

SKC AND
POLITICAL PRACTICES
OF ART

: Note

‘New Artistic Practice’ in Former Yugoslavia: From Leftist Critique of Socialist Bureaucracy to the Post-Communist Artifact in Neo-Liberal Institution of Art

How to theorize political practices in art? How to bridge the gap between art or political theory and the ongoing art and activist practices?

These questions stem from the confrontation of the theoretical abstractions, explaining the relation of art and politics, which are usually completely detached from the actual practices and insufficiently elaborated concepts produced in the terrain of the very practice [of art, curating, art criticism etc.]. This confrontation is either leading towards the disciplinary enclosure in the language and related epistemology [of both the theory and artistic practice] or to the reduction and utilization of the efficiency of art in political theory and philosophy [i.e. Ranciere, Badiou...]. The answer, then, must be found in the mutual and active testing of concepts and contexts of theoretical and art production in order to find the common language for the actual discussion of politics of art.

The generic term ‘critical art’ is often used nowadays in order to define a certain kind of cultural production. What does it really mean? By using the language of contemporary art criticism, one is tempted to claim both that every art is critical, and every art is political; but, the basic questions still remains open: what kind of critique and what kind of politics? Therefore, the real problem is about how to (re-)define the art of critique, and how to make it effective today.

Contemporary cultural production embraces critique as the vaunted value of contemporary art, and this new tendency emerges in parallel with the changes of the institutional field in contemporary post-welfare state capitalism. Neo-liberal institution of culture advocates the policy of transformation from the inside [of the society, cultural, alternative or state institutions, etc.], which relies upon on the inclusion of the critique from the very beginning [and, consequently, its appropriation]. Such dynamic constellation produces the so-called ‘institutionalization of critique’ - the topic that has been re-discussed in the past few years on various ‘institutional’ and ‘independent/self-organized’ levels. This new institutionalization is followed by the processes of ‘culturalization’ (of political relations), that is, the strategy of outsourcing political issues to the field of culture, the process especially visible on the European margins, in so-called transitional societies. The requests for ‘critical intellectual production’ and ‘social engagement of art’ are already inscribed in the guidelines of the leading European art foundations.

The ‘New artistic practices’ of the 1960s and 1970s, being at stake here, were, generally speaking, developed through the critique of capitalist conformism, art market, welfare-state institutions, institutional bureaucracy and hierarchy. At the same time, they are directed against bourgeois values of art in the sense of ‘beautiful image in the rich interior’, but are also, in the sense of modernist formalism, self-contemplation and concept of autonomy of art, conceived through self-sufficiency, disciplinary enclosure, professional division of labor, etc. Those practices were consequently challenging not only the status of art object [its material form, commodity status and forms of distribution], but also the [art] institutions themselves, together with their ideological-representative social function. As Benjamin Buchloh noticed, conceptual art has introduced a “new legalistic language and administrative style of material presentation” as a contrast to the traditional forms of appearance and [social] function of art.

The project of Conceptual art on the wider level has been formulated as a tactical replacement of marketable art product by critical art attitude. This replacement of the “object” by the “idea” is sometimes

openly [and naively] perceived as the tactical operation, which confronts and even overcomes the logic of the market economy in art. Observed from the contemporary cultural and economical perspective, this emancipatory attempt contributed to the formal radicalization of art rather than to the real change of its social function. It resulted in practicing the “methods” of self-reflexivity and self-referentiality within the enclosed disciplinary field of art. In other words, the replacement of the “object” by the “idea” at the same time remained internal to the discourse of the “institution of art” and created a well situated self-position in the logic of the post-Fordist (re) production and what is referred to as a “cognitive capitalism”.

The cultural climate around the network of Students’ Cultural Centers established all over Yugoslavia [as the consequence of the protests of ‘68] could be described as the left critique of the official culture of the Yugoslav Socialist state. The official cultural policy-making was following the idea of self-management as the unique principle of Yugoslav socialism, resulting with the concept of ‘relative autonomy of the culture’ and, in general, modernist-progressivist tendency, often discussed under the term of ‘socialist modernism’. While 1970s in Yugoslavia are characterized by the sweeping changes in the direction of liberalization of the society, the ‘New artistic practices’ developed around new liberal institutions of Students Centers were influenced by the Western, neo-Marxist, post ‘68 political criticism. Their critique was mostly directed towards politically passivized bureaucracy of the Yugoslav State and the emergence of the new class of ‘red bourgeoisie’.

The selection of the artifacts and documents presented in this room points to the ideological trajectory and political positioning of ‘New artistic practices’ in the former Yugoslavia from their original context until the present day, when they are generously marketed in the Western art institutions as the artifacts of ‘aestheticised politics’ of post-communism. Within the prevailing post-Socialist condition, the critique can be only dissidency, and, consequently, ‘critical art’ created inside the Socialist state can only be the representation of an individual rebel in totalitarian society [stereotypically represented through the skinny body of the performer in the gloomy alternative (art) space]. The ideological re-framing of the critique of the post ‘68 generation of artists from former Yugoslavia develops in parallel with the paradigm of “Eastern European” art. That paradigm, meticulously built through the cultural politics of SCCA network during the 90s via blockbuster exhibitions of EE art at the beginning of XXI century [such are *Body and East*, *After the Wall*, *Aspects/Positions*, etc] and leading all the way to the formation of the examples like the Erste Bank collection, points to the ultimate victory of the postmodernist-cultural studies approach in the interpretation of politics of art, sovereignly replacing the political position of art with cultural identity of the artist.

Jelena Vesić

~~OKTOBAR 75~~

This series of documents, connected to the project 'October 75', presents several texts which investigate the relations of art, critique and politics in the actual social situation of Yugoslavia in the 1970s. SKC regularly organized the alternative 'October events,' as opposed to the governmental manifestation — 'October Salon', annually held in Belgrade, which carried a bourgeois prerogative 'Salon' and was, in general, *l'art pour l'art*-istic- oriented. In 1975, Dunja Blažević, at that time the head of visual arts programme of SKC, proposed to the individuals and the groups, gathered around the Centre, collective re-thinking of the potential of the principles of 'self-management' in the field of culture, through either the affirmative or critical positioning. The part of the community rejected this proposition as 'the form of co-optation with the regime' [self-management was the buzzword of the Yugoslav state politics in the 1970s], while part of the community accepted it, using the very subject as the starting point for the examination of the fundamental question of the role of the art in society. Today, the project is preserved in the form of printed booklet and is rarely shown and presented in recent re-historizations of the Conceptual art in the former Yugoslavia. It represents the unique document of 'political practices in art' — the tendency that seems to disappear on the horizon of the market individualism of today.

The 'October 75' texts are edited by Prelom Kolektiv and translated into English by Novica Petrović. Visual material: Goran Djordjević- "Portraits (Oktobar 75)", super 8, SKC, Belgrade 1975

Jelena Vesić



Dunja Blažević

ART AS A FORM OF OWNERSHIP AWARENESS



Today, there are a lot of controversies, misunderstandings and open questions in connection with understanding art, its nature, essence, purpose and place in society. It is of particular topical interest with us, in view of the specific circumstances and problems concerning the relationship between art and society. At a time of intense social changes and searching for new mechanisms of exchange and labour association, there is a demand for linking art with the social base. At the same time, there remains the unresolved issue of whether art "goods" can associate with anything.

It appears to me that the problem in connection with this issue lies in the view of culture and art as "autonomous", "eternal" and "universalising" humanist spheres where

enduring laws prevail. This view results in it being totally impossible to include art in social practice and social division of labour, except for a mechanistic and formalist inclusion.

I shall dwell on the mechanisms of socialising fine arts. So far, there have been two main ways of financing art and buying up works of art.

The first one is the system of social manager or budget, which, on behalf of society and for society buys up works of art, provides funds, incentives and channels trends in the sphere of culture and art. Works of art bought up in this way become socially-owned property and are placed in socially-owned spaces, museums, galleries, offices, factory halls, basements, depots and the like. It is a system of a markedly state, bureaucratic structure, which does not resolve the existential problems of artists or the essential issues pertaining to the social function of art. It functions and makes sense only under the conditions of a strictly guided, propagandistic and apologetic character of art.

The other is the private system of free art market, which is stimulated with us as a positive trend. Wishing to become as close to the more developed and civilised countries as fast as possible, we tend to see a projection of our own high standard in the ideal of private property, owning a house ("your home is your own fortress"), gadgets, man, woman, child, art object (unique, singular, unrepeatable, hand-made).

Both examples are a reflection of the existence of ownership relations and the ownership character of art, which clearly reveals the social-economic basis upon which art came into being and developed.

Following the logic of an ownership-related attitude towards art, the predominant artistic production is the only authentic and possible one. In this situation, there is nothing useful to be done apart from establishing an art market. Art should be changed! As long as we leave art alone and keep on transferring works of art from studios to depots and basements by means of social regulations and mechanisms, storing them, like stillborn children, for the benefit of our cultural offspring, or while we keep on creating, through the private market, our own variant of the nouveau riche or kleinbürgers, art will remain a social appendage, something serving no useful purpose, but something it is not decent or cultured to be without.

THE SELF-MANAGING SYSTEM OF FREE EXCHANGE AND ASSOCIATION OF LABOUR THROUGH SELF-MANAGING COMMUNITIES OF INTEREST REPRESENTS A NEW NON-OWNERSHIP RELATIONSHIP that examines and revises the existing models of artistic work and behaviour. Is it not extremely comical to build a self-managing social system using the political means of a feudal or bourgeois structure?

Raša Todosijević

ART AND REVOLUTION



Art, just like philosophy, is critical by definition. [...]

AN UNCLEAR ARTISTIC CONCEPT IS THE FIRST PREREQUISITE FOR A WORK OF ART TO BE ALIENATED. A work of art then becomes instrumental and loses its integrity. [...]

ARTISTIC ENGAGEMENT represents internal critique of linguistic procedures, not an external presentation of FIXED VALUES. A continual wish for a total autonomy art is nothing else but its effort to attain self-conscious and efficient functioning within the framework of its own language, and thereby dignity in society. [...]

A newly formed language is in opposition to the previous one, for it is a radical critical finality of it, not a

formal evolution or a stylistic and aesthetic innovation. FUNCTIONING AS SELF-ANALYSIS AND SELF-CRITIQUE, ART reveals the previous establishment of artistic values that are inseparably linked to other values. [...]

The astonishing dialectical behaviour of art is a reflection of its being perfectly permeated with other manifestations of spirit. It is achieved (or achievable) through respect of the specific nature of the laws prevailing in its internal linguistic practice. At the very bottom of liberal decadence and social injustice, there appears resistance, protest and revolutionary art. "New art", in this sense, is a critical finale of a deteriorating system of values, not an exalted requiem. When this new art prevails, it loses its soul, turning into a heroic, pathetic, monumental, ritual, symbolic activity – a graveyard nothingness. ART THAT CELEBRATES VICTORY STOPS FIGHTING. [...]

In situations most fraught with conflicts, the greatest art comes into being: in moral, political and social conflicts art sharpens and emphasises its meaning. What is offered to us as "unquestionably great art" from bourgeois society, as "the ripest fruit of its culture", its past and present, is nothing else but ARCHIVE MATERIAL of art history. A CONSOLIDATED ESTABLISHMENT accepts art at a moment when its revolutionary and subversive spirit wanes. Thus the bourgeois society of the West today appropriates historical avant-gardes as their own history of art, and yet, did not the avant-gardes of that time spit in the face of that same society? [...]

It is an even greater irony that academies and art schools of socialist countries still study and practise the modernised art ideology of the 19th century, or at best the decadent intimism of the Paris school from the 1930's. To this day, the same academies view historical avant-gardes as some kind of anti-art, destruction and downfall of the great European (bourgeois) culture. [...]

The Soviet avant-garde from the era of the revolution was liquidated, to be replaced by the moral prostitution and political blindness of "artists" of socialist realism... Bauhaus was liquidated in order to make room for painters of Nazi-patriotism and other Nazi toadies... The only rebellious surrealist still praised is the worst fascist, royalist and anarchist Salvador Dali. [...]

Before the great uprising and the national liberation war, the echoes of dadaism were equated with subversion and communism. At the same time, the artists who won on the left were those who had lost their battle with art for good. Why do many people in Belgrade today call that art decadent? The avant-garde of Zurich, Cologne, Berlin, Moscow, Barcelona and New York pointed out the hypocrisy of that time rushing headlong into war and bloodshed. It rose against the ruling class, against fat bellies and whimpering salon art. The avant-garde began its own revolution. [...] On the other hand, at the time of the first socialist revolution, our modernists, our cultural greats masked as court bohemians chatted to their heart's delight in the hypocritical, well-fed, liberal and deaf Paris. [...]

SOCIALIST REALISM and engaged art of the Zhdanov type is, first of all, a demand made OF ART by ideology, it is by no means a problem in the sphere of the language of art and the system according to which it functions. A critique of socialist realism in local circles is mainly based on a bourgeois liberal view of art, irrespective of declarative denials, even in the case of Marxist theoreticians. What is noticeable is the absence

of the elementary fact that THE ROLE OF ART IN SOCIETY IS INSEPARABLE FROM ITS OWN PRACTICE. The problem lies in the lack of knowledge on the part of philosophers and theoreticians whose work is included in contemporary socialist practice. Is that practice really being revolutionised? [...] One should not think about the MECHANISMS OF FITTING ART INTO SOCIETY – it would mean a lack of interest in the constitutive trends of the LANGUAGE OF ART. It is no wonder, then, that these philosophers and theoreticians have turned to the EXTERNAL APPEARANCE of art. This decision, however, means imitating a mystical and religious notion of art.

ART IS AN INTEGRAL PART OF CRITIQUE OF SOCIAL PRACTICE. Still, most conclusions proclaimed so far in the name of humanism and freedom of creation are so arbitrary and DIALECTICALLY UNFOUNDED that this optimistic ignorance and swearing is conducive to the development of a dogmatic understanding of art. IT IS ONLY WHEN FUNCTIONING AS A CRITIQUE AND SELF-ANALYSIS OF ITS OWN LANGUAGE THAT ART IS CAPABLE OF RAISING THE ISSUE OF ANALYSIS AND CRITIQUE OF SOCIAL PRACTICE AND DEMANDING ITS CHANGE. Socialist realism of the Zhdanov type has an uncritical attitude towards its own language, and an uncritical and non-analytical attitude towards social reality. Art that excludes its own dialectical mechanism is always art for art's sake. Each society striving for a dogmatic stabilisation of its own mechanism and its own values requires an unbridgeable and undialectical concept of art. Both l'art pour l'artism and socialist realism view processes within art as a formal EVOLUTION, and its function in society as "independent" or separate from its linguistic, that is, internal requirements.

It is all too often demanded of art to confirm the rightness of an ideology and its short-term or long-term policy. However, this only contributes to the stabilisation and eventual conservation of that same ideology, not to its qualitative change. This means that every language is relevant for the doctrine, and that it can appropriate each art form and each art system as a synonym for its understanding of realism and a confirmation of the reality of its ideological concept with a clear conscience. Whether it is poster-type realism, pop-art, minimal art, abstract expressionism, land art, conceptual art... if each of the above art systems has its DIALECTICAL MECHANISM of self-analysis and self-criticism switched off in the process of its formation, it is enabled to function in the service of conservation of social relations. Thus an "exceptional theoretician" eventually opts for third-rate kitsch, a Marxist aesthete of good reputation tolerates an extremely regressive programme in academies of art, while a Marxist philosopher strives to confirm his theses, only to affirm them on a retarded art concept.

This means nothing else but establishing control over muddy water.

NOTES



Based on our view of the world, we always belong to a particular group, precisely a group of all the social elements sharing the same way of thinking and acting. [A. Gramsci]

If it is true that each language contains elements of some world-view and some culture, then it is also true that on the basis of the language of an individual one can recognise his/her world-view. In connection with this, I shall ask several questions. To wit: how come it is said that we have a heritage of petty bourgeois and bourgeois art (culture) without ever saying where this heritage comes from, who develops it and where? Or, if we have accepted Marxism as our ideology, if we are developing self-management, and through self-management associated labour and labour exchange, if we see self-managing

communities of interest as a possibility of an equal-footing relationship, interaction between the basis and the superstructure – how can, amidst all this, a model of universal art function or, as a segment of this, for example, a model of monumental tragism? Where do the terms such as vision/hallucination/renewal/capital or the often-used phrase “the artist wanted to present the fate of man-mankind, and this fate is hard, dark, but the artist elevates it to the level of monumentality...” THE LANGUAGE OF THIS ART BOILS DOWN TO LITANIES, it is general and never specific, it claims to be HUMANE, to be for the benefit of all men, but is essentially UNCRITICAL.

Another language/art that exists in these parts is expressed as objective/synthesis/analysis/abstraction/visualisation/materialisation. Here the word synthesis is indicative of a lot of things. A synthesis exists at least in the sense that we do not mourn our own destiny, that we have arranged things well, so that there exists a synthesis of our artistic practice, on the one hand, and social practice, on the other. This kind of art especially stresses the professional spirit of art, on account of which art gets isolated and a complex of incompetence is created among the public. The world-view of this language is intended for conscious and competent people. How can one be socially-polemically or artistically progressive at all without being critical of oneself, not just of what we think but also of what we do and what we are on the basis of certain historical processes. Creating new art/culture does not mean arriving individually at “original discoveries”. It also means critically promulgating truths already discovered, “socialising” them, making them become basic life actions, making them public.

Ješa Denegri

THE LANGUAGE OF ART AND THE SYSTEM OF ART



Any examination of the function of art in the contemporary world must proceed from the postulate that the phenomenon of art is not an isolated, unchangeable and neutral sphere of the spirit; on the contrary, it is an integral part of the broadest social economic reality that not only influences the organisation of artistic life in the existing social context but also conditions the essential character of the language through which artistic views are formed and manifested. Such an approach must always bear in mind the existence of two equally complex and mutually permeated areas of examination, which, on account of their specific natures, can by no means be reduced to identical parameters: one is the language of art itself, come into being on the basis of some immanent historical laws, and on the basis of irreplaceable existential experiences of particular artists, whereas the

other is the system of art, come into being on the basis of those general determinants that condition not only consciousness and imagination but also the position and the status of those artists in a particular social context. It is understood that between these two factors – the language of art, on the one hand, and the system of art, on the other – there exists a sensitive structure of dialectical mutual conditioning.

If we accept these postulates in principle, at the next step we come across the first specific question: what is/are the social-economic basis/bases upon which the complex of contemporary art is built in the reality of today's world? The characteristic mechanisms of global systems, neocapitalism on the one hand, and socialism on the other, essentially determine the shape and the position of art within the general processes of the functioning of these systems. Pursuing this thesis further, we can establish that the shape and the position of art within these systems are actually profiled through the possibility of a reaction manifested in relation to the dominant factors of social power, irrespective of whether this power is at various moments manifested as the economic, ideological or political structure of power. Thus, the face of contemporary art at this historical moment is nothing but a form of resistance, formulated in a specific language, or a form of integration in relation to the notion and the instruments of power, and the specific modes of its manifestation may be subsumed under the three basic forms of the social behaviour of artists as direct producers of art. One is a form of acceptance and passive reflection of reality, another is a form of partial attempt at reforming reality, while the third is a form of radical criticism or even total denial of that reality, where the notion of reality should be understood not in the sense of some very general surroundings but, on the contrary, in the sense of the most specific social-economic and cultural institution. It is illusory to believe that an artist can act in some space in-between these three designations. After Gramsci had once and for all destroyed the myth about the alleged neutrality of intellectuals, and thereby also the myth of the neutrality of artists, it is inevitable that the examination of the status and function of art in the contemporary world gets rid of the phraseology about some imaginary "freedom of expression", and that the element of freedom from now on should be viewed only within that fundamental Marxist diagnosis about freedom as a possibility or impossibility of specific action under the real social and historical circumstances.

Proceeding from these two basic theses of Gramsci's, according to which intellectuals, and thereby artists as well, are not an isolated and entirely autonomous social stratum, but are actually always more or less tightly connected with either the ruling or the revolutionary powers, let us now try to briefly specify the modes of their behaviour in the global social-economic context of the contemporary world. The context in which art develops today, that is, that cultural sphere which we call the West, is still, despite all the factors of resistance, a context of domination of neocapitalism where the market mechanism has an exceptionally pronounced role. The consequences of the functioning of the market mechanism are twofold: on the one hand, the artist as the direct producer of art is deprived of the possibility of exerting any decisive influence on the further destiny of his work: not only is he unable to prevent the process of financial manipulation of the results of his own work, which specifically means that one who is not the actual producer of the work of art in question reaps the profit; he is also unable to choose his own collocutors or to control the trajectories of his own discourse – which is of no less importance to the artist as a person participating in the struggle of ideas. As the final consequence of the above, even the most progressive artistic attitudes, when they are caught in the net of this system, cannot avoid

the humiliation of being treated as a commodity, and this is how any firm spiritual or ideational projection can be exposed to the danger of being compromised. Closely connected with this is another characteristic moment of the assimilating strategy of the system of art of neocapitalism: for, precisely because of the easy acceptance and the equally easy entry in the web of dominant market circulation, all new artistic proposals, initially created as more or less radical acts of social opposition, gradually end up in the marginal zone of the consumer culture. This culture, whatever its creators might think of it, is nothing but an instrument in the hands of the dominant social-economic structures in the existing set-up of the contemporary civilisation.

Therefore, in order to be able to understand various forms and processes in contemporary art in the very essence of their meaning, it is necessary to bear in mind the fact that an immanent resistance to the alienated function of the market has crept into the core of the ideational motivation and operative techniques that progressive artists are guided by and make use of today, not only through its anti-aesthetic manifestations but also through a radical spiritual and political orientation. That is why we by no means accept the general assessment of an extremely negative qualification of art arising in the context of contemporary neocapitalism, offered by representatives of the vulgarly materialistic aesthetics, but examine the character of this problematic by referring to the analyses and the conclusions of the authentically Marxist approach employed by Karel Teige, who, in his texts written as far back as the 1930's, polemicising from the point of view of a Plekhanov-type mechanicism, established that revolutionary elements in art created within the system of the bourgeois society are revealed to be the elements of conflict and the indicator of a crisis in the relationship between that art and the society it is created in.

If it is possible to say of artistic practice taking place in the context of neocapitalism that it is exposed to the danger of alienation on account of the pernicious influence of the market, it is also true that art is exposed to other kinds of deformations, no less severe, in systems that are referred to as socialist. From the time of the liquidation of the Soviet avant-garde, right down to the present, ideology has exerted permanent pressure, striving to determine and limit the function of art in advance, treating it solely as an instrument of its own strategy of controlling all the material and spiritual resources of society. If art can exist, even in an alienated state, in Adorno's perspective of negativity, in the "bad infinity" of bourgeois society, it does indeed wane in the Stalinist solution of demanding an unconditionally apologetic presentation of the existing reality, all the more so because history unequivocally confirms that this reality has been full of all kinds of aberrations that the artist, as an ethical being, could not fail to see and could not hide. The result of such a situation was that, in an environment otherwise characterised by a great tradition of revolutionary art, there was a total regression of goals and ideals imposed on its authentic social function. Under such circumstances, the space of artistic action becomes the space of a more or less illegal underground, which leads to its enforced isolation from the necessary mass of potential or actual collocutors that it addresses.

A specific form of alienation also threatens the artist who works in the context of social trends in the underdeveloped countries of "the third world": for, even if we leave aside the total anachronism of linguistic experiences that artists in these surroundings use, contemporary demands for an enlightenment-oriented approach may entail a loss of any critical distance from the inner development trends in these environments.

What is necessary here is to briefly review the current Yugoslav situation. As we know, there is no private art market in Yugoslavia, which does not mean that there is no opportunity for making a considerable profit for various groups of those who pursue the artistic practice professionally. Also the principle of freedom of creation is proclaimed and applied, although the reality of artistic life actually shows that for some – most often the proponents of new and progressive orientations – that freedom was no more than freedom of expression deprived of adequate material compensation for the results of their work, whereas for others – mostly the relatively broad group of artists involved in the system of academies and other pedagogical or cultural institutions – it also meant freedom that brought a whole lot of privileges and, in the final analysis, influence when it came to regulating the existing system of art. The practice of Yugoslav artistic life points to a paradoxical fact: the social and the political elite in this country is most suspicious of the very phenomena that endeavour, through the critical nature of their language, to democratise artistic communication, thus involving themselves in the broader trends of social and ideational change. On the other hand, what is supported, directly or indirectly, are those views that are based on the neutral aestheticism, intimism and sentimentalism of the local models of bourgeois artistic tradition, or those whose arbitrary literary-narrative symbolism could easily adapt to the frequent demands for apologetic and solely affirmative interpretations of the current political and cultural situation.

What, then, remains to art and artists today, in the concrete historical circumstances wherein one cannot even remotely see the possible and real forms of dealianation that they must strive for owing to the nature of their engagement?

The global political situation in the world today is such that we are increasingly of the opinion that Marcuse was right when he claimed that contemporary art would never free itself from the state of alienation it had actually been in throughout its history. If that is its real and only possible perspective, then the only thing we can do, despite all the idealistic prejudices that human spirit feeds on steadfastly, is characterise this phase in its historical existence as part of a process of probable and inexorable death of art, based on those forms and those functions that we encounter in the existing historical experience.

Goran Đorđević

ART AS A FORM OF RELIGIOUS CONSCIOUSNESS



The known history of human society is mostly the history of class relations. Relying on the existing means of production and the production relations of the ruling class, in other spheres of man's activity it sought a justification or a confirmation of the given relations in society. It is quite understandable that there is a pronounced presence of religious consciousness in those forms of social order where there is direct control (first of all, economic) of a small number of members over the remaining members of society. Conditioned by the corresponding degree of development of human society, the existence of religious consciousness has essentially always manifested itself through a recognition and acceptance of the notions of absolute, universal, ideal, eternal, which entails a spontaneous affirmation of

its elementary notion most often referred to as GOD. It is important to mention another very important godly attribute, which is the notion of creation ex nihilo (out of nothing). At this level of knowledge of relations in nature (including both man and society as forms of its manifestation), it appears that no phenomenon is known that would correspond to the notion of creation, which leads us to the conclusion that this notion can have meaning only if the notion of God has meaning. To put it quite simply, only a being that exists as a consequence without a cause can create. (It is certainly not a human being.) Quite understandably, the period of the advent of early capitalism roughly coincides with the decline of God's authority (as negation). The previously prevailing social consciousness, which places man in a subservient (humiliating) position in relation to God, is not convenient for the new production forces. The rise of the young bourgeois class entails the advent of awareness of strong, powerful and exceptional people who rise above the rest. These are virtually people of a higher order in relation to the others, who have won their place in society first of all through their "exceptional" qualities.

