

BIOGRAPHY

Website



Nika Oblak & Primož Novak have worked as a tandem in the field of contemporary art since 2003. Their artistic practice explores modern society under the influence of media and capitalism, presenting its visual and linguistic structures in detail. Their work has been exhibited at major contemporary art venues worldwide, including the Sharjah Biennial (UAE), Japan Media Arts Festival (JP), Istanbul Biennial (TR), Biennale Cuvee in Linz (AT), Transmediale in Berlin (DE), and FILE in São Paulo (BR). They have received numerous scholarships and awards, including the CYNETART Award from the Trans-Media-Akademie Hellerau in Dresden (DE).

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Nika Oblak & Primož Novak

AND NOW FOR SOMETHING COMPLETELY DIFFERENT 18

12 December 2025–17 January 2026

MMC KIBLA/KiBela, Ulica kneza Koclja 9, Maribor

Opening hours: Monday to Friday from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., Saturday from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

KIBELA

Nika Oblak & Primož Novak AND NOW FOR SOMETHING COMPLETELY DIFFERENT 18

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Nika Oblak & Primož Novak are a rare and distinctive artistic duo who have been active since 2003, creating a highly original body of work that stands out on the global stage. Their work draws on a wide range of cultural references, including the legacy of Monty Python, from which the title of this long-running series is borrowed, now presented in its eighteenth iteration. They maintain the continuity of the “genre,” satirizing the trendiness of new and contemporary media as well as conceptual art, which often replaces the emptied artistic quality with endless chatter about what a work is supposedly meant to “say,” instead of allowing art to speak for itself. Clever verbiage seems unavoidable, as little or nothing would remain of the “work” – meant entirely conceptually – after all the highbrow posturing, which is often for the better.

It is true, however, that one must first look within and reflect deeply on the reality in which one lives. Is it a media-driven, virtual, digital, manipulated, and manipulative reality, or a real, genuine, analog, intellectual, and heartfelt one? The insight may be unsettling, yet it marks only the beginning, as the remainder of the journey must be undertaken individually. This is precisely the approach taken by the artistic duo, who presented their first solo exhibition at KIBLA in 2007 with the cycle *Teamwork 3*. A subsequent presentation followed in 2017, marking the fifteenth anniversary of their practice, with *And Now for Something Completely Different 8*. The third, and for the time being final, installment of the series, *And Now for Something Completely Different 18*, is presented this year, eight years later. Since their formation in 2003 and up to the present year, 2025, they have participated in numerous group exhibitions at KIBLA, at the KIBLIX Festival and in international presentations co-organized by KIBLA, a trajectory that is set to continue.

Their video installations are silent: they do not speak but instead show, exhibit, and perform as testers of their own inventions, thus advertising them as well, although I doubt their actions persuade anyone to buy. Still, we laugh and wonder how they approached a particular piece and how they realized it. Without a look behind the scenes, it is hard to imagine how many plans had to be prepared and what physical constructions had to be assembled and set up for the chosen idea to be realized. Our eyes see only the materialized action, driven by banal everyday situations or traditional wisdom from which they draw their creative impulses, twisting these through literal citation into their opposite. Once laid bare before us, these actions are stripped of their historical connotations and left without meaning. They become meaningless.

By distorting reality, Nika and Primož also take on pedagogical and parental roles. On one hand, they teach the audience that clinging to canonized imperatives and singular truths leads to a cyclical routine that traps us, first confining us to cages within our own minds until it becomes a habit and a voluntary prison, of which many remain unaware. As they hold up a mirror to adults, they simultaneously educate children by exposing the absurdities that shape human lives and warning them not to repeat these patterns. It is as if they wanted to emphasize in a trailer before

the actual film: “Warning! Do not try this at home!” Or anywhere else. If old habits die hard, then self-evidence is foolish, and literalness can be funny when the artists approach it with their distinct artistic code, which, over decades of work, has become their hallmark. Confronted with what they present, we are both amazed and entertained.

The simple setup of the works draws us in with its purity of form, enchants us with the minimal color palette, and mesmerizes us with its content. Although we cannot predict what their next masterpiece will be, we know we will again receive a story, and we can be certain that we will first be astonished and then entertained until we reach a catharsis and “look truth in the eye.” We may then discover that we recognize when a thought loses its meaning. When that happens, we are ready for the next installment in their series, for the continuation of the lesson in the pedagogical process of knowing life by knowing ourselves on the way to the next healing. When insight is added, we can set out on a journey to grasp memory and search for the primordial memory that nourishes our ego with smugly confident certainty in something that, apart from the media, perhaps does not exist at all.

