

folio



Pilot za intermedijsko umetnost, kulturo in veselje do življenja / Guide to intermedia art, culture and the joy of life
no. 1, letnik 1 (2009), Maribor / Volume 1 (2009), Maribor, Slovenia

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Folio, nov časopis!

Snežana Štabi

Folio izvira etimološko iz edninske oblike latinskega "folium" in pomeni list. Folio je list rokopisa ali knjige in tudi standardna velikost pol papirja, zglobanih na polovico, kakor so preloženi listi časopisa. – Novega časopisa, ki je namenjen umetnosti, kulturi in veselju do življenja, smo zapisali v podnaslov. Na naslovnici prve številke časopisa je fotografija lista drevesa z imenom Paulownia tomentosa iz družine cvetočih rastlin črnobinovk (Scrophulariaceae), tudi Princess Tree, ki smo jo posneli v Mariboru. Prepoznali jo boste: raste iz najbolj nenavadnih mest, špranj in razpok, žlebov ... in prvo leto z ogromnimi listi požene tudi do več metrov višine. Nadaljevanje zgodbe je stvar preživetja, v nenaklonjenem okolju. V tiskarstvu pomeni folio številko strani v knjigi (leve strani so sode in desne lihe), pri knjigah pomeni folio format, ki po višini presega 30 centimetrov, ali stran knjige. Folio je tudi pisava, tipografija brez serifov, podobna Helvetiki, ki sta jo oblikovala Konrad Bauer in Walter Baum leta 1957 za črkostavnica/črkolivnico/livarno tiskarskih črk/tipografski studio Bauer (v Franciji je licencirana z imenom Caravelle). Prepoznamo jo po črki Q, kjer je rep črke postavljen v sredino.

Folio prepoznamo po vprašanjih, ki jih zastavljamo umetnikom. Odgovori so premišljeni, spontani, kratki ali izčrpani, vsekakor pa vredni razmisleka in branja, k čemur vas vabimo. Najprej v Berlin, z berlinskimi umetniki in mestom, ki si zasluži posebno pozornost. V naslednjih številkah med umetnice in umetnike, njihova dela in projekte. Dobrodošli v Folio!
Folio ima dobro družbo: Folio Society je angleška založba za dragocene ilustrirane izdaje knjig, mesečnik Folio je revija za tiskarsko industrijo in tudi ime novovalovske glasbene skupine iz L.A., Folio Corporation pa je ime računalniškega podjetja – in Folio je ime novega časopisa, v slovenščini in angleščini, ki ga izdajamo v Mariboru.

DOSJE BERLIN

Aleksandra Kostič:
Berlinartpedia

Heiko Daxl: "Strictly Berlin"

Barbara Caveng, Berlin

Don Ritter, Berlin



Folio, a new magazine!

Etymologically, Folio originates in the Latin singular form of "folium" – leaf. Folio is leaf of a manuscript or book, and a standard size sheet of paper once folded – like the folded newspaper sheet. – The new magazine dedicated to art, culture and joy of life, as we defined it in the subtitle. The cover of the first issue features the photograph of a leaf from the tree Paulownia tomentosa, also Princess Tree, from the flowering figwort family (Scrophulariaceae), the photo having been taken in Maribor. It will be familiar to you: it grows in most peculiar places, crevices and cracks, drainpipes ... In its first year, it grows several meters high, having enormous leaves. The continuation is a matter of survival in a hostile environment.

In printing, folio designates the page number in a book (even folios are on the left-hand pages and the odd folios on the right-hand), in books, folio stands for the format exceeding 30 cm in height, or a page of a book. Furthermore, Folio is a typeface – sans-serif, similar to Helvetica, designed by Konrad Bauer and Walter Baum in 1957 for the Bauersche Gießerei/Bauer foundry (in France licensed under the name Caravelle). Its distinguishing feature is the letter Q with its tail centred under the figure.

Folio is to be identified by questions being posed to artists. Their answers are deliberate, spontaneous, short or lengthy, but always worth to be considered and read, and you are invited to do so. First we go to Berlin, with its artists and the city deserving particular attention. And in the following issues among artists, their works and projects. Welcome to Folio!

Folio is in good company: Folio Society is a British publisher of fine illustrated books, Folio is a monthly magazine for the publishing industry and the name of a new wave band from Los Angeles, whereas Folio Corporation is a software company – and Folio is the name of the new magazine, in Slovenian and in English, being published in Maribor.





Berlin, Alexanderplatz



Galerija KunstWerke (KW) v Berlinu
KunstWerke (KW) Gallery, Berlin



Berlin, muzej za sodobno umetnost Hamburger Bahnhof (foto PC)
Berlin, Hamburger Bahnhof, Museum of Contemporary Art (foto PC)



Berlin, veleblagovnica, ena izmed redkih ohranjenih stavb nacistične arhitekture
Berlin, Commercial House, one of the rare preserved buildings of Nazi architecture

Berlin art p

V prijetnem ambientu galerije ConcerArt galerista Georgija Beguna na Kreuzbergu v Berlinu – med umetniškimi deli umetnikov Georgija Beguna, Heika Daxla, Chusa Garcia-Frila, Alexeia Shulgina in drugih na razstavi s ciničnim naslovom "Prava umetnost se prodaja", *Wac(h)re Kunst*, se je odvijal x-op simpozij z več kot 25 predstavami umetnikov in umetniških institucij. Vzpodbudna plat zgodbe je, da pri x-op (izmenjava operaterjev in umetnikov), evropskem sodobnem umetnostnem projektu, ki ga koordinira Kibla, sicer sodeluje deset evropskih partnerskih organizacij, vpletenost pa močno presega dano številko in vzpostavlja široko platformo neodvisnih akterjev na področju sodobne vizualne in intermedijske umetnosti.

Ti "neodvisni" po svoji geopoziciji označujejo vzhodne in zahodne točke Evrope, centre in periferijo in predstavljajo realni del sodobne evropske umetniške stvarnosti. Ker so te točke male in vpete v različne pogoje delovanja, vežejo nase sorodne točke in dejansko ustvarjajo mrežo raznolikih, pa vendar sorodnih kontekstualnih kreativnosti. In ne hierarhičnih uprizoritev moči odločanja in vplivanja na umetniško produkcijo, kot bi bilo to v primeru modernih galerij ali centrov za sodobno umetnost. Takšna srečanja uprizarja x-op v živo na različnih lokacijah.

Umetniški par *Media in motion*, ki jo sestavljata Heiko Daxl in Ingeborg Fülepe, sta bila berlinski vezni člen evropske platforme intermedijskih umetnikov, producentov in operaterjev x-op. Tridnevni simpozij je potekal v različnih stopnjah intenzivnosti ter ves čas omogočal konkretne predstavitve, mnenja, kritike, vprašanja, dvome in neposredne stike. Pravi tridnevni berlinski umetniški maraton: Ingeborg Fülepe, Marko Košnik, Petra Kapš, Don Ritter, Goncalo Leite Velho, Isse Karsten, Jerica Mrzel, Selda Asal, Serra Ozhan in mnogi drugi. Pustil je veliko odprtih, nedokončanih vprašanj, ki se bodo še razreševala.

Med zadnjimi se je predstavil zvočni umetnik Jan-Peter E. R. Sonntag, ki je vzpostavljal konceptualno povezavo med skoraj istočasno potekajočim festivalom za umetnost in digitalno kulturo Transmediale. Na osrednji razstavi Transmediale je predstavil taljenje ledu kar se da prepričljivo in konkretno navezujoč se na osrednjo temo "Globoko na severu" raziskujoč soočanja in premisleke o alarmantnem scenariju okoljske katastrofe. Taleči se led – kaj lahko storimo proti izumrtju severnih medvedov? Soočiti se moramo z nečim, kar je tako daleč od nas. Marko Peljhan je kot nalašč za to temo na *Vroči točki* Transmediale predstavil *Arktične perspektive* – tretjo kulturo na ledenih robovih, o socialni, kulturni in prostorski navigaciji in sposobnostih preživetja. Glede na januarske berlinske temperature se je ta oddaljenost zdela paradoksalno blizu.

Kar pa se tiče ledenih robov, kako dobro jih je naslikal Caspar David Friedrich v njegovih dušnih krajinah v času nemške romantike, ko so se razsežne pokrajine zdele še neskončne in neminljive. Pogled nazaj in naprej bistri preglednost sedanjosti. Berlin ima lepo zbirko nemških romantikov (Schloss Charlottenburg, Alte Nationalgalerie), posebej dela največjega med njimi: Casparja Davida Friedricha, ki velja za velikega trageda pokrajine.

V 30. letih so ga nemški nacisti simbolno povezali s svojimi prepričanji o superiorni naciji in njenih monumentalnih občutjih. Z reaktualizacijo Linza,

prestonice kulture 2009 (ki bi bil tudi prestolnica kulture nemškega "Reicha", če bi v 40. letih prevlada nemške nacije nad Evropo uspela), ter javno objavljene dokumentacije Hitlerjeve zbirke umetniških del – izjemno zanimive in tudi precej enostranske zbirke, ki zajema precejšnji del nemških romantikov – se ponovno pojavlja zatajevani del evropske kulturne zgodovine.

Šele po toliko letih je možno vrednotiti umetniška dela izven političnih in etičnih kontekstov – kar je temelj estetskega vrednotenja v okviru umetnostne zgodovine. Evropski profesorji umetnostne zgodovine so ta del gladko preskočili ali ga opredeljevali enoznačno. Kot da zaradi teže zgodovinskih dejstev objektivnost v tem delu enostavno ni bila možna. Friedrichova povezava z nacistično kulturo je oslabila njegovo vrednost vse do 70. let prejšnjega stoletja, ko so ga ponovno rehabilitirali.

Živahna umetniška scena pred prvo svetovno vojno in po njej je na januarskem berlinskem umetniškem obhodu zbujala nostalgijo za evropsko kulturo med obema vojnama, ki je ponujala tolikšno umetniško barvitost. Vizualno je to ponudil muzej Die Brücke z obsežno razstavo Ludwiga Kirchnerja, člana nemške ekspresionistične skupine. Njen zaščitni znak je srednjeveška tehnika lesoreza, ki je takrat doživela svoj preporod. Simpatičen muzej v parku v predelu Dahlem je postavil na ogled študijski pregled, kakor bi si ga želel vsak pravi umetnostni zgodovinar. Objektivni prikaz zajema tudi osupljivo svobodomiselnih pornografske risbe.

Fenomenalni muzej Pergamon je bil zgrajen med leti 1910 in 1930 po merah naravne velikosti najčudovitejšega, delno iz originalnih kosov rekonstruiranega pozno grškega templja v njegovi naravni velikosti (Pergamonski oltar in Miletusova vhod na trg). Precej kosov zavidljive zbirke so Rusi prepeljali po 2. svetovni vojni iz Vzhodne Nemčije v moskovske in sanktpeterburške muzeje, kjer so še danes. Veliko čudovitih antičnih kosov v postavitvah z natančnim nemškim čutom za lepo je bilo možno tu ogledovati bolj ali manj skozi celotno 20. stoletje do danes. Največji oboževalci in posnemovalci antične umetnosti pa so bili prav nemški nacisti. V Berlinu se še vedno kolektivno in individualno izprašuje fenomen fašizma in nemškega nacionalnega socializma med obema vojnama in v drugi svetovni vojni. Nemška kultura je imela moč, prepoznavnost, večplastnost in presežke. Po letu 1933 pa je takratna brutalna politika postopoma zatrla, izgnala in prepovedala t.i. "sprevrženo umetnost" (entartete kunst) in s tem porušila zračeno ravnotežje med zgodovinsko nemško klasično in sodobno "židovsko" umetnostjo. Pregledna razstava subtilnega nemškega slikarja židovskega porekla Paula Kleeja je to postopno izničenje prikazala skozi umetnikovo ustvarjanje in biografske dokumente. Klee je umrl 1940, še preden se je zlo, ki ga je tako dobro upodobil v demonih v zadnjih likovnih delih, zares udejanjilo. Po perverziji druge svetovne vojne je končno sledil katastrofalni padec Berlina in s tem jedra nemške kulture.

Januarja je bil Berlin preplepljen s plakati, na katerem Tom Cruise upodablja nacističnega Clausa von Stauffenberga, ki je s skupino somišljenikov načrtoval Hitlerjev neuspešni atentat 20. julija 1944. V Berlinu so postavili spomenik Hitlerjevemu atentatorjem. Spomenik je vzbudil zanimanje do te



edia

Aleksandra Kostič



Death does not suffice to become famous. You have to surpass the time in which you lived, and surpass the time that has rediscovered you.



Akcija v močvirju / Action in Moor, 1971

mere, da je nastala filmska zgodba. Stauffenbergova aristokratska družina, žena in štirje od petih otrok, rojenih v 30. in 40. letih v Nemčiji, živijo še danes, njegova žena je celo doživela častljivo starost 92 let. Napeta zgodba osvetljuje nemško aristokracijo, ki se ni strinjala s Hitlerjevim režimom.

V Hollywoodu, ki je predvsem evropsko-izseljeniški židovski konstrukt in investicija, se počasi izteka trend visoko proračunske produkcije, ki s pomočjo zadnjih živečih prič druge svetovne vojne ustvarja monumentalne filmske kreacije z zgodbami, ki še niso bile povedane in bodo z novimi generacijami kmalu zatonile v pozabo.

Berlin v svojem jedru še vedno nosi tradicijo gledališčne in kabaretske mestne kulture. Nemiljivi simbol Marlene Dietrich, ki kot berlinska fatamorgana v pojavnosti plavega angela preživi v razdvojeni berlinska 70. leta, v avtentični kombinaciji glamurja in destruktivne ulične kulture, utelešene v heroinskih pop ikonah Davida Bowieja in Louja Reeda, ki sta se umetniško, fiktivno in realno povezovala z Berlinom. Črno-usnjena scena in energični alt Nine Hagen, ki je provokativno uveljavljala načela nenasilja, veganstva in najavljala ekstazi kulturo. In intelektualci Wim Wenders in Peter Handke. Čas tistih dveh koridorjev, ki sta vodila iz zahodnega Berlina v zahodno Evropo. Po padcu berlinskega zidu leta 1989, so v 90. v Berlin

pridre neznosne milijonske množice rejverjev na *Love Parade*, ki je pustil svojevrsten pečat mestu. Masovni razcvet ekstazi in vegetarijanske kulture, travestitske mode, ljubezni kot načela, svobode kot boemstva.