An artist is an exceptional, specially gifted, talented man who, owing to his ability to create, should achieve (realise) ideal, eternal, universal, absolute values (that is, reach God). Thus art, as a sum total of the results of creative activity (by this very fact, of exceptional people), should serve as material evidence and proof of the justification of the given class relations. While on the one hand we have the human being, deeply conditioned by biological, economic, sociological, psychological and other factors, on the other hand we have its spiritual opposite and (unfortunately) ideal, a being of absolute qualities – God. This means that art, especially over the previous centuries, represents a kind of a document testifying to a conflict inside man, between the desire for the supernatural, godlike, and natural human abilities. This process was conditioned, first of all, by the level of development of the means of production and production relations, and it was supposed to justify and confirm those relations through its results. In other words, art was and has remained one of the instruments of the ruling class in the process of forming consciousness and ruling over the majority. A revolutionary change of the social order is conditioned, first of all, by a qualitative change of the means of production which fundamentally changes control over work and the results of work. The decentralisation of society and the possibility of directly deciding on the results of one's own work provides the conditions for establishing more humane relations among people and between man and his environment, thus allowing a greater degree of freedom for every individual member of society, and thereby the community as a whole. I believe that the support and affirmation of art as a consequence of class relations (in the service of the ruling class) is a way of manifesting reactionary consciousness in a society that is developing new relations among its members (for example, our society). What this society needs is a truly critical analysis of its entire cultural heritage from the point of view of the essential needs of the community. (What I have in mind here is primarily the educational system.) At the same time, one should search for new

forms of activity, new ways of thinking, which would be the result of awareness of the real, natural possibilities and aspirations of the human being, in the sense of increasing the degree of individual and collective freedoms. It is necessary to free oneself from the primeval fear of the unknown (as a function of economic, sociological, psychological and other factors). Fear of the unknown is the basic prerequisite for the appearance of any form of religious consciousness.

“It is no wonder if, over the centuries, social consciousness, despite all the discord and diversity, develops through certain common forms – forms of consciousness that will never fall apart completely, unless classes disappear altogether.” (K. Marx and F. Engels – “Manifesto”)

Zoran Popović

FOR SELF-MANAGING ART



Advocating “universal” values of art is necessary in order to maintain the view of the autonomy of art, of its being independent from the dictates of ideologies, of continual straight-line progress in the sphere of art. This is nothing else but a projection of non-dialectical idealism. “Universal” artistic values, due to the given constellation of powers, are actually the “values” of the non-conflicting spectacular art of bourgeois consumer society, and in terms of type – the values of the petty bourgeois class. And finally, all of the above functions in the name of preserving the hegemony of Western culture, fulfilling the aspirations of late capitalism, its imperialist needs and aims. Thus the liberal artistic technocracy, in the name of

“irrepressible progress” in art (society), steadfastly declares itself to be against ideology, while carrying out bourgeois ideology in practice...

An artistic activity would have to contain within itself a new postulate as an alternative, which would be radically critical towards the previous practice. This new postulate or alternative should appear for the purpose of overcoming the existing artistic conformism (the existing social order), where changes occur only on the level of form, that is to say, where one artistic context replaces another, while the establishment remains unchangeable. Hence a politisation of art is necessary. Art must be negative, critical, both towards the external world and in relation to its own language, its own (artistic) practice. It is pointless and hypocritical to be engaged, to speak and act on the name of some humanity of mankind, political and economic freedoms, and to remain passive, on the other hand, in relation to the system of “universal” artistic values, the system that is the basic prerequisite of the existence of artistic bureaucracy, and therefore of the outrageous robbery perpetrated by star artists. For the purpose of its own reproduction, artistic bureaucracy, having got hold of power, starts manipulating it, always providing for those phenomena that prolong its existence. In this way, it guides and “arranges” artistic production and production relations. By way of its monopoly of information and education, bureaucracy creates an inert artist and a passive consumer of art – it produces “merry robots”. The power of artistic bureaucracy (art historians, curators, the clerical staff of secretariats of culture and other cultural and educational institutions, critics, artists, gallery owners, etc.) is consolidated owing to the artists’ lack of awareness of the revolution, divisions among artists and the public being ill-informed. In the name of “universal” values, engaged art boils down to the aesthetics of politics. Thus, instead of a politisation of art we have the aesthetics of politics. The aesthetisation of politics leads to treating facts in the manner of fascists. Art as the aesthetics of politics is a projection of state-administrative and technocratic-liberal conformism. Contrary to this, the Marxist notion of art presupposes a politisation of art.