While Nika Oblak and Primož Novak greet us with a “welcome to our film”, we must recognize that the film also belongs to the observer. In truth, it is not just a film but Life itself, which they present through simple, sensitively aestheticized, and superbly rendered croquis that exist within all of us. What transforms these into a story is their work as an artist duo, tirelessly reminding us that we too compose our own stories. What those stories become depends above all on us, for they cannot be provided by the state, parties, faith, or democracy – we can write them only ourselves. In promoting art, they speak on behalf of life, which is the core of their oeuvre, metaphorically enacted by the media as imitators of the living – programmed manipulators and thus replicants.

Nika and Primož essentially create their own film throughout their entire practice, performing and taking on all roles themselves. This is most evident in their frame-by-frame, visually reconstructed version of the original trailer for the film *Pulp Fiction*, which they titled *Shund* in 2008. They produced the entire trailer in the studio using a green screen and simple props such as toy cars, toy guns, cardboard, and paper. The scene backgrounds are photo collages. In this fictional, non-existent film, they transform themselves into invented superstars, although they are already stars within their own works, videos, photographs, and installations. However, given their “artistic play”, they might more accurately be described as anti-stars, as their actions, activities, and banners analyze and dissect the strangeness of our everyday lives and behaviors, as well as eternal truths, statements, and proverbs, which they either subvert directly through language or address indirectly in videos that are actually their performances – or they simply wear T-shirts bearing the slogan “THIS IS A PERFORMANCE”, and we are already there.

All of their works are created independently, from the initial conception and consideration of method and medium to the construction required for execution. They also handle the filming, editing, presentation, and installation themselves. Their practice is conceived as a holistic process, carefully structured through various procedures in which reality is transformed into fiction when its imperatives are taken literally, or into irony when fiction becomes reality. By playing with the fluidity of perception and the inversion of statements, their work “subverts” the hero into an anti-hero and action into anti-action. Despite the seriousness of execution and the evident effort involved, these gestures become humorous and bizarre, extreme yet cautionary, pedagogical and admonitory, exposing what happens when reality is treated literally as prescription, dogma, axiom, ideology, or rule.

The screens displaying their works are therefore not merely “frames” for films or images, but are

often the result of actions or performances for which the “traditional rectangle” is too restrictive. They expand the screen beyond its basic form and technologically enhance it, transforming a static format into a kinetic one. The screen tilts, rotates, moves through space, is sometimes augmented with additional elements, and at other times remains in its basic role. And what about your television? The screen – the most widely accepted rectangular form of popular culture. The purest form of pop. And nothing else.

Yet even when screens remain screens, in the work of Nika and Primož they become objects, both static and dynamic, displaying images that are always in motion – slow, meaningful, and explicit in their presentation – while the represented content inverts meaning and subverts media manipulation into an act of creativity. When Marshall McLuhan wrote, “The medium is the message,” he was undoubtedly responding to the artistic practices of his time. Video art pioneer Nam June Paik was among those who used the television screen as an artistic substrate – as dialogue, sculpture, and commentary. Similarly, these artists further develop television iconography: it is no longer merely a window onto the world, but becomes a window of our world.

“The horizon, as televisions buzz,” as the band Prljavo kazalište sings. Nika and Primož are punk as well – not only in their subversion of mainstream media and the formal language of the screen, but also in their subtle use of technology alongside other media. For example, when robots protest in the work *Activists* (2011), expressing a technological obsession with autonomously moving platforms, on which the artists placed *Thoughts and Meanings*, the self-portrait photographs show them jabbing at conformist, universally celebrated objects. From the intimate to the public, both are present everywhere. If the direction is reversed, they are a pair – like Gilbert & George, except they create their world under different names. They then turn the screen into a mirror. To display it. To reflect on it.

The screen is a mirror. What you are looking at is what you are, whether you think so or not. When you look at Nika and Primož, they appear familiar, yet they could be anywhere – like a live broadcast or a recorded match. With themselves. In an endless carousel of life. They externalize the intimate and build their own planet, one on which we are also present: all of us caught in the routines of everyday life, which – however absurd it may be – remains endlessly seductive and, each time we wake up, creative. Even when we fall asleep. And then we already know ...

Comrades and comradeses Slovenians, march on!