Stefan Zweig je okoli leta 1900 zapisal o Berlinu: "Prav dejstvo, da v Berlinu ni bilo prave tradicije in stoletij stare kulture, je vabilo mlade k uveljavljanju. Zakaj tradicija vedno pomeni tudi oviro. Dunaj, vezan na svojo zgodovino ter obožujoč svojo preteklost, je bil previden in nezaupljiv do mladih ljudi in drznih poizkusov. V Berlinu pa, ki je hotel na hitro oblikovati svojo podobo (na prehodu od navadnega glavnega mesta v svetovno mesto, op. p.), so iskali nova pota. Tako je bilo več kot razumljivo, da so mladi ljudje iz vse države in celo iz Avstrije silili v Berlin..." Zdi se, da ta misel še vedno drži. Berlin uteleša sanje, ki jih je opisal svetovljanski Zweig.

Letos Berlin praznuje 20. obletnico padca berlinskega zidu in je še kar premišljeno kultivirano mesto prihodnosti, mesto za 21. stoletje. Od umetne združitve do danes so Berlin skoraj popolnoma obnovili, vložili neverjetne vsote denarja, mediji so mnogokrat obelodanili, da je to vreča brez dna in brez učinka ... toda Berlin danes je unikat, očičen biser, prostorno mesto z veliko kulture in pozitivne energije. Mrzla severna evropska metropola, ki ti otopli pogled ob pogledu

na Berlinčanke, ki vse lepo premikajo usta ter visoke Berlinčane s friedrichovskim pogledom nekam naprej. V lepem nasprotju so temnejši Berlinčani turškega porekla v nemški kulturni metropoli že drugo ali celo tretjo generacijo – več jih je tu kot v matični državi. Seveda je čutiti tudi napetost med obema skrajnostma – oster pretep v podzemni se nekako ne zdi naključen.

Zaradi velikega števila umetnikov, kustosov, zbiralcev, menedžerjev, državnih in zasebnih galerij in drugih prizorišč, se v Berlinu ustvarja svojevrstna klima, kjer dobiva pozicija umetnika, ki je na finančnem hierarhičnem dnu, odločen socialno angažirani pečat. Če ni svetovna zvezda ali vsaj ne razstavlja po svetovnih galerijah, kjer si rešuje kožo z razstavninami, marsikdo preživetje lajša s štipendijami, socialno podporo ali s ceninimi storitvami. Ni lahko in konkurenca je močna. Sredi tega vrvenja in trenja, med ostrimi besedami in ignoranco, se kot veličastni spomeniki postavljajo velike retrospektive svetovnih mojstrov 20. stoletja, kjer dokončno dojameš, da se selekcija dogaja tudi posthumno. Ni dovolj umreti, da si slaven. Prekositi moraš čas, v katerem si živel in prekašati moraš čas, ki te ponovno odkriva.

Velika retrospektivna razstava Josepha Beuysa, največjega nemškega umetnika po Albrechtu



Baterija Capri / Capri-Battery, 1985



Predavanje na čikaškem inštitutu / Institute of Chicago, Januar 1974



7000 javorjev / 7000 maple trees, Kassel, 1982–2002

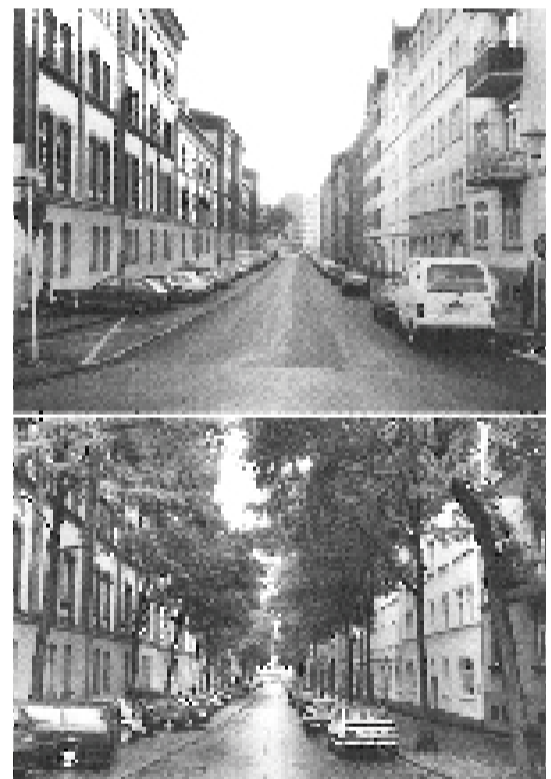
Dürerju, v odlični Hamburger Palace (za galerijske potrebe prenovljena železniška postaja) je postavila pokojnega Josepha Beuysa, "umetnika s klobukom" v popolnoma aktualno luč. Smiselno razdeljene glavne značilnosti njegovega ustvarjanja ga izjemno posrečeno priključijo v današnji prostor in čas. Še posthumno je tukaj tako živ, sodoben in daleč pred časom – po inventivnosti, inteligenci, sposobnosti eksperimentiranja ... je materializirana mentalna in čustvena avantgarda, utemeljitelj performativnih vsebin in oblik, premišljevalec o ekologiji: "Drevesa so inteligentnejša od ljudi.", ki je v enem izmed performansov zasadil kar sedem tisoč javorjev. Bil je tudi politično aktiven in postavil za načela svobodo, enakost in bratstvo po zgledu starih francoskih revolucionarjev (1789). "Revolucija smo mi." (Die Revolution sind wir.) Njegov socialni angažma je imel kar se da širok domet: "Vsak človek je umetnik." (Jeder Mensch ist ein Künstler.), saj je razumel družbo kot permanentni proces plastične kreacije, kjer je svobodni individuum vzpostavljen po ustvarjalnih principih. Nenasilna evolucijska "socialna plastika", ki jo je gradil z nenehnim pedagoškim procesom, ga je pripeljala do ustanovitve partije. Za nameček se je razglasil brez zadrege za kreativnega oglaševalca umetnosti: "Vse moje življenje je bilo eno samo oglaševanje." (Mein ganzes Leben war Werbung.) Če pomislimo samo

na Documento v Kasslu, veliko nemško kvadrinalno umetniško prireditev, zanjo je Joseph Beuys res bil popolna blagovna znamka, v splošnem nemškem in svetovnem medijskem prostoru pa so ga zaradi nerazumevanja in pogoste pojavnosti pogosto označili za šarlatana. Kot kipar je prvenstveno premišljeval o materialu, utemeljeval naravne materiale (vosek, filc, mast, margarina itd.) proti umetnim (beton, plastika). Prostorska osmišljanja v risbah so naravnost odlična, tam se v mrtvih izidih zgodba nikoli ne konča, ampak se vedno znova odpira. Vse je sprejemal, o vsem je premišljeval. Velikokrat je izjavil, da ga vodi ljubezen. Vzpostavil je tudi enega prvih sistematičnih sodobnih medijskih arhivov. Na razstavi postane jasno, da je Joseph Beuys tudi oče intermedijske umetnosti: slavni performans z margarino je bil izveden leta 1968 v galeriji Art Intermedia v Kölnu. Spustil se je v poigravanje z odmevi različnih medijev, ki se med seboj že prelivajo, npr. igranje z učinki ogledala pri dokumentiranju performansov, postavljenega v prostor, na videz močno podobno današnjim tridimenzionalnim video učinkom.

V oddaljenem južnem delu Berlina, v Ullsteinhausu (v 20. letih zgrajena tiskarna s sedežem Ullstein Verlag, židovskega porekla, ki so jo nacional-socialisti za časa Tretjega Rajha preimenovali v "nemško hišo"), v

Reprodukcije so iz kataloga k razstavi Beuys. Die Revolution sind wir, ki je bila od 3. oktobra 2008 do 25. januarja 2009 postavljena v muzeju sodobne umetnosti v Hamburger Bahnhof v Berlinu (Nationalgalerie im Hamburger Bahnhof – Museum für Gegenwart, Berlin) v okviru ciklusa razstav »Kult des Künstlers« (uredila Eugene Blume in Catherine Nichols).

Reproductions have been taken from the exhibition catalogue Beuys. Die Revolution sind wir. The exhibition was on view in Hamburger Bahnhof, Museum of Contemporary Art (Nationalgalerie im Hamburger Bahnhof – Museum für Gegenwart, Berlin) from 3 October 2008 to 25 January 2009 within the series »Kult des Künstlers« (curated by Eugene Blume and Catherine Nichols).



visoki zgradbi ekstremnih dimenzij, je Marko Košnik, utemeljitelj slovenske intermedijske umetnosti, s svojim Inštitutom Egon March v okviru x-op projekta v ateljeju nemške umetnice vzpostavil aktivno prizorišče umetnikov *Electropera Act 1: Parahouse_12*. Do tja nas je pripeljal z roko napisan "parahouse" s puščicami po stavbnem labirintu. Nočni intermedijski umetniški clubbing, živa scena v živo delujoče mednarodne zbirke sodobnih umetnikov je v nabit polnem ambientu živahno utripala. Duh 80., v maniri 90., za prihodnost: "Na Ostranenie festivalu v Bauhausu, 1997, je mednarodna skupina umetnikov združila svoje sile, da bi živela in delala mesec dni v kulturnem centru K.I.E.Z. v Dessau. Hišo so ožičili s kamerami, senzorji in monitorji za "letečo" generacijo in reinterpretacijo videa in zvoka. Občinstvo v baru, plesalec v teatru in mimoidoči na štirinadstropnih stopnicah so soudeleženi pri kreaciji permanentnega video in audio spletnega oddajanja/nalaganja, razglašujoč "prihodnost" medijskega instrumentalizma. 12 let kasneje se zberejo isti umetniki in gostje, da bi odkrili, kako se nanašajo njihove vizije iz preteklosti na prihodnost."

Na razstavi *Embedded art* (skrita, zakopana umetnost; naslov razstave se neposredno nanaša na iraško vojno in na pojem "embedded journalist") na Novi

akademiji za umetnost je 30 umetnikov ustvarjalo z obrambnimi sistemi, varnostnimi podjetji, se gibali v nevarnih conah, pregledovali arhive z vsebinami globalne varnosti in si pomagali s tremi ključnimi besedami: grožnja, odziv in premik.

Mesto za razstavo ni moglo biti bolje izbrano: Pariški trg je bil do konca osemdesetih simbol hladne vojne. Z ameriškim in francoskim veleposlaništvom, banko, slavnim hotelom Adlon in z bližnjim spomenikom holokavstu je danes ta del eden najbolj varovanih delov nemške republike. Povsod kamere, prepovedani prehodi in prisotnost policije – varnostno območje št. 1.

Skupina kuratorjev, dva iz umetniške skupine BBM, Olaf Arndt in Janeke Schönenbach, je v to okolje postavila namestitve umetniških premislekov o globalnih vprašanjih, kot so vojna, nasilje, strah, nadzor, varnost v povezavi s državljanskimi pravicami, zaščito podatkov in razumevanjem demokracije. 40 kamer je bilo postavljenih po Akademiji, vsi obiskovalci razstave so bili posneti in neposredno soočeni s pojmom "marketing", marketing v službi vojske. Toda "Prepovedano za Google", je pisalo na strehi Akademije za umetnost, opozorilo neizprosnim kameram Google Earth, ki snemajo topografijo zemlje.

75 minutna zvočna namestitve Olafa Arndta, BBM, je uporabila zvok kot analizo sistema nadziranja in manipuliranja človeške psihe. Med tridimenzionalnim in štiridimenzionalnem umeščanju in premikanju zvoka se v večkanalnem zvočnem valovanju besed, govora, razlag, zvokov različnih decibelnih kvalitiet, mešajo prostori vakuumske tišine. Zvoke je sproduciral Cameron Bobro, "embedded artist" iz mariborskega podzemlja, KIT-ove kleti.

Človek, ki nas je vodil po razstavi – ta sega do četrte kleti pod zemljo – je sredi vodenja, po nekaterih zastražujočih video posnetkih in fotografijah, ki pričajo o vojnih grozotah, mučencih in mučiteljih, obelodanil, da se je dvigalo pokvarilo in po nekakšnem labirintu hodnikov prestrašeno skupino obiskovalcev komaj rešil iz podzemlja. Izhod na prosto in nadaljevanje pohoda po berlinskih prostorih.

V odlično proporcijirani galeriji Kunstwerke (KW) je na razstavi *Politično/minimalno* kraljevala okrogla črna slika Damiena Hirsta, sestavljena iz mrtvih muh. V 4. nadstropju so kratki filmi in videi beležili slavna imena performativne scene: Marina Abramovič, Doug Aitken in drugi. V nemškem Guggenheimu je Anish Kapoor v galerijski prostor postavil odličan, velik rjast ovalni objekt, ki si ga lahko ogledal iz dveh različnih vhodov v galerijo, tudi v notranjost, monokromna žametna črnina organske odprtine je z odmevi lovila glasove obiskovalcev.

Se nadaljuje.



Taking place in the pleasant atmosphere of ConcentArt Gallery in Kreuzberg, Berlin of the gallerist Georgi Begun – among works of art by Georgi Begun, Heiko Daxl, Chus Garcia-Fraile, Alexei Shulgina and other artists at the exhibition bearing the cynical title "True Art Truly Merchandise", *Wac(h)re Kunst* – the x-op symposium featured more than 25 presentations of artists and art institutions. The encouraging thing about it is that x-op (exchange of operators and artists), the European contemporary art project coordinated by Kibla, integrates ten European partner organisations, but the integration exceeds the number massively, thus establishing a wide platform of independent players in the field of contemporary visual and intermedia art.

The geographical location of these "independent players" marks eastern and western points of Europe, as well as centres and peripheries, and represents the actual share of contemporary European artistic reality. As these points are small and integrated into various operation conditions, they attract similar points. They actually form a network of diverse, yet similar contextual creativities, and not of hierarchical expressions of power in decision-making and affecting the artistic creation, as would be the case in contemporary art galleries or centres. x-op performs such meetings live at various locations.

In Berlin, the Media in motion art duo, composed of Heiko Daxl and Ingeborg Fülep, functioned as the link within the European x-op platform of intermedia artists, producers and operators. The three-day

Ni dovolj umreti, da si slaven. Prekositi moraš čas, v katerem si živel, in prekašati moraš čas, ki te ponovno odkriva.

symposium ran in various levels of intensity, constantly enabling concrete presentations, opinions, criticisms, questions, doubts and direct contacts. A real three-day artistic marathon in Berlin: Ingeborg Fülep, Marko Košnik, Petra Kapš, Don Ritter, Goncalo Leite Velho, Isse Karsten, Jerica Mrzel, Selda Asal, Serra Ozhan any many others. Many issues were left open, uncompleted, left for further attempts at resolving.

One of the last to be presented was the sound artist Jan-Peter E. R. Sonntag, who was establishing the conceptual connection to the practically concurrent *Transmediale Festival for Art and Digital Culture*. At the main *Transmediale* exhibition he presented ice melting very convincingly, related to the major topic "Deep North", in which he was researching confrontation with and consideration of the alarming environmental catastrophe scenario. The melting ice – what can we do to prevent the extinction of the polar bear? We have to confront something so distant from us. How appropriately for the topic, Marko Peljhan was presenting at *Transmediale Hot Spot* his project "Arctic Perspectives – Third Culture in The Floe Edge, social, cultural and spatial navigation/survival capabilities". Considering the temperatures in Berlin in January, the remoteness seemed paradoxically near.

As regards floe edges, how well they had been painted by Caspar David Friedrich in his soul landscapes in the time of German Romanticism, when expansive landscapes yet felt infinite and interminable. A view backwards and forward clears the view of the present. Berlin keeps a nice collection of German Romanticism (Schloss Charlottenburg, Alte Nationalgalerie), particularly the works of the greatest artist: Caspar David Friedrich, who is considered the major landscape tragedian.

In the 1930s the German Nazis related his works in symbolic ways to their beliefs in the superior nation and its monumental feelings. Parallel to the newly actualised Linz, capital of culture in 2009 (which would also serve as the cultural capital of the German "Reich" if the German nation succeeded in its victory over Europe in the 1940s), and publicly presented documentation on Hitler's art collection – a particularly interesting, but quite partial collection comprising a great share of German Romanticism artists – the suppressed part of European cultural history has been emerging again.

Only after so many years it is possible to evaluate works of art outside any political and ethical contexts – which forms the base of all aesthetic evaluation within art history. European art history professors have been skipping this part without a second thought or defining it one-sidedly. As if due to the weight of historical facts, objectivity was simply impossible as regards this task. Friedrich's connection to Nazi culture had weakened his value up to the 1970s when he was finally rehabilitated.

At the Berlin art tour in January, the lively art scene before and after World War I provoked nostalgia for the European culture between the Wars offering immense artistic diversity. This was offered visually by the museum Die Brücke and its extensive exhibition of Ludwig Kirchner, member of German expressionist group. Its emblem is the medieval woodcutting technique, experiencing its revival at the time. The amiable museum in a park in Dahlem district offered a study review, just like any proper art historian would want it to be. The objective display also comprises breathtakingly freethinking pornographic drawings.

The remarkable Pergamon museum was constructed between 1910 and 1930 based on real-life measures of the most beautiful late Greek temple, partly reconstructed from original pieces (the Pergamon altar and Miletus market entrance). After World War II, many pieces of the enviable collection were transported by Russians from Eastern Germany to museums of Moscow and Saint Petersburg, where they have remained until today. Many marvellous antiquity pieces arranged in installations by the precise German feeling for beauty have been on display here practically throughout the 20th century until today. Indeed, it was the German Nazis who were the greatest admirers and imitators of antiquity art.

Collective and individual questioning of the phenomenon of Fascism and the German National Socialism between the wars and during World War II still persists in Berlin. The German culture had the power and extraordinary achievements, was identifiable and multilayered. After 1933, however, the brutal political power of the time gradually suppressed, expelled or banned the so-called "degenerate art" (entartete kunst), thus destroying the unified balance between the historical classical German and contemporary "Jewish" art.



Electropera Act 1: parahouse_12, Marko Košnik

FINNIS



A comprehensive exhibition of Paul Klee, the subtle German painter of Jewish origin, displays this gradual destruction based on his artistic creation and biographical documentation. Klee died in 1940, before the evil that he portrayed so well as demons in his latest works of art really materialised. After the perversion of World War II finally ensued the catastrophic fall of Berlin and thus the core of German culture.

In January, Berlin was covered in posters featuring Tom Cruise as the Nazi Claus von Stauffenberg, who planned with a group of like-minded the failed assassination of Hitler on 20 July 1944. A memorial to Hitler's assassins has been raised in Berlin. The memorial attracted so much attraction that the story was made into film. Stauffenberg's aristocratic family, his wife and four of five children born in Germany in the 1930s and 1940s, are still alive, his wife having lived to the impressive age of 92 years. The entangled story sheds light on German aristocracy who defied Hitler's regime.

In Hollywood, which is primarily a European-immigrant Jewish construct and investment, the time has passed for the trend of high-budget productions that based on the last surviving witnesses of World War II created monumental cinematic creations of stories that have not yet been told and will soon be forgotten when generations change.

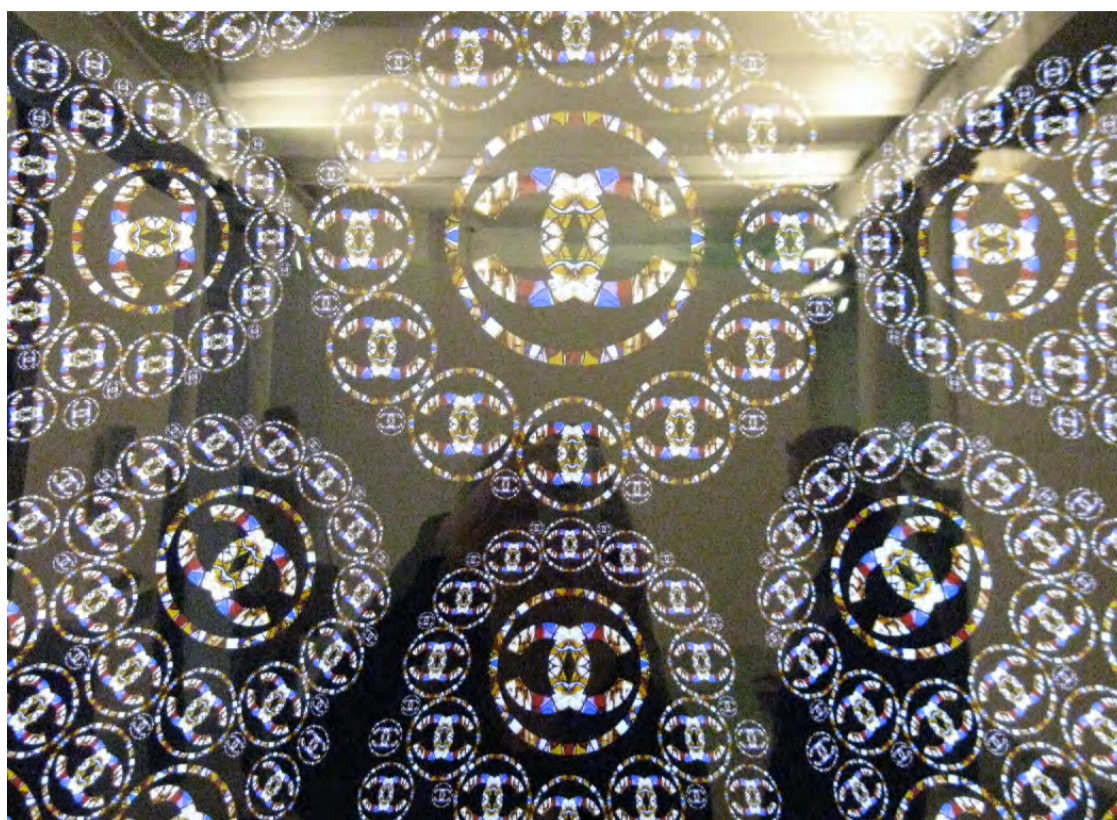
In its core, Berlin still carries the tradition of theatre and cabaret city culture. The imperishable symbol Marlene Dietrich, surviving into the bisected 1970s of Berlin as a fata morgana appearing in the form of the Blue Angel, in an authentic mix of glamour and destructive street culture impersonated in heroin pop icons, David Bowie and Lou Reed, who were related to Berlin in their art, both fictively and for real. The black leather scene and the energetic alto of Nina Hagen who provocatively asserted principles of non-violence, vegan diet and announced the culture of ecstasy. And intellectuals like Wim Wenders and Peter Handke. The period of the two corridors leading from Western Berlin to Western Europe.

After the fall of the Berlin Wall (1989), unthinkable millions of ravers rushed to Berlin in the 1990s to the *Love Parade*, which left a peculiar mark on the city. The massive flourishing of ecstasy and vegetarian cultures, transvestite fashion, love as a principle, freedom as bohemianism.

Around 1900 Stefan Zweig wrote about Berlin: "It is the fact, that in Berlin there was no real tradition and centuries of old culture, that invited the young to establish themselves. Because tradition is always an obstacle. Vienna, bound to its history and adoring its past, has been cautious and suspicious towards young people and daring attempts. In Berlin, however, wanting to shape its image quickly (during its transition from a normal capital to a metropolis, TN), new paths were being sought. Therefore it is understandable that young people from across the country and even from Austria were rushing to Berlin..." It seems that this idea still holds water. Berlin impersonates the dream once described by the man of the world, Zweig.

As Berlin is celebrating the 20th anniversary of the fall of the wall this year, it remains to be a deliberate, cultivated city of future, a city for the 21st century. From the artificial merging until today, Berlin has been almost completely renovated, unthinkable amounts of money have been invested. Media have reported on many occasions it was a bag without a bottom and without effect ... But today, Berlin is unique, a purified pearl, an expansive city with much culture and positive energy. The cold northern European capital where your sight becomes warm as you spot the women of Berlin, all moving their mouth in a pretty way, and the tall men of Berlin with a Friedrich-like gaze turned forwards. A nice contrast is provided by the dark Berlin population of Turkish origin who have been staying in the German cultural metropolis for the second or third generation – there are more here than in their home country. Of course tension can be felt between the extremes – a severe fight in the underground somehow doesn't seem a coincidence.

Thanks to a large number of artists, curators, collectors, managers, public and private galleries and other venues, there is a certain atmosphere being created in Berlin, in which the position of an artist at the very bottom of financial hierarchy has been acquiring a decisive engaged feel. If not a star of worldwide renown or exhibiting in galleries around



Wa(h)re Kunst



simpozij x-op, Selda Asal in Serra Ozhan, projekt Apartment, Istanbul in Petra Kapš, neodvisna kuratorka, Maribor x-op symposium, Selda Asal and Serra Ozhan, Apartment Project, Istanbul and Petra Kapš, independent curator, Maribor



Electropera Act 1: parahouse_12



Georgi Begun



re.act, umetnost performansov v šestdesetih in sedemdesetih, feminizem, Umetnostna akademija v Berlinu, Marina Gržinić
re.act, Performance Art 60. and 70ies, feminism, Akademie der Künste, Berlin, Marina Gržinić

the globe to make a living by exhibition fees, many artists can make their living easier by scholarships, social benefits or cheap services. It is not easy and the competition is strong. Amidst this hustle and bustle, among sharp words and disregard, huge retrospectives of 20th century world masters are being set up like magnificent memorials, finally making you aware that the selection is also going on posthumously. Death does not suffice to become famous. You have to surpass the time in which you lived, and surpass the time that has rediscovered you.

A great retrospective exhibition of Joseph Beuys, the greatest German artist after Albrecht Dürer, in the exquisite Hamburger Palace (railway station redesigned into a gallery), has been presenting the late Joseph Beuys, "the artist with the hat", as completely relevant. The main characteristics of his creativity divided into meaningful sections bring him into today's space and time in a very original way. Even posthumously, he is very much alive, modern and much before his time in his inventiveness, intelligence, experimentation... he is the materialised mental and emotional avant-garde, the founder of performative contents and shapes, ecology thinker ("Trees are more intelligent than people."), who planted as many as 7,000 maple trees in one of his performances.

He was also active politically, setting the principles of freedom, equality and fraternity based on the old French revolutionaries (1789). "Revolution is us" (Die Revolution sind wir.) His social engagement was very broad in its range "Each man is an artist" (Jeder Mensch ist ein Künstler), because he saw the society as a permanent process of plastic creation, in which a free individual is established based on creative principles. The non-violent evolutionary "social plastic", which he was creating in a continuous educational process, led him to establish a political party.

On top of everything he proclaimed himself a creative advertiser of art. "All my life has been advertising." (Mein ganzes Leben war Werbung.) Let's consider the *Documenta* in Kassel, the great German quadrennial art event, for which Joseph Beuys was the perfect trademark, while the general German and international media sphere often marked him a charlatan due to their failure to comprehend and due to his frequent public appearances.

Being a sculptor, his thoughts were primarily dedicated to materials, to justifying the use of natural (wax, felt, fat, margarine, etc.) vs. artificial materials (concrete, plastic). Unquestionably, the spatial justifications in his drawings are outstanding, the story in dead outcomes never ends but continues to open up. He accepted everything, considered everything. He often claimed to be guided by love. He also established one of the first systematic contemporary media archives. It becomes clear at the exhibition that on top of everything, Joseph Beuys is the father of intermedia art: his famous margarine performance took place in Galerie Art Intermedia, Cologne in 1968. He plunged into an interaction with echoes of various media already merging with one another, e.g. a play with mirror effects in documenting performances set in space, which looks very much like today's three-dimensional video effects.

In a remote southern part of Berlin, in Ullsteinhaus (the seat of Ullstein Verlag, a 1920s printshop of Jewish origin, during Third Reich renamed into "German House" by National Socialists), a high building of extreme dimensions, Marko Košnik, the founder of Slovenian intermedia art and his Egon March Institute established within the x-op project the *Electropera Act 1: Parahouse_12* active artist venue in the atelier of a German artist.

We were led there through a labyrinth of buildings by a handwritten "parahouse" supported with arrows. The nightly intermedia art clubbing, an animated scene of an active international group of contemporary artists was pulsating lively in the jam-packed venue. The spirit of the 80s in the style of the 90s for the future:

"At Ostranenie festival in Bauhaus in 1997, an international group of artists joined their forces to live and work for a month in the cultural centre K.I.E.Z. in Dessau. They wired the house with cameras, sensors and screens for on the fly generation and reinterpretation of video and audio. The audience in

the bar, the dancer in the theatre and the passengers of the four-floor stairs were interacting in the creation of permanent video and audio netcast announcing "the future" of media instrumentalism. Twelve years later the same artists and their guests are coming together to discover how their visions from the past are relating to the future."

For the exhibition *Embedded art* (hidden, buried art; the title relates directly to the war in Iraq and the term "embedded journalist") at the Akademie der Künste, 30 artists were creating using defence systems, security companies, were inspecting archives holding global security data and using the three key words: threat, response and movement. The location could not have been more appropriate: until the end of the 1980s, Pariser Platz was the symbol the Cold War. Featuring the American and French Embassy, a bank, the renowned Adlon Hotel and the nearby Holocaust memorial it now represents one of the most guarded parts of Germany. Security cameras everywhere, forbidden passages and the presence of Police – security area No. 1.

A group of curators, two of them from BBM artist group, Olaf Arndt and Janeke Schönenbach, placed in this environment the installations of artistic considerations of global issues, such as war, violence, fear, control, civil rights related security, data protection and understanding democracy. 40 cameras were installed across the Academy. All visitors to the exhibition were recorded and faced directly with the term "warketing", marketing in service of the army. But the sentence "Off-limits for Google Earth" was fixed on the roof of the Academy to warn the inexorable cameras of Google Earth, recording the Earth's topography.

The 75-minute sound installation by Olaf Arndt, BBM, was using the sound as an analysis of the system controlling and manipulating the human psyche. During the three- and four-dimensional placement and movement of sound, sections of vacuum silence are being intertwined in multichannel sound waves of words, speech, explanations, sounds of various decibel qualities. Sounds were produced by Cameron Bobro, the "embedded artist" from Maribor underground, the KIT cellar.

The man guiding us around the exhibition – reaching to the fourth cellar underground – having guided us past some frightening clips and photos testifying to atrocities of war, the tortured and torturers, announced that the elevator has broken down and hardly managed to rescue the terrified group of visitors through a labyrinth of hallways from below ground. The way out and continued tour of Berlin venues.

In the exquisitely proportioned Kunstwerke (KW) gallery, the exhibition *Political/minimal* was governed by the round black painting by Damien Hirst, composed of dead flies. In the 4th floor, short films and videos registered famous names of the performing sphere: Marina Abramovič, Doug Aitken and others. In Deutsche Guggenheim, Anish Kapoor placed into the gallery an excellent large, rusting oval object, which could be observed from two different gallery entrances, including its interior. The monochrome black velvet organic opening was capturing voices of visitors with echoes.

To be continued.

“Strogo Berlin”

Heiko Daxl



Heiko Daxl, Ingeborg Fülepp, Media in Motion, Berlin

Ta koncept je prav tako dober ali slab kot katerikoli koncept. Vendar sledi filozofiji določenih vrednosti, ki so se vzpostavile na področju zgodovine. Ne da bi hoteli biti naporni, začnimo na samem začetku: kot je dejal Aristotel, ko se ljudje nečemu začnejo čuditi, to počnejo zaradi znanja, ne uporabnosti.

Kuratorji pa ne sanjajo o tem; prej gre za prepričanje, da je prihodnost edini cilj, za vero, da smo se znašli skupaj zaradi nečesa, kar presega naše razlike: *vita brevis, ars longae*. S tem priznamo bogastvo, ki obstaja le zato, ker smo si različni. Igrajmo se, vendar ne, ker bi hoteli zmagati, ampak zato, ker hočemo doživeti, uživati, čutiti, se učiti in vedeti.

Ta razstava združuje množico vzporednih pristopov, ki privzemajo različne izrazne oblike. V Berlinu opažamo, da oblikovanje istih skrbi preveča vsa področja umetnosti, pa naj bo glasba, vizualna umetnost, film, gledališče ali uprizoritve. Umetniki iz različnih držav, ne samo iz Nemčije, so se vsaj za nekaj časa ustalili v Berlinu. Njihov cilj ni očitna reprodukcija resničnosti, ampak osvoboditev upodobljene resničnosti iz njenih običajnih časovnih in pomenskih kontekstov ter oblikovanje njenega pomena v novih kombinacijah. Ne posnemanje resničnosti, ampak koncepti resničnosti, v katerih se pokaže, da je določena interpretacija le ena od številnih možnosti. Možnost ponovnega pripovedovanja je pri teh izraznih oblikah le redko možna, opredeljevanje prepoznavnega običajno prav tako ne pripelje daleč. Gledalec je prisiljen v premislek o samem sebi in o svojih izkušnjah; šele nato se pojavi užitek ob gledanju, čeprav brez vsakršnega zagotovila, da se bo uganka popolnoma razkrila.

Kakorkoli pogledamo, smo kot izvajalci ali potrošniki v vrtincu pretvarjanja medijev le morski prašički ali beta preizkuševalci procesa, ki že poteka. Na žalost v tej situaciji sodobni umetnosti ostane le neželena odgovornost. Medtem ko informacijske tehnologije dobivajo izdatno finančno podporo in razvijalci programske opreme zagotavljajo estetske smernice, ki se ujemajo z njihovimi proizvodi, ni tako rekoč nobenih sredstev za raziskave osnov sredinskih izkušenj, umetniškega ustvarjanja in posredovanja. Umetniki, katerih delo in prispevek k bogatenju našega estetskega in refleksivnega doživljanja in misli naj bi upoštevali, so pogosto degradirani v oblikovalce trenutnih okolij ali trendov.

Danes smo na robu “črvine”, črne luknje, ki posesa vso obstoječo energijo, jo premeša in preuredi. Preko dogodkovnega obzorja (astronomski pojem za meje med dimenzijami) se lahko sprejeta kategorija izkaže le za eno med številnimi možnimi, ki imajo vse svoj pomen in veljavnost. Preroški aforizem Nama Juna Paika iz leta 1970 je ena takih možnosti: “Nato sledi neposredna povezava elektrod in možganskih celic, kar bo vodilo v elektronski zen”. In to nas vodi v sanje, ki lahko s pomočjo tehnologije prevzamejo katerokoli osebno noto. Edino vprašanje, ki ostane, je, kdo bo zagotovil programsko opremo? Programska oprema bo prišla iz bogastva, ki presega denar.

To je kapital tega mesta!



This concept is as good or as bad as any other. But it follows the maxims of certain validities established in the realm of history. Without getting tedious, let's start from the very beginning: As Aristotle said, when people wondered about things, they did so for the sake of knowledge, not utility.

That is not what curators dream of; rather, it is the belief that the future is the only goal; it is the confidence that we have been brought together for the sake of something larger than our differences: *vita brevis, ars longae*. It is the acknowledgement of a wealth that exists only because we are different. Let us play, but not because we want to win; rather, because we want to experience, enjoy, feel, learn and know.

This exhibition brings together a plethora of parallel approaches that take different expressive forms. In Berlin a formulation of similar concerns can be seen to pervade all spheres of art, be it music, the visual arts, film, theater or performance. Artists from many countries, not just from Germany, have made Berlin their home, at least for a time. Their goal is not the apparent reproduction of reality, but rather to liberate the depicted reality from its usual temporal and semantic contexts and to give it meaning in new combinations. Not the copy of reality, but concepts of reality, in which an interpretation reveals itself to be only one of many possibilities. The option of retelling is rarely applicable to these forms of expression, and identifying the recognizable usually does not get one very far either. The viewer is forced to think about himself and his own experiences; only then does the pleasure of viewing emerge, albeit without any guarantee that the enigma will be completely revealed.

In one way or another, within the vortex of media conversion, whether as producers or as consumers, we are guinea pigs or beta testers of a process that is already underway. Unfortunately, in this situation contemporary art is often left holding the bag. While information technologies are generously subsidized and software engineers provide aesthetic guidelines to go along with their products, so to speak, there are no provisions for exploring the basics of medial experience, artistic creation and mediation. The artists whose work, whose contribution to the enrichment of our aesthetic and reflective experience and thought is supposed to be at stake are often degraded to producers of the environments or trends of the minute.

Today we are standing at the edge of the “worm hole”, the black hole which sucks up all the energy there is, stirring it up and rearranging it. Beyond the event horizon (the astronomical term for the boundary of the dimensions), an accepted category may turn out to be merely one among many possible ones which all have meaning and validity. Nam June Paik's prophetic aphorism from the year 1970 would be one such possibility: “The next is the direct connection of electrodes and braincells, which will lead to electronic Zen”. And this takes us to the dream which can take on whatever personal note is desired with the aid of technology. The only question left is, who will provide the software?

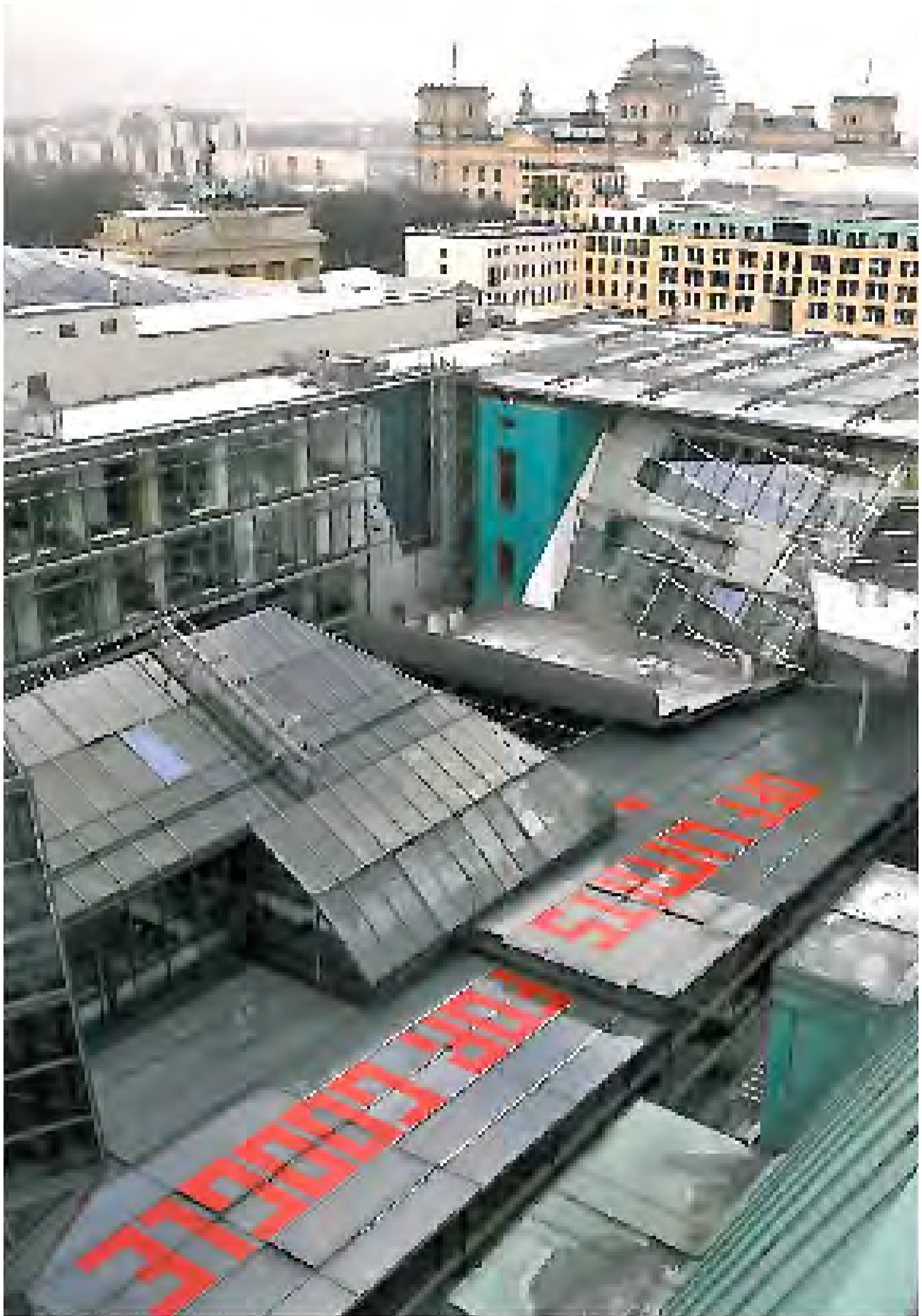
This software will come from the wealth that transcends money.

That is this city's capital!

www.daxl.org

www.strictly-berlin.de

“Strictly Berlin”



Zakopana umetnost / Embed art

Barbara Caveng, Berlin

Mesto ni nikoli dokonča



Berlin, 2007, C-print 70 x 110 cm,
Aludibond (photo Christian Reister)



Prihajaš iz Švice in sedaj že dvanajst let živiš v Berlinu. Kako čutiš Berlin kot umetnica? Ali je zate inspirativno mesto ali delaš v Berlinu zato, ker je svetovni center umetnosti?

Mislím, da gre za oboje. Po eni strani gre resnično za mesto inspiracije, gledano iz različnih zornih kotov. Je inspirativno, saj je v mestu sproducirane zelo veliko umetnosti. In spet po drugi strani; mesto je tako veliko, da človek potrebuje drugačno inspiracijo. Skratka, karkoli iščeš, boš našel v Berlinu. To je posebnost, glede na nemška mesta. Toda kot umetnik ne moreš eksistirati kot umetnik brez publicitete in vizibilnosti. Tukaj ima umetnik oboje, toda delo je zelo trdo. Pravzaprav sem imela srečo, saj sem po enem letu in pol srečala galerista, s katerim sem takoj začela delati. Sicer je bil zelo težavna oseba, toda bil je zelo poslovno usmerjen, delal na zares velikih projektih. Tako sem dobila priložnost delati na velikih projektih in to je bila točka, ko me je občinstvo začelo prepoznavati. In še danes me ljudje poznajo iz tistega obdobja.

Če govoriva o inspiraciji v Berlinu, kateri parametri inspiracije so zate najpomembnejši; ljudje, mesto kot center umetnosti ali energija mesta nasploh?

Zame je najpomembnejše dejstvo, da mesto ni nikoli dokončano. Je v večnem razvoju. To je zame izredno pomembno, saj me v nasprotnem primeru zagrabi nekakšna panika. Če imajo stvari definicijo, pomeni, da so takšne, kot so. Toda Berlin se vedno znova spreminja. Na primer, če te v določen predel ali ulico ni dva meseca in se ponovno znajdeš v tem predelu, je podoba lahko popolnoma drugačna. Večno se sprašujem; sem že sploh bila tukaj? Zgodilo se mi je že, da sem stopila iz hiše, se odpravila v predel, kjer sem živela deset let in se zgubila (smeh). Zame so take situacije inspirativne.

Ko sva se srečala na umetniškem dogodku Parahouse, si omenila, da se včasih počutiš "paralizirano" zaradi velikega števila umetnikov in inflacije umetnosti. Kako ubežiš tem občutkom in zaščitiš sebe in svojo umetniško identiteto?

Množica umetnikov je za posameznika v Berlinu lahko velika nevarnost. Resnica je, da veliko umetnikov ustvarja odlično produkcijo. Zame je to dobro, saj sem rada obdana z vrhunsko umetnostjo. Dejstvo pa je, da se vsi dejansko borimo. Ne gre le za boj za uspeh, je tudi borba za preživetje. To je star problem, ali je možno preživeti od umetnosti. Če izgubiš distanco, se lahko resnično zlomiš.

Kaj so tvoje strategije za ohranitev distance in preživetje na tem "bojišču"?

Verjamem, da je moje edino orožje moja umetnost. Delam, kar delam in ljudje imajo to radi ali pa tudi ne. Delam non-stop in večinoma grem v direktno smer. Gre za razmerje med potrpežljivostjo in nepotrpežljivostjo. Velikokrat se zgodi, da te oseba, ki si jo srečal včeraj, pokliče čez dve leti. Zato poskušam biti Buda.

Vsi vemo, da je Berlin eden od najpomembnejših globalnih trgov. Lahko nekaj poveš o vrednotenju umetnosti?

Zelo težko vprašanje. Veš, da moraš ustvarjati vrednost. Lahko rečem, da imam precej močno reputacijo, vendar v bistvu ne morem reči, kolikšna je vrednost moje umetnosti.

Kdo, po tvojem mnenju, diktira cene in vrednost umetnosti v Berlinu?

Galeristi delajo umetnike. Je pa težko, v smislu, en galerist oceni, da je nek umetniški kos vreden tisoč evrov, nakar greš do drugega galerista, ki pravi, da je potrebno dodati še eno ničlo. Kot na borzi. V Berlinu lahko zelo veliko razstavljaš, toda večina umetnikov ne proda niti enega kosa. Statistično



Berlin 2008, instalacija, material: artproduction & artpräsentation, 16 m2 (foto Christian Reister)
 Berlin 2008, installation, material from artproduction & artpräsentation, 16 sqm (photo Christian Reister)

gledano samo trije odstotki umetnikov živi od umetnosti.

Kaj pa dejstvo, da je zelo veliko tujih umetnikov dobrodošlih v Berlinu in včasih človek dobi občutek, da galerije bolj podpirajo tuje umetnike kot domače. Kako sama gledaš na to situacijo?

Absolutno pozitivno. Sama več razstavljam v drugih državah, mestih kot v Berlinu. Zame je Berlin neke vrste NLP. Zadnje večje razstave sem imela v Kirgistanu, Maastrichtu in v Španiji (Madrid).

Živiš od umetnosti?

Odvisno, kaj misliš pod "od umetnosti". Če gre le za prodajanje umetnosti, to ni mogoče. Nazadnje je bil eden od mojih kosov, kot del skupinske instalacije leta 2002, prodan na Islandijo za dosti denarja. Od tega izkupička sem živela celo leto. Zadnja leta sem naredila nekaj projektov popolnoma brez denarja. Pomembno je, da delam s časom. Nisem hitra ustvarjalka. Produkcija READY NOW (Pripravljeni zdaj) projekta je trajala več kot eno leto, non-stop. S tem mislim na nepotrpežljivost. Prisiljena sem začeti projekte tudi brez denarja. V realnem svetu potrebuješ denar ali pa nekoga, ki stoji za tabo. Ravno to je tako težko v Berlinu. Vedeti je treba, da le 20 galerij od 450 resnično prodaja umetnost. Te galerije predstavljajo trg umetnosti, ostale predstavljajo Berlin.

Se lahko dotakneva še vsebin tvojega dela?

Še posebej recikliranja materialov, kar je zelo značilno za tvoje delo.

Včasih sem delala na precej klasičnih instalacijah, toda leta 2005 sem se začela ukvarjati z bolj performativno umetnostjo. Ker sem govorila o READY NOW projektu, to je bil proces, ki je vključeval več kot 100 ljudi. Na koncu pa gre za en kos, ki ima močne komunikacijske karakteristike, gledano globalno, prav tako podaja informacijo, kaj pomeni komunikacija v nasprotju z medijem. V tem primeru, kateri je bil posledica vojne v Iraku, je bilo zame glavno vprašanje kulturna identiteta. Uporabila sem v medijih zelo pogosto objavljeno fotografijo letalonosilke Abraham Lincoln, s 500 vojaki na krovu, ki so stali v obliki besedne zveze "ready now". Zame je to grozljivo grda fotografija. Bilo je sporočilo predsedniku Bushu: "Pripravljeni smo napasti Irak". Povabila sem več kot sto ljudi v majhno stanovanje – kjer je bilo hkrati lahko največ

osem ljudi. Vsi ti ljudje, ki so bili z vseh koncev sveta, so skreirali preprogo, veliko 12 kvadratnih metrov, s fotografijo "ready now".



Originally, you are coming from Switzerland and now you are living in Berlin for twelve years. Do you find Berlin, as an artist, inspirational city or are you more here because Berlin is the centre of art business?

I think it is both. On one hand, it is really city of inspiration from the different points of view. It is inspiring because a lot of art is produced in the city, on the other hand, city is so big, that you need another kind of inspiration; whatever you are looking for, you will find it here. This is special, regarding from the point of Germany. But as an artist, you cannot exist as an artist without the publicity and visibility. So you have both, but you have to work very hard. Actually, I was very lucky because I was one and a half-year in Berlin when I meet the first gallerist and started to work with him. He was very difficult person but he was really in the business and he was working on big projects. So he gave the chance that I could realise big projects and that was the point when the audience recognized me. Still, people know me from that time.

If we talk about inspiration in Berlin, which parameters of inspiration are most important for you? People, city as artistic centre or general energy of the city?

For me personally is most important fact, that the city is never finished. It is always in progress. This is important for me, because otherwise I get some kind of panic. If things have a definition, that means that's how things are in any case. But Berlin is always changing. If you are not in certain area for two months and then you come to the area, the image can look very different. I ask myself frequently: have I ever been here? :) It also happened that I went out of the house in the area where I leaved for ten years and I lost myself. For me those situations are great and inspirational condition.

When we met on the Parahouse art event, you've told me that sometimes you fill paralysed

because of overload of art and artists. How you are escaping out of this filling to protect yourself and your artistic identity?

The number of artists in Berlin can also be a big danger for individual. The truth is that many artists are creating a very good art. However, this is very good for me, because I like to be surrounded with excellent art. Actually, everybody is really fitting. And it is not only for artistic success, it is also a fight for existence. This is very old problem is it possible to survive on art. But if you lose distance, than you can really break down.

What are your strategies to keep distance and to survive in this "battlefield"?

I really believe that my main weapon is my art! I do what I do and people can like it or not. I have to work non-stop and mostly I go direct way. It is a relationship of being patient and nonpatient. Many times people you've meet yesterday, make a phone call after two years. That's why I try to be Buddha.

We all know that Berlin is one of the most important global art markets. Can you say something about the value of art?

This is very difficult question. You know that you have to make the value. I would say, I have strong reputation, but actually, I cannot say what the value of my art is.

Who is creating prices and the value of art in Berlin in your opinion?

Actually, gallerists are making artists. But is heavy in the way that one gallerist says that this or that piece is worth one thousand euros and than you go to the other gallerist and he says we have to put one zero more. It is really like a stock. In Berlin, you can exhibit a lot but most of the artists never sell a piece at all. By the statistics, only 3% of artists are living out of art.

What about the fact that many foreign artists are welcome in Berlin and sometimes there is a feeling that galleries support foreign artists more than local. How do you see this situation as a local artist?

Absolutely positive. I have more exhibitions in other countries, cities than in Berlin. For me Berlin is a kind of UFO. Recently I had exhibitions in Kyrgyzstan, Maastricht and in Spain (Madrid).

Do you live out of art?

It depends what you mean "out of art". If it is only



Berlin, 2007, C-print 110 x 70 cm, Aludibond (photo Christian Reister)

art by selling it, it is not possible. Last time one of my pieces as a part of a big installation in 2002 was sold to Iceland and they had paid a lot of money. I was able to live out of it for one year. But in the last years, I did some projects totally without money. Important is, that I work with time. I'm not a fast producer. The production of READY NOW project last for more than one year, day by day. That is, what I ment inpatient. I just had to start to work even without money. But in real world you need money or somebody who stands behind you and this is so hard in Berlin. You have to know that only 20 galleries out of 450 are really selling art. Those galleries represent art market and others represent Berlin.

Let's touch a bit of the content of your work. Specially recycling of materials, which is very typical for your work.

I use to work on very classical gallery installations, but in 2005, I started more with performative art. As I mentioned READY NOW project, it was a process which involved more than 100 persons. But at the end, it is one piece, which has a strong communicative characteristics in global way and also information what means communication opposite to media. In this case which was caused by Iraq war the main question for me was focused on cultural identity. I took a photo, which was published in media very often, aircraft carrier Abraham Lincoln, with 500 soldiers standing in a

word structure "ready now". For me it is such an ugly photo. It was a message to President Bush "we are ready to attack Iraq". So I invited more than 100 people in a small flat. It was possible to invite max eight at the same time. All those people – they were coming from all over the world – created a carpet, 12 square meters with the photo "ready now".

Dejan Pestotnik

For further information look at:

www.b-r-a-c-e.net
www.kunstparkett.net
www.ready-now.net or
www.caveng.net (<http://www.caveng.net/>)

Maja Škerbot: Barbara je tipična berlinska umetnica. Dela v Berlinu in večinoma razstavlja drugje, v tujini, kjer je njena umetnost bolj znana.
Kako si spoznala Majo Škerbot?

Barbara Caveng: Spoznala sem jo preko svojega prejšnjega galerista. Delala je v galeriji DNA. Pogoji v galeriji DNA so takrat bili zelo težki, ljudje so se ves čas menjavali in zame je bila preprosto nov obraz. Z galeristom sva pila kavo, nakar se nama je pridružila. Delala sem na projektu, pri sebi sem imela letak, pogledala ga je in rekla: "To je odlično!"

Maja Škerbot: Bilo je celo več. Nisem vedela, da je delala z galeristom, s katerim sem tudi jaz začela delati. V tem obdobju se je DNA galerija transformirala v komercialno galerijo. Ravno zato je bila galerija zame zelo zanimiva. Po naključju sem našla letak I HAVE A DREAM nekaj tednov pred božičem, pobrala sem večje število letakov in jih uporabila kot božično voščilnico. V bistvu je bil to letak njenega umetniškega projekta. Torej sem imela priliko izraziti kompliment in tako sva začeli delati skupaj.

Maja Škerbot je bila kustodinja tvoje razstave v Sloveniji, v galeriji v Slovenj Gradcu. Nam lahko poveš kaj več o tej izkušnji?

Barbara Caveng: Bila je razstave TO LIVE (Živeti) leta 2003 in dve leti kasneje, v isti galeriji na razstavi THREAD (Nit). Maja je bila kustos obeh razstav. Delati v Slovenj Gradcu je bilo zame kul. Je tako majhno mesto, praktično z eno osrednjo ulico in bilo je kot v filmu. Bilo je fantastično. Umetniki smo prihajali iz Nemčije, Kanade, Japonske in drugih držav, ... in v tem majhnem mestu delali skupaj. Razstava je za nas bila priložnost, da smo dali direkten pečat celotnemu mestu Slovenj Gradec. Če delam v majhnem ali revnem mestu, organizatorji vedno znova poskušajo narediti moje življenje udobno, kolikor se le da. Ko sem se iz Slovenj Gradca vrnila v Berlin, sem se počutila bogatejšo.



Maja Škerbot: Barbara is a typical Berlin artist. Working in Berlin and mostly exhibiting abroad. Her art is more recognized abroad.

How did you meet Maja Škerbot?

Barbara Caveng: I meet her through my former gallerist. She was working in DNA gallery. Because the conditions in DNA were very difficult in that time, so people changed every time and simply first she was new for me. I had a coffee with my gallerist and she joined us. In that time I was working on the project I HAVE A DREAM. I had a card of this project with me; she looked at it and said "this is really great".

Maja Škerbot: It was even more. I did not know that she is working with the gallerist with whom I started to work. It was also period when this gallery was transforming its space to a commercial gallery. That's why the gallery was an interesting point for me. And by the coincidence, I found the card of I HAVE A DREAM few weeks before Christmas; I took bigger amount of them and use them as Christmas greeting cards. Actually, it was her art project. So I had the opportunity to express my compliment and that's how we started to work somehow.

You've been also exhibiting in Slovenia, Gallery of Slovenj Gradec. Maja Škerbot was the curator. Can you tell something about this experience?

Barbara Caveng: Yes, it was the exhibition TO LIVE in 2003 and two years later at the same gallery on the exhibition THREAD. Maja was curating both exhibitions. And to work in Slovenj Gradec for me was cool. It is such small city with almost only one street and it was like a movie. It was great. We were coming from Germany, Canada, Japan and other countries, and worked together in this small town. So the exhibition gave us opportunity that we had a direct impact on the city of Slovenj Gradec. If I work in small or poor countries, organizers always try to make your life there as comfortable as possible. When I came back from Slovenj Gradec, I felt richer.

Don Ritter, Berlin

Nekakšna perverzna

Kanadski intermedijski umetnik Don Ritter je pozoren opazovalec ljudi in družbenih trendov. Čeprav se je v štirih dneh v Mariboru komaj kdaj odmaknil od svojih elektronskih naprav, pravi, da mu najsodobnejša tehnologija, ki jo uporablja pri svojih postavitvah, v zadnjem obdobju služi le še kot orodje za posredovanje vsebine – razmišljanje in ugotovitev o zamotanosti človeških značajev. V Sloveniji je februarja letos v galeriji KiBela razstavljal prvič.

Kako ste izbrali dela za to razstavo? Kako jih običajno izbirate? Pri svoji instalaciji *Vox Populi* (Glas ljudstva) v določenih državah izpustite govor Adolfa Hitlerja.

Za to obstaja več dejavnikov. Eno je zanimanje kuratorja za določena dela in kakšne instalacije lahko umestim v razstavni prostor. Večina mojih instalacij ima zelo specifične tehnične in prostorske zahteve. Ni jih mogoče postaviti v katerikoli prostor. Naslednji dejavnik je denar; postavitve nekaterih instalacij je dražja zaradi količine tehnične opreme, ki jo mora zagotoviti galerist ali jaz sam. Delo, za katerega se je Peter (Peter Tomaž Dobrila, op. a.) sprva zanimal, je moje najnovejše in tudi najdražje delo, *Vested* (kar lahko pomeni biti oblečen v jopič, pa tudi biti pristranski; imeti pristranski pogled na stvar, op. a.). **Lani so se v razpravah znotraj našega teoretskega projekta "O" – refleksija umetnosti pojavila vprašanja o tem, kdo je umetnik, kdo je kurator, kdo je manager. Situacija je pogosto takšna, da mora umetnik, poleg tega, da je umetnik, biti še sam svoj manager, pa tudi producent. Kje so torej te ločnice? Imate managerja?**

Nimam managerja, imam pa prodajalca. Moj galerist je Jack the Pelican Presents v New Yorku. *Vox Populi* je bil tam prvič razstavljen leta 2004. Ves moj zaslužek iz umetnosti temelji na razstavljanju v muzejih in na festivalih, ne na prodaji. Redko razstavljam v zasebnih galerijah, ker so moje postavitve zanje večinoma prevelike. *Vested* na primer meri 19 x 12 metrov.

Lahko kaj poveste o tem projektu? Je nastal kot odziv na nekaj, kar se vam je zgodilo?

Pravzaprav gre za nekaj, s čimer se ukvarjam že leta, to je uporaba človeških tragedij kot sredstva zabave v medijih. Med gladiatorskimi boji v antičnem Rimu so ljudje za zabavo opazovali druge ljudi, ki so se pobijali med sabo. In prav zdaj opažamo podoben pojav v poročanju o vojni v Gazi. Video posnetki in fotografije ranjenih Palestincev pogosto niso primerni za novice. Gledati mater, ki drži s krvjo prepojenega otroka, po mojem mnenju ni primerno za novice, to je neke vrste sprevržena zabava.

V projektu *Vested* gledalci lahko delujejo kot samomorilski napadalci. Ko vstopite v instalacijo, zagledate 12-metrsko video projekcijo oblakov v visoki ločljivosti. Na eni strani sobe je vojaški brezrokavnik z vsemi vrstami naprednih, vendar uporabnih elektronskih naprav. V resnici je to sledilni sistem. Ko si nadenete brezrokavnik, ta sistem ve, kje v sobi se gibljete. Takoj ko se znajdete pred oblaki, se na projekciji pojavijo različne zgradbe. Na voljo je približno 70 različnih zgradb, vključno z nekaterimi najbolj znanimi umetnostnimi muzeji: newyorški muzej sodobne umetnosti MoMA, pariški center Georges Pompidou itd. Poleg tega so na voljo pomembne politične zgradbe: kanadski parlament, ameriški kapitol, londonski parlament. Če se oseba, ki nosi brezrokavnik, premakne v desno, se stavbe ob donečem zvoku premaknejo na levo. Če se oseba premakne v levo, se stavba premakne

v desno. Če se oseba premakne nazaj ali naprej, se zgradbe spremenijo v druge vrste stavb, na primer cerkve, tempelje, stolpe in starodavne zgradbe. Dva zelena žaromet sledita osebi v brezrokavniku in jo osvetljuje, ko se sprehaja po instalaciji. V sobi je tudi veliko video kamer in če oseba stoji manj kot 4 metre stran od projekcije, se njena glava in telo vidita na projekciji med panoramo stavb, osvetljena z zeleno barvo žarometov. Vse to je precej dramatično. Oseba z brezrokavnikom je v instalaciji okrepljena, zdi se, da je zelo pomembna. Na brezrokavniku je velik rdeč gumb. Če ta oseba pritisne rdeči gumb, projicirana panorama prikaže eksplozijo z dramatičnimi gobastimi oblaki in glasnimi eksplozivnimi zvoki. Kljub vsemu pa ljudje še vedno hodijo naokrog in pritiskajo na gumb, ker jih celotna situacija zelo zabava.

Ali obiskovalcem svojih razstav dajete navodila? Je kje navedeno, da je treba pritisniti na gumb?

Ne. Nobena moja instalacija, vključno z *Vox Populi*, nima nobenih navodil. Navodila zagotovi sama instalacija. V primeru *Vox Populi* navodila dejansko pridejo iz množice, vnaprej posnete publike, ki vpije: "Govor, govor!" Tako mi je bolj všeč; v resnici ne maram interaktivnih instalacij, ki potrebujejo napisana navodila, ker je s tem tehnologija preveč izpostavljena. Čeprav so vsa moja dela tehnično precej zapletena, je moj namen, da je tehnologija vedno podrejena etični refleksiji projekta. V resnici me precej bolj zanimajo ljudje in nenavadne stvari, ki jih počnemo eden z drugim, kot je na primer posedanje in opazovanje ljudi, ki se pobijajo med sabo, ali se boksajo v obraz in temu rečejo sport.

Rimski imperij ste primerjali z zahodno civilizacijo in njeno fascinacijo z nasiljem v medijih, ta spektakularen "resničnostni šov", v katerem lahko opazujemo žive nastope iz Iraka, Pakistana, Gaze... Med znanstveniki, filozofi in zgodovinarji je bilo veliko teoretskih razprav, veliko vzporednic je bilo potegnjenih med tema dvema civilizacijama. Kam torej mislite, da gremo, rimski imperij se je sesul od znotraj?

Moji komentarji se ne nanašajo na rimski imperij ali ameriški imperij, ampak na vse imperije. V Srednji Ameriki so pred tisočletji preko žrtvovanja ljudi počeli iste stvari. Prepričan sem, da se je mnogim Toltekom zdelo zabavno, ko so gledali, kako nekomu izrezujejo srce. Ne ukvarjam se z antičnimi Rimljani, Američani, Nemci, Slovenci, s komerkoli posebej. Mislim, da so si ljudje pravzaprav bolj podobni kot različni. V svojem delu se hočem dotikati človeštva, ne posameznih družb.

Bi torej lahko rekli, da preučujete človekovo naravo kot tako?

Da, in *Vox Populi* je namenjen premisleku, kako se milijarde ljudi prepuščajo peščici preostalih, da jih nadzorujejo. Kako so Adolf Hitler, Napoleon in George Bush lahko počeli to, kar so? Voditelji včasih počnejo stvari, ki so koristne za ljudi, včasih pa ne. Hitler je prepričal ljudi, da so izvajali grozotna dejanja, njegova zapuščina pa je še vedno prisotna. O tem govori *Vox Populi*: o vodenju.

Morda ste zasledili v časopisu: neki angleški založnik je pred kratkim začel izdajati nemške časopise *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* iz let 1933 do 1945. Prodajajo iste časopise, popolnoma iste, sedem časopisov, s popolnoma enako vsebino kot leta 1933. Glavna novica iz tega časa je, da je Marlene Dietrich pela na sprejemu za novinarje, Hitler je imel govor v nemškem parlamentu itd. In celotna naklada je bila razprodana v nekaj urah.

Isto se dogaja z mojo instalacijo *Vested*; ljudi zabava trpljenje, to je sadizem. Grozljive stvari, ki jih ljudje počnemo, so temeljito dokumentirane v medijih, ker ljudi očitno fascinirajo človeške tragedije. Še vedno ne vem, zakaj se to dogaja. Sam osebno nasprotujem nasilju v medijih, ker mislim, da ljudi spodbuja k nasilnemu vedenju v realnem življenju. V devetdesetih se je v New Yorku zgodil zločin, ki to dokazuje. Nekaj mesecev pred zločinom je bil na sporedu film "Zmeda na poštne vlaku". V filmu nek lik napade prodajalca vozovnic za podzemno železnico v neprebojnem kiosku. Skozi majhno odprtino, kjer si izmenjate denar in vozovnico, vbrizga vnetljivo tekočino in jo nato vžge, zaradi česa kiosk eksplodira, prodajalec vozovnic pa je ves v plamenih. Kmalu po tem, ko je bil film na sporedu, je to nekdo res naredil prodajalcu vozovnic v New Yorku. Zločinec je očitno videl film in pomislil: "O, kakšna dobra ideja".

In vi mislite, da je to vpliv medijev?

Da, to je vpliv medijev in o tem govori eden mojih največjih projektov sploh, knjiga z naslovom *The e Decision*. Leta 2003 sem začel pisati knjigo o estetiki novih medijev. Intervjuval sem mnoge kuratorje in ugotovil, da obstaja določena razlika med tem, kar se uradno dogaja v umetnosti in kaj se dejansko dogaja. Institucije in kuratorji javno govorijo določene stvari, ki pa se malo razlikujejo od resnične zgodbe, posebej glede njihovih razlogov za razstavljanje določenih del v svojih zavodih. Moj zaključek je, da vsi mediji, pa naj gre za tiskane medije, televizijo ali interaktivne instalacije, promovirajo določeno vrsto človeškega vedenja kot bolj primerno od drugih. Zato verjamem, da bodo ljudje še naprej nasilni in agresivni, dokler bodo medijske vsebine nasilne in agresivne. Ko sem raziskoval, sem hotel ugotoviti, zakaj obstajajo agresivni filmi in video igrice in zakaj so tako priljubljeni. Ugotovil sem, da so producenti takšnih vsebin ocenili, da ljudje hočejo gledati nasilje in so za to pripravljeni plačati. Zato obstaja. Producentom se spleča.

Obstaja teorija, da ljudje vedno hočemo vse ločevati na dva pola: "jaz" in "drugi". Če torej opazuješ "druge", ki se pobijajo med sabo, imaš dober občutek o "sebi".

Da, nekateri se počutijo dobro, močno in prijetno.

Ali poskušate svoje instalacije narediti prijetne za občinstvo? Ali vam je ljubše, da se publika na vaših instalacijah počuti vsaj malo neprijetno?

S svojim delom ne želim biti didaktičen. Nočem učiti ali predavati. V zadnjih petih letih sem se zavedel, da veliko mojih del odseva človeško moralo, tako se na primer *Vox Populi* nanaša na čudno nagnjenje ljudi, da se pustimo nadzorovati nekaj ljudem. Kar pa se tiče povzročanja nelagodja pri ljudeh, verjetno med mojimi instalacijami največ neugodja povzroča *Intersection* (Križišče). Ta zvočna postavitve je moje najpogostejše razstavljeno delo. Narejeno je bilo leta 1993 in mislim, da ga je od takrat doživelo 600.000 ljudi. Gre za prostor z merami 13 x 15 m, v katerem se v popolni temi srečate s štirimi zelo glasnimi linijami avtomobilskega prometa. Če se med hojo v temi znajdete pred avtomobilom, ki se vam približuje, ta škripajoče ustavi. Če se mu umaknete, avtomobil spet pospeši in nadaljuje svojo pot skozi prostor. Zdi se, da se na to instalacijo vsi odzivajo zelo čustveno. Nekaterim se zdi tako strašljiva, da ne morejo prehoditi instalacije, drugi pa se le smeji in se jim zdi zabavno.

Ko sem projekt *Intersection* razstavljal prvič, mi je neka ženska povedala, da je njen oče pred kratkim

Depota ...





Glas ljudstva / Vox populi

umrl v prometni nesreči, zato ni nobenih možnosti, da bi lahko šla skozi instalacijo. Morda tu ni šlo nujno za njen strah pred zvokom avtomobilov, ampak za njeno povezovanje avtomobilov s smrtjo njenega očeta. Hotel sem, da se to delo nanaša na strah, ne na avtomobile. Ljudje to instalacijo običajno imenujejo *Donovo avtomobilsko delo*, vendar se po mojem mnenju nanaša na strah pred neznanim. Ljudi je pogosto strah stvari, ki jih ne poznajo ali ne razumejo. Nekatere umetnike, kot na primer Damiena Hirsta, se obtožuje, da namenoma ustvarjajo provokativna dela in hočejo, da je ljudem neprijetno. Tega jaz nočem početi, čeprav so me pri delu *Vested* obtožili točno tega. Ko ljudje vidijo *Vested* z gromozanskimi eksplozijami v visoki ločljivosti, večina reče: "Kako lepo!" Prepričan sem, da je bilo v antičnem Rimu isto. Nekomu so odrezali glavo, kri je brizgala vsepovsod in ljudje so rekli: "O, kako lepo!" To je nenavaden koncept lepote.

Vendar jaz nočem vznemirjati ljudi. Za razliko od večine konceptualnih umetnikov se precej ukvarjam s formalnimi vidiki svojih del in njihovega videza. Zaradi tega so me včasih kritizirali. Številni kuratorji so mi dejali, da jih ne zanimajo dela, ki so lepa, da jih zanima samo koncept.

Že leta obiskujem festivale elektronske umetnosti in zadnje čase se mi je precej instalacij zdelo bolj predstavitev visoke tehnologije s podporo vsebine. Vendar mislim, da bi moralo biti ravno obratno; tehnologija bi morala podpirati vsebino. Za svojo knjigo sem to temo temeljito raziskal in moj sklep je, da so nekateri festivali novih medijev postali promocije za računalniška podjetja. Kadar pripravim javna predavanja in govorim o tem, je veliko novomedijskih umetnikov med publiko jeznih. Hočejo namreč verjeti, da so oni avantgarda in ne komercialisti. Po mojem mnenju obstajajo praktični razlogi, da se jih prepričuje, da so avantgarda. Študiral sem strojništvo in pet let sem profesionalno oblikoval telekomunikacijsko opremo za veliko korporacijo. Zelo dobro poznam industrijo visoke tehnologije in njihove strategije za povečevanje dobička. Mnoga visoko tehnološka podjetja, posebej Apple, so zelo uspešna v prikrivanju svojih strategij trženja. Apple je dolga leta razvijal idejo, da je uporabnik Applla bolj kul kot uporabnik Windowsov. V svojih reklamah nam kažejo uporabnika Applla kot trendi mladega tipa. Ko to vidim, si mislim, to je

trženje, zelo dobro trženje. Najboljše oglaševanje je tisto, ki ga publika ne prepozna kot oglaševanje. Mnogi mislijo, da se za mojimi instalacijami skriva zelo preprosta tehnologija, ker o njej ne govorim veliko, ne povzdiguem je. Dandanes me bolj zanima človečnost kot tehnologija.

Pred nekaj leti sem predaval v zelo pomembni instituciji za novomedijsko umetnost. Govoril sem o delu *Vox Populi*, ki je bilo takrat moje najnovejše. V govoru sem ga res izpostavljaj, pokazal sem njegovo dokumentacijo. Ko je bil čas za vprašanja, se je prvi oglasil neki profesor, ki je vprašal: "Kateri programski jezik ste uporabljali?" Odgovoril sem, vendar sem si oblikoval tudi določene zaključke o tej instituciji. Kadar ljudje govorijo o nekem umetniškem delu, mi njihov komentar pove, kaj se jim zdi pomembno. Če predstavljam instalacijo o vodenju in je prvo vprašanje povezano z uporabljenim programskim jezikom, sklepam, da so za to osebo programski jeziki zelo pomembni. Mislim, da je vprašanje tistega profesorja pokazalo, da je eden od namenov te institucije promovirati določene tehnologije, na primer specifične programske jezike. To je posebej očitno, če je odziv te osebe na moj odgovor naslednji: "Ne bi smeli uporabljati tega."

V poznih 80. letih sem razvil program za nadzor videa preko preko glasbe v živo. V tistem času sem uporabljal amigo, ker je bil to prvi računalnik, s katerim se je za precej malo denarja dalo delati digitalni video. Leta 1990 sem o tej programski opremi govoril na veliki konferenci v Los Angelesu. Pokazal sem nekaj svojih video kaset o uporabi in nekdo je vprašal: "Zakaj ne uporabljaš Macintosha?" Odgovoril sem: "Predvsem zato, ker tega ne zmore." Moški se je resno razjezil zaradi mojega odgovora in vztrajal pri tem, da bi to lahko naredil z Macintoshem. Meni je v resnici vseeno, kateri računalnik uporabljam. Uporabljam tehnologijo, ki bo za razumno ceno naredila, kar hočem. Apple je zelo uspešen pri oblikovanju pripadnosti med svojimi strankami. Apple je za mnoge ljudi kot religija. Takrat so bila moja zanimanja za interaktivni video dejansko zelo formalna; preučeval sem zaznavne odnose med zvokom in podobo: *Digestion* in *Badlands* (Presnova in Pustinja, dve deli Dona Ritterja, ki sta bili razstavljeni v Kibli poleg instalacije *Vox Populi*, op. a.) izhajata iz tega področja zanimanja. Nobeno od njiju ni niti malo politično, vendar pa sta tehnično v resnici povezani s projektom *Vox Populi*, ker vsa tri

dela temeljijo na isti programski opremi. *Vox Populi* je video množice ljudi, ki jo nadzira človeški glas, medtem ko gre pri *Digestion* in *Badlands* za video, ki ga nadzoruje glasba v živo.

Mislim, da je veliko novomedijske umetnosti danes promocija. Verjamem, da direktorji novomedijskih institucij to vedo, umetniki pa ne, ker tega nočejo verjeti. Nekdaj je bilo v tehnoloških podjetjih zelo običajno, da so umetnikom ponudili rezidence. Ko sem delal raziskave za svojo knjigo, sem takšna podjetja vprašal, zakaj vabijo umetnike, da se igrajo z njihovo tehnologijo. Ko sem novomedijske umetnike spraševal isto, je večina dogovorila: "Ker sem tako ustvarjal, da bom inženirjem pokazal, kako so lahko ustvarjalni s tehnologijo." In ko sem to povedal ljudem iz podjetij, so se samo smejali. Nekdo je dejal, da njihovo podjetje zaposluje 3000 najboljših računalniških inženirjev in programerjev v svetovnem merilu; res niso potrebovali umetnikov, da jim pokažejo, kako uporabljati tehnologijo. Rekli so mi, da umetnike vabijo iz promocijskih razlogov, da se zdi, kot da podjetje zanima kultura.

Vendar sem ugotovil, da umetniki vsega tega nočejo slišati in običajno rečejo, da so moje ugotovitve povsem napačne. Te in druge ugotovitve iz moje raziskave so leta 2004 vodile v spremembo glavne tematike knjige. Osrednje zanimanje knjige je tako postala razprava o funkciji medijev, o medijski pismenosti, o tem, kako se medije izrablja, da ljudje obdržijo svoja prepričanja in delujejo na način, ki nekomu drugemu prinese koristi. Steve Jobs, direktorja Applla, se v različnih novičarskih medijih pogosto predstavlja kot bog. Kar seveda ni, še vedno pa gre za dobro trženje.

Velja isto za Linux?

Koga sploh zanima, kateri operacijski sistem se uporablja na računalniku? Meni je vseeno, če je Mac ali Linux. Diplomiral sem na inštitutu MIT v Bostonu, ki se zelo posveča tehnologiji. Ko sem bil jaz tam, je vsak študent na MIT-u pisal programsko opremo. To je bilo v sredini osemdesetih in mnogi od teh študentov so o sebi govorili kot o sodobnih pesnikih. "Nikakršni pesniki niste," sem jim rekel, "saj pišete programsko opremo." Pet let sem delal na področju visoke tehnologije, pa se nismo imenovali pesniki, bili smo programerji, inženirji. Mislim, da je ideja o "programerju kot pesniku" preteza. Ko programerji delajo za velike računalniške korporacije, je povsem



Opasan / Vested

običajno, da na teden naberejo 25 nadur, vsaj meni se je to dogajalo. In kako podjetja svoje zaposlene pripravijo do tega, da to počenejo? Ne gre samo za plačane nadure. Podjetja programerje prepričajo, da so pesniki; s tem jim zagotovijo privlačno podobo o sebi. Zdaj najbrž razumete, zakaj me novomedijske institucije po takšnih opazkah ne vabijo več, vendar sem popolnoma prepričan, da so moji zaključki pravi. Sprva nisem hotel, da bi bili resnični, vendar se zdi, da je tako.

Vodilni nočejo, da se vmešavaš v njihovo strategijo, jim uničiš pravljico.

Tu govorimo o industriji, ki je vredna milijarde dolarjev. Na splošno ljudje nočejo verjeti tistega, za kar nočejo, da bi bilo res. Če delam na nekem področju, naj bo umetnost ali inženiring, hočem vedeti, kdaj me izkoriščajo. Nekateri ljudje tega očitno nočejo. Bolj zabavno je verjeti, da je elektronski umetnik avantgarda. Mislim, da bi to lahko tudi bilo res, vendar se zaenkrat žal ne dogaja.

Odkar sem spremenil pogled na novomedijsko umetnost in o tem javno govorim, precej več razstavljam v galerijah za sodobno umetnost kot za novomedijsko. Tam jim je vseeno, če je Macintosh ali PC, če je Maxim SP ali DV video. Zdi se, da so zavodi za likovno umetnost precej bolj odprti za tehnologijo kot novomedijske institucije, ker jim je vseeno, kakšno tehnologijo uporabljam.

Ste iz Kanade, vendar trenutno živite v Berlinu. Slišal sem, da se želite za stalno preseliti v Berlin.

Pravzaprav v Kanadi nisem živel že veliko let. 13 let sem živel v ZDA. Preden sem se preselil v Berlin, sem 17 let imel službo rednega profesorja, najprej v Montrealu in nato v New Yorku. V Berlin sem se preselil leta 2006.

Zakaj Berlin? To mesto je nekako stalno na robu. Obstaja neke vrste pregovor, ki gre takole: "Tako smo revni, ampak to je tako prekleto seksi." Kaj je to z Berlinom?

V zadnjih nekaj letih se je mnogo Američanov in Kanadčanov preselilo v Berlin, ker naj bi bil "kulturna prestolnica sveta". Poznam pa nemškega kuratorja, ki se ob tem le nasmehne in reče: "Poznamo pravi razlog, in to so poceni najemnine." To je prednost revnega mesta, poceni je živeti v njem. London, Berlin in New York so danes za umetnika verjetno najbolj živahna mesta. London in New York pa sta izjemno dragi mesti. Moje stanovanje v Berlinu meri približno 300

kvadratnih metrov. Na Manhattanu to pomeni mesečno najemnino v višini 10.000 dolarjev. V Berlinu je 1.000 dolarjev. Veliko Berlinčanov bi reklo, da je to drago, če pridete iz New Yorka, pa ni.

Celo v Ljubljani bi bilo to vsaj 2.000 evrov.

Eden od glavnih razlogov, da želim ostati v Berlinu, je kulturna prefinjenost tega mesta in te države. Ko sem leta 2003 v Nemčiji raziskoval za svojo knjigo, sem srečal veliko Nemcev, ki jih je moje delo zanimalo. Z njimi cele ure res zanimivo pogovarjal o vsebini knjige. Ko sem v bil Kanadi ali ZDA in sem omenil svojo knjigo, so ljudje običajno povprašali po založniku knjige ali številu strani. In ko sem jim povedal, da bo govorila o estetiki in novih medijih, so največkrat vprašali po naslovu knjige, ne pa po njeni vsebini. Zavedel sem se, da je to odsev razlik v vrednostnem sistemu, da obstaja povezava med etiko in estetiko. V Evropi sta kultura in intelektualizem bolj pomembna za večji odstotek prebivalstva. V ZDA te stvari zanimajo samo nekaj ljudi, večinoma na univerzitetnih oddelkih za filozofijo in likovno umetnost ter ljudi, ki delajo v umetnosti in kulturi. V Berlinu komaj poznam koga, ki se ne ukvarja z umetnostjo. Tam je ogromno umetnikov. Zelo navdihujoče mesto je, čeprav se mi zdi nemški značaj zelo resen. V Nemčiji se le redko povezuje humor in intelektualizem, ali pa sploh ne. Veliko mojih del ima v sebi precej humorja. Sicer je to prikrit humor, pa vseeno. Preveč resnosti se mi zdi zelo izčrpavajoče.



The Canadian intermedia artist Don Ritter is a careful observer of people and social trends. Although during his four-day stay in Maribor he hardly ever moved away from his electronic devices, he says that recently the state-of-the-art technology he uses in his installations has been to him only a tool for transferring contents – considerations and findings on the complexity of human natures. In February this year his first Slovenian exhibition was staged in KiBela.

How did you choose the works for this exhibition? How do you normally choose them? In your Vox Populi installation you leave out the speech by Adolf Hitler in certain countries.

There are a number of factors. One is the curator's interest in certain works and which installations can be accommodated by the exhibition space. Most of my

installations have very specific technical and ambient requirements. They cannot be set up in any room.

The other factor is cost. Some of my installations are more expensive to set up because of the amount of equipment that must be provided by the exhibitor or myself. The piece that Peter (Peter Tomaž Dobrila, AN) was initially interested in was my recent and most expensive installation, *Vested*. (*Vested* can mean carrying a vest or be partial; have a one-sided view of things; AN)

There were questions last year on the debates of our theoretical programme Art reflection "On" about who is the artist, who is the curator, who is manager. The situation is often such that the artist, besides being an artist, also has to be his or her own manager, as well as a producer. So where are the lines? Do you have a manager?

No, I don't have a manager, but I have a dealer. My gallery is *Jack the Pelican Presents* in New York City. *Vox Populi* was first exhibited there in 2004. All of my art income comes from exhibiting in museums or festivals, rather than through sales. I rarely exhibit in private galleries because my installations are usually too large to be accommodated. *Vested* is 19 x 12 meters.

Can you explain a bit about that project? Was it a reaction to something that happened to you?

It's something I've been concerned with for many years, the media's use of human tragedy as entertainment. During the gladiator events of Ancient Rome, people watched other people kill each other as entertainment. And right now, we're seeing a similar phenomenon within the news coverage of the war in the Gaza Strip. The video and photo coverage of the injured Palestinians are beyond newsworthy. To see a mother holding her child covered in blood is not newsworthy, it's some kind of twisted entertainment. In *Vested*, the audience gets to act like a suicide bomber. When you walk into the installation, you see a 12-meter, high definition video projection of clouds. On one end of the room is a military vest containing funky, but functional electronics. This is a tracking system. The system knows where you are in the room after you put on the vest. As soon as you walk in front of the clouds, the projection transforms into buildings. There are about seventy different buildings within *Vested*, including some of the best known art museums: The Museum of Modern Art in New York,



The Georges Pompidou Centre in Paris, etc. There are also important political buildings: the Parliament Building of Canada, the US Capital Building, and the London House of Parliament. If the person wearing the vest moves to the right, the buildings move to the left with a rumbling sound. If the person moves to the left, the building moves to the right. If the person moves backwards or forwards, the buildings will transform into others types of buildings, including churches, temples, towers, and ancient buildings. There are two green spotlights that follow and illuminate the vested person as he walks within the installation. There are also many video cameras in the room, and if the person stands within four meters of the projection, the person's head and body are displayed within the panorama of the buildings, bathed in green light from the spotlights. It's very dramatic. The vested person is being aggrandized within the installation, is being made to appear important. On the vest, there's a large red button. If the person presses the red button, the video panorama depicts everything exploding with dramatic mushroom clouds and loud explosion sounds. And what happens is that people just keep walking around and pressing the button, being entertained by the whole situation.

Do you give directions to the visitors of your exhibitions? Is it stated somewhere that one has to press the button?

No. In all of my installations, including *Vox Populi*, there are no instructions. The instructions come from the installations themselves. In *Vox Populi*, the instructions come from the crowd, the pre-recorded public that chants "speech, speech!" I prefer it this way. I don't like interactive installations that require written instructions because that puts too much emphasis on the technology. Even though all of my works are technically complicated, I intend to make their technologies secondary to their ethical reflection. I'm really much more interested in humans and the peculiar things we do to each other, such as sitting around and watching people kill each other, or watching people punch each other in the face and calling it sports.

You compared the Roman Empire with western civilisation and its fascination with violence in the media, this spectacular "reality show" where we can watch live performances from Iraq, Pakistan, Gaza, and so on. According to scientists, philosophers, and historians, there were lots of theoretical discussions, parallels made between these two civilisations. So where do you think we're going, the Roman Empire collapsed from the inside?

I'm not commenting about the Roman Empire or the American Empire, but about all empires. In Mesoamerica, they were doing the same thing a thousand years ago through human sacrifices. I'm sure that many Toltecs back then found it entertaining to watch someone's heart being ripped out. I don't look at the Ancient Romans, the Americans, the Germans, the Slovenians, whoever, as being separate. I think people are more similar than they are different. I want to reflect humanity in my work, not a specific society.

So you could say you're studying human nature in general?

Yes, and *Vox Populi* is meant to reflect how billions of people let themselves be controlled by a handful of others. How did Adolf Hitler, Napoleon, and George Bush do the things they did? Leaders sometimes carry out acts that are useful to people, but sometimes they don't. Hitler persuaded people to carry out atrocious

acts, and his legacy still exists today. This is what *Vox Populi* is about: leadership.

Maybe you've read in the newspapers: an English publisher has recently started publishing the German newspaper, the *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* from 1933 to 1945. They are selling the same newspapers, exactly the same newspapers, seven of them, with the exact same content as in 1933. The top news at that time was Marlene Dietrich singing at a journalist reception, Hitler giving a speech in front of the German parliament etc. And the complete issue was sold out in a few hours.

It is the same thing that comes up in my *Vested* installation; people are entertained by suffering, with sadism. The horrible acts that humans do are well documented in the media because people are apparently fascinated with human tragedy. I still don't know why that is. I am personally opposed to violence in media because I think it causes people to do act violently in real life. There was a crime performed in New York City in the mid-nineties that demonstrates this. A few months before the crime, a commercial film was released called "Money Train". The film had a character in the film that attacked a subway ticket-seller in his bullet-proof booth. The character squirted a flammable liquid through the small opening in the booth where the money and ticket are exchanged and then ignited it, causing the booth to explode and the ticket-seller to be covered in flames. Shortly after the film was released, someone actually did this to a ticket-seller in New York. The criminals supposedly saw the film and thought, "Oh, what a good idea!"

And you think that is the influence of media?

Yes, this is the influence of media, and this topic is the focus of my largest projects ever, a book called *The e Decision*. In 2003, I started writing a book about the aesthetics of new media. I interviewed many curators and discovered a difference between what is officially happening in the art world and what is actually happening. There are certain comments that art institutions and curators will say publicly that are different from the true story, especially their reasons for exhibiting certain works at their institutions. My conclusion is that all media, regardless of it being print, television or interactive installations, are promoting certain types of human behaviour to be more appropriate than others. I believe that people will continue to act violently and aggressively as long as media content is aggressive and violent. When I was researching, I wanted to determine why these aggressive films and video games exist, and why they are so popular. I learned that the producers of this content have determined that many people like to watch violence and are willing to pay for it. That's is why it exists. It makes money for the producers.

One theory is that people always want to separate things on two poles: "me" and "the other". So if you are looking at 'the others' killing each other, you have a good feeling about "me".

Yes, it makes some people feel good, strong, and nice.

Do you try to make your installations comfortable for the audience? Or do you, on the other hand, want the audience of your installations to feel a little uncomfortable?

I'm not trying to be didactic through my work. I'm not trying to teach or lecture. I realised over the past five years that many of my works reflect human morals, such as *Vox Populi* reflecting this odd human tendency to let ourselves be controlled by a few people. As for

making people uncomfortable, the installation that probably causes the most discomfort is *Intersection*. This sound installation is my most widely exhibited work. It was made in 1993, and I believe 600,000 people have experienced it since then. *Intersection* is a 13 x 15 m space where you encounter four lines of loud traffic in complete darkness. If you find yourself in front of an approaching car as you walk through the darkness, the sound of a car screeches to a halt. If you move away, the car accelerates and continues across the room. Everyone seems to respond to *Intersection* in a very emotional manner. Some people find it so frightening that they can't walk through the installation, while others just laugh and find it funny. When *Intersection* was first exhibited, one woman told me that her father was killed a week before in a car accident, and there was no way she could walk through the installation. This was not necessarily due to her fear of the car sounds, but her association of cars with the death of her father. I meant this piece to be about fear, not about cars. People usually call this installation "Don's car piece," but for me it's about fear of the unknown. People are often afraid of things they don't know or understand.

Some artists, like Damien Hirst, have been accused of purposely creating works to provoke people, to make them uncomfortable. I don't want to do that, though I've been accused of it with *Vested*. When people see *Vested* and its enormous explosions in high definition, most say, "This is beautiful!" I'm sure it was the same in ancient Rome, someone's head would be cut off with lots of gushing blood and people would say, "Oh, its beautiful!" It's a strange concept of beauty.

But I'm not trying to provoke people. Compared to a lot of conceptual artists, I'm very concerned with the formal aspects of my work, what it looks like. I've sometimes been criticised for that. Some curators have told me that they don't like works that are beautiful, that they're only interested in the concept of a work.

I've been visiting electronic art festivals for many years, and some installations at recent festivals seem like demonstrations of high technologies that are supported with content. I think it should be the other way around, the technology should support the content.

I've done a lot of research on that topic for my book, and my conclusion is that some new media festivals have become promotions for computer companies. When I make public presentations and talk about this, many new media artists in the audience become angry. They want to believe that they are the avant-garde, that they are not salespersons. I think there is a practical reason for them being told that they are the avant-garde. I studied engineering and I spent five years designing telecommunications equipment for a large corporation. I am familiar with the high technology industry and their strategies for maximizing profit. Many of these high tech companies, especially, Apple, are very good at disguising their marketing strategies. For many years, Apple has been developing an image of the Apple user as being cooler than the Windows user. In their advertising, they present the Apple user as a hip, young guy. I look at that and see marketing, good marketing. The best advertising is that which is not recognized by an audience as advertising.

Many people think the technology behind my installations is very simple because I don't talk about it, I don't glamorise it. Nowadays, I'm more concerned with humanity than technology.

I gave a lecture a few years ago at an important institution for new media art. I spoke about *Vox Populi*, my newest installation at the time. I emphasised this installation in my talk and showed its documentation. The first question during the question period was from a professor who asked, "What programming language did you use?" I answered the question, but I also made certain conclusions about that institution. When people talk about an artwork, their comments or questions tell me what is important to them. If I am showing an installation about leadership and a person's first question is about its programming language, then I assume programming languages are very important for that person. I think this professor's question demonstrated that one purpose of this institution is to promote certain technologies, such as specific programming languages. This is especially evident if the person's response to my answer is, "You should not be using that one."

In the late 1980s, I developed software for controlling video through live music. At that time, I was using an Amiga computer because it was the first computer that could work with digital video at a relatively low cost. I spoke about this software in 1990 at a large conference in Los Angeles. I showed videotapes of it being used, and during the question period someone from the audience asked, "Why aren't you using a Macintosh?" I replied, "The main reason is because it can't do it." The guy got really angry from my response, and insisted that a Macintosh could do it. It really makes no difference to me which computer I use. I use the technology that can do what I want for a reasonable cost. Apple has been very successful in creating loyalty among its customers. Apple is like a religion for many people.

My interest with interactive video at that time was actually very formal; I was exploring the perceptual relationships between sound and image. *Digestion* and *Badlands* (the other two of Don Ritter's pieces that were exhibited in Kibla alongside *Vox Populi*) come from that area of interest. There is absolutely nothing political about either of these works, but they have a technical relationship with *Vox Populi* because all three works use the same software. *Vox Populi* presents video of a crowd of people controlled by human voice, while *Digestion* and *Badlands* are video controlled by live music.

I think a lot of new media art has become promotion. I believe the directors of new media institutions know this, but the artists don't because they don't want to believe it. At one time, it was common for high technology companies to offer residencies to artists. When I was doing research for this book, I asked these companies why they were inviting artists to play with their technology. When I asked new media artists this same question, most replied, "Because I am very creative, I'm going to show their engineers how to be creative with the technology." When I told that to people from these companies, they just laughed. One person said that their company employed 3000 of the best computer programmers and engineers in the world; they did not need artists to show them how to use technology. She said they were bringing in artists for PR reasons: it makes the company appear interested in culture. I learned that artists don't want to hear that answer, and they usually say my findings are completely wrong. This and other findings from my research led to a change in 2004 on the primary topic of the book. The book's focus became a discussion on the function of media, on media literacy, about how media are used to make people hold beliefs and act in ways that are advantageous to someone else. Steve Jobs, the CEO of Apple, is often presented as a god in various news media. Evidently he is not, but it's still good marketing.

It is the same with Linux?

Who cares which operating system is used in a computer? I don't care whether it's Mac or Linux. My graduate degree is from MIT (Massachusetts Institute of Technology) in Boston, a university that is focused on technology. When I was there, practically every student at MIT wrote software. This was in the mid-eighties, and many of these students were talking about themselves as being modern poets. "You're not poets," I said, "You're writing software." I had worked professionally in high technology for five years and we didn't call ourselves poets, we were programmers and engineers. I think the idea of "programmer as poet" is spin. When programmers work for large computer corporations, it is common for them to work 25 hours of overtime per week, at least I did. How do companies

get their employees to do this? It's not just the overtime salary. These companies make programmers believe that they are poets; they give them an image of themselves that is desirable. I think you understand why new media institutions don't invite me back after I make comments like this, but I'm certain these conclusions are true. Initially, I didn't want them to be true, but this is the way it seems to be.

The big ones don't want you to mess with their strategy, ruin their fairytale.

Exactly. We are talking about a multi-billion dollar industry. In general, people don't believe what they don't want to be true. If I'm working in a field, whether it's art or engineering, I want to know when I'm being taken advantage of. Apparently, some people don't. It is more fun to believe that the electronic artist is the avant-garde artist. I think it is possible for this to be true, to be the avant-garde, but that is not what's happening.

Since I've adopted this perspective about new media art and have been stating it publicly, I've been exhibiting more often in venues focused on contemporary rather than new media art. These places don't care whether it's a Macintosh or a PC, whether it's Max or DV video. These fine art intuitions seem more open to technology than new media intuitions because they don't care which technology I use.

You are from Canada but currently living in Berlin. I've heard that you want to live in Berlin permanently.

I haven't lived in Canada for many years, and I lived in the USA for 13 years. I was a full-time professor for 17 years before I moved to Berlin, first in Montreal and then in New York City. I moved to Berlin in 2006.

Why Berlin? The city is kind of on the edge all the time, they have a saying that goes: "We are so poor but it's so fucking sexy". What is it about Berlin?

A lot of Canadian and American artists have moved to Berlin over the past few years, saying that it is the "cultural capital of the world." I know one German curator who just smiles and says, "We know the real reason, and it's the cheap rent." That is the advantage of a poor city; it is inexpensive to live there. London, Berlin and New York are probably the most active cities for artists today, but London and New York are very expensive. My apartment in Berlin is about 300 square meters. In Manhattan, that would cost \$10,000 rent a month, but it is 1,000 € in Berlin. Many Berliners would say that's expensive, but it's not if you are from New York.

Even in Ljubljana, it would be at least 2,000 €.

One of the main reasons that I want to remain in Berlin is the cultural sophistication of this city, and of this country. When I was in Germany in 2003 doing research for my book, I met a lot of Germans who wanted to know about the work. I had many interesting discussions for hours on the book's contents. But when I was in Canada or the US and mentioned my book, people usually asked about the book's publisher or the number pages. And when I told them it was about aesthetics and new media, they would ask about the book's title, but not about its contents. I realised this was a reflection of different value systems, that there was a relationship between ethics and aesthetics.

In Europe, culture and intellectualism are more important to a large percentage of the population. In the US, these topics are important to relatively few people, mostly to people within university departments dealing with philosophy or art, and to people working in arts and culture. I hardly know anyone in Berlin who is not working in the arts. There are many artists there. It's a very inspiring city, although I find the German personality to be very serious. Humour and intellectualism are rarely, if ever, combined in Germany. Many of my works have a lot of humour in them. It is a dry humour, but it's there. I find too much seriousness to be exhausting.

Nika Logar, Dejan Pestotnik

Vox populi (glas ljudstva)

interaktivna video in zvočna instalacija, 2005

V video projicirana množica 28 ljudi kliče "speech, speech" (govor, govor) in spodbuja obiskovalce, da spregovorijo z govorniškega pulsta, opremljenega z mikrofonom in teleprompterjem, ki prikazuje besedila zgodovinskih političnih govorov. Ko obiskovalec posreduje govor preko mikrofona in s tem prevzame vlogo voditelja, se na teleprompterju vrtil besedilo, množica pa se odziva z različnimi stopnjami sovražnosti, podpore ali posmeha. Govor voditelja je v velikem zvočnem sistemu pomešan s kričanjem množice. Sama instalacija ne vsebuje nobenih namigov, da govori na teleprompterju pripadajo vplivnim voditeljem, kot so John F. Kennedy, Martin Luther King Jr. in George W. Bush.

Digestion (prebava)

interaktivna video in zvočna instalacija ali performans, 2003

Prebava vključuje organske podobe – na začetku kot vreča voda – ki se interaktivno transformira v niz mehanskih gibov z usklajeno zvočno podlago. Gledalcem je predstavljena abstraktna izkušnja večkanalnih podob pod nadzorom zvoka. Nepredvidljiva narava dela zagotavlja notranjo interaktivnost, ki jo publika lahko opazi, ne more pa je nadzirati.

Badlands (pustinja)

interaktivna video in zvočna instalacija ali performans, 2003

Obdelane podobe kanadskega težko prehodnega sveta po imenu badlands (pustinja) nadzoruje in prilagaja živa glasba. Računalniška analiza, ki jo izvaja glasba, nadzoruje izbor posnetkov, hitrost in fotografske značilnosti posnetkov.



Vox populi

interactive video and sound installation, 2005

A video projected crowd of 28 people yells "speech, speech" and encourages visitors to speak from a lectern equipped with a microphone and a teleprompter that displays the text of historical political speeches. When a visitor assumes the role of leader by delivering a speech through the microphone, the text scrolls on the teleprompter, the crowd responds with varying degrees of hostility, support or ridicule, and the leader's speech is mixed with the screaming of the crowd through a large sound system. There are no indications within the installation that the speeches on the teleprompter are from influential leaders, including John F. Kennedy, Martin Luther King Jr, and George W. Bush.

Digestion

interactive video and sound installation or performance, 2003

Digestion presents organic imagery – originating as boiling water – that is interactively transformed into a series of mechanical movements with synchronized sound. Viewers are presented with an abstract experience of multi-channel imagery that is controlled by sound. The unpredictable nature of the work provides an internal interactivity, which can be observed by an audience, but not controlled by them.

Badlands

interactive video and sound installation or performance, 2003

Processed imagery of the Canadian Badlands is controlled and manipulated by live music. A computer analysis of the music controls clip selection, tempo and cinematic features of the video.