If our work is not to be an apology of the status quo of art, of our total cultural alienation, if it is not to provide fresh blood to the conservative and dogmatic, socially perilous artistic establishment, which keeps the common cultural values of the people in the possession of a small number of hands (which enables them to establish a kind of monopolisation on the art market – over artistic values, artistic production, and more importantly, over information and education – all for the purpose of reproducing its own parasitic existence), if we, artists, are not to prolong, through our extreme passivity, the life of our bloodsuckers, thereby aiding the class enemy of the proletariat, producing precisely the kind of works that bureaucracy has guided and “arranged” anyway through its power of decision-making, giving awards, buying up works of art, organising exhibitions, financing culture, etc. – we, artists, must seriously review our work, our role, our real social position, our allies

and our interest. All those artists who take up a passive attitude towards the existing social order, who mind their own business and pursue their own interest, belong to the category of the bourgeois or the petty bourgeois, whose social-psychological foundations are used for the purpose of maintaining domination over man and robbing man...

...Only an affirmed public, affirmed public opinion, ensures a negation of bureaucracy, that is, of the mystery of bureaucracy. That is why it is in the best interests of bureaucracy to keep a monopoly over information, over all public information media, for these media are one of the basic prerequisites of the usurpation of power and self-reproduction...

Dragica Vukadinović



Those attitudes that deprive an area of human practice of the possibility of being revolutionary are polemical and, perhaps, dangerous.

In order to secure for itself the character of a revolutionary activity, art is forced to deal with issues that deal with itself. On the other hand, art has never been a radical motive power of society, and it is illusory to expect of it revolutionary turnabouts in this sense...

Art could more likely have evolutionary values: its power does not lie in its ability to change social relations in a revolutionary manner, but in its efforts to improve them.

That is why it is not uncommon for the protagonists of social

revolutions, or for the power-holders in established societies, to strive for an alliance between art and artists.

Within the framework of revolutionary turmoil, artistic turmoil is tolerated as long as the turmoil in the social base has not stabilised. After it has done so, it is requested of art to correspond to the newly established relations, or support is provided for that profile of art which appears to do so.

The problem of getting art closer to the working people is a false problem, but the working people are not a false power...

To advocate linking art with revolution means to support art's efforts to find its place within the framework of the social revolution...

The revolutionary character of art is not reflected in its manifestos but in the structure of its thought and practice. Even for art that clearly advocates a certain ideology, the mechanism through which its practice fits in with the economic practice of the given society is more important than ideology itself.

Today, the revolutionary importance of art is reflected in the politisation of its practice. Or to put it more precisely, in whether it opts for political intrigue or politics.

Slavko Timotijević

A SKETCH OF THE POSSIBILITIES OF ART IN SELF-MANAGEMENT SOCIALISM



Despite the fact that art, as a cultural activity, is highly rated and abundantly subsidised, no systemic and flexible solution has yet been found for adequately monitoring its dialectical changes, and consequently the criteria have no clear theoretical basis...

...Specifically, the sum total of the activities of an artist leads to the establishment of an attitude towards those activities as being artistic, with the artist getting social and financial satisfaction. That is why the situation in our “official” – “academic” art is such that all (almost all) the artists who have completed their academic studies and been present before the eyes of the public for a certain period of time are in almost the same financial situation (differences occur only due to a set of circumstances, personal interest and engagement),

even though there do exist qualitative differences among their works, and consequently a great difference in their contribution to the development of artistic thought...

...The process of evaluating emergent art, as historical experience tells us, has been repeating itself from the era of impressionism to the present day, and runs as follows:

A NEW PRINCIPLE = A GENERAL SOCIAL ATTITUDE OF NEGATION

A PERIOD OF TIME IN THE COURSE OF WHICH THE PRINCIPLE GETS REPEATED = PARTIAL SOCIAL INTEREST

THE PRINCIPLE BECOMES OUTDATED = SOCIAL AFFIRMATION

THE PRINCIPLE BECOMES DECADENT = SOCIAL ABSORPTION

...It is pointless that entire institutions and scientific institutes exist because of art and artists, whereas artists themselves have virtually no means of support when it comes to professional advancement. There are multitudes of administrative staff and other experts who are “employed on a full-time basis”, and there is not a single institution where artists could deal with the subject of their studies and be employed on a full-time basis, without being obligