in particular collages and photograms (some of these works are now being exhibited for the first time), as well as archival material and numerous books and periodicals. In addition it presents artists who did not form part of the surrealist group proper, such as Mony de Bouilly, Ljubiša Jocić, and Risto Ratković. The questionnaire *Čeljust dialektike* (Jaws of Dialectics) from the *Nemoguće* almanac and the questionnaire on desire from the *Nadrealizam danas i ovde* journal have been given pride of place.

Another exhibit points to the connections between Yugoslav and French (former) surrealists in the time of the social-

ist revolution: a manuscript of Paul Eluard’s 1947 poem in homage to Ivan Goran Kovačić, which was to be published in the French edition of Kovačić’s poem *Jama* (The Pit). It is a document of a time when contact between Yugoslav and French left-wing intellectuals was particularly close. In 1945, Marko Ristić became the Yugoslav Ambassador to France – and the Yugoslav Embassy in Paris became an almost utopian place of revolutionary and artistic encounters, which also saw a revival of the surrealist spirit. During that time, Eluard, Aragon, and Tzara visited Yugoslavia (Eluard also came to Ljubljana). The Cominform Resolution of 1948 not only put an end to cultural and political cooperation but abruptly wiped out friendships that had, until that moment, seemed indestructible.

Miklavž Komelj

Politicization of Friendship Curators

Curator

Bojana Piškur

Piškur is a curator at the Moderna galerija in Ljubljana. Her focus of professional interest is on political issues as they relate to or are manifested in the field of art, with special emphasis on the region of the former Yugoslavia and Latin America.

Co-curators

Isabel García Pérez de Arce

García Pérez de Arce is a researcher, curator, and teacher of artistic practices of the 1970s related to art and politics, with a focus on the museum as institution and architecture. She is currently completing her doctorate in architecture and urban studies at the Catholic University of Chile.

André Mesquita

Mesquita is a researcher on the relationship between art, politics, and activism. He holds a PhD in Social History from the University of São Paulo. He is the author of the book *Insurgências Poéticas: Arte Ativista e Ação Coletiva* (Poetic Insurgencies: Activist Art and Collective Actions) (Annab-lume/Fapesp, 2011), and a member of the Red Conceptualismos del Sur (Network Conceptualisms of the South).

Curators of special projects

Miklavž Komelj

Komelj earned a PhD from the Faculty of Arts at the University of Ljubljana with the thesis *Pomeni narave v toskanskem slikarstvu prve polovice dvajsetega stoletja* (The Significance of Nature in Tuscan Painting in the First Half of the 20th Century). Among his published titles are several volumes of verse, the treatise *Kako misliti partizansko umetnost?* (How to Think Partisan Art), and a collection of essays *Nujnost poezije* (Essentiality of Poetry). In his studies of the history of art he is particularly interested in periods in which symbolic coordinates realigned. He also works as a translator (Fernando Pessoa, César Vallejo, Djuna Barnes).

Branka Stipančić

Stipančić is an art critic and freelance curator who lives in Zagreb, Croatia. She graduated from the Faculty of Philosophy, University of Zagreb, with degrees in art history and literature. Her former positions include curator at the Museum of Contemporary Art Zagreb (1983–1993) and Director of the Soros Center for Contemporary Art, Zagreb (1993–1996).

Politicization of Friendship

+MSUM

Museum of Contemporary Art Metelkova, Ljubljana
Maistrova 3

1 July – 28 September 2014

Exhibition curator: Bojana Piškur

Co-curators: Isabel García Pérez de Arce, André Mesquita

Curators of special projects: Miklavž Komelj, Branka Stipančič

Program of events and public relations: Adela Železnik

Pedagogical program: Adela Železnik, Lucija Cvjetković

Technical coordination: Tomaž Kučer

Coordination of photographic material: Dejan Habicht, Matija Pavlovec

Technical crew: Boris Fister, Vojko Kmetič, Janez Kramžar, Armin Salihović

Special thanks to:



Thanks to: The Archives of the Republic of Slovenia, Julie Ault, Roberto Barandalla, Izidor Barši, Nil Baskar, Jorge Bassani, The Beehive Collective, Sonja Bezjak, Gordana Brzović, Ivan Cardoso, Alejandro Crispiani, Ana Curk, Lisa Darms / Downtown Collection at the Fales Library NYU, Alicia Escobio, Adolfo Espinoza, Diego Fernandez, Victoria Fernández-Layos Moro, Katarina Ficko, Vito Flaker, James Fuentes, Metka Gombač, Teresa Grandas, Lola Hinojosa Martínez, Becky Howland, Hrvatska radiotelevizija, Keiichi Ikemizu, Roberto Jacoby, Srečko Javornik, Eric Jimenez, Leilani Kljunak, Anej Korsika, María José Lemaitre, Pablo León de la Barra, Eva López, Vladimir Macura, Vlado Martek, Jurij Meden, Teja Merhar, Ljiljana Miletić Abramović, Ana Mizerit, Alan W. Moore, Felipe Mujica, Soledad de Pablo Roberto, Srečko Pavlič, Rosario Peiro Carrasco, Jelena Perač, Antònia M. Perelló, Rodrigo Pérez de Arce, Fernando Pérez Oyarzún, Goran Radman, Jaime Reyes, Socialno varstveni zavod Hrastovec, Patricia Sorroche Quesada, Sven Stilinović, Darko Šimičić, Gašper Šmid, Mojca Urek, Joe Villablanca, Andreja Vučak, Fedor Vučemilović, Claudia Zaldivar, Darja Zaviršek, Anja Zver

The project was supported by:



REPUBLIC OF SLOVENIA
MINISTRY OF CULTURE

MG+MSUM

Catalogue published by:

Moderna galerija, Tomšičeva 14

SI-1000 Ljubljana, Slovenija

tel +386 1 2416800, fax +386 1 2514120

info@mg-lj.si www.mg-lj.si

Represented by: Zdenka Badovinac

Catalogue editor: Tamara Soban

Texts: Cristina Cámara Bello, Katarina Ficko, Vito Flaker, Isabel García Pérez de Arce, Teresa Grandas, Miklavž Komelj, André Mesquita, Viktor Misiano, Ana Mizerit, Nebojša Pajkić, Bojana Piškur, Zoran Popović, Branka Stipančić, Horacio Torrent, Stevan Vuković, artists

Translations: Tamara Soban

Copyeditor: Jeff Bickert

Consulting editor (Bojana Piškur, *Politicization of Friendship*): Marko Jenko

Design: Škart

Printed by: Standard 2, Belgrade, Serbia

Print run: 600

© 2014 Moderna galerija, Ljubljana, artists, authors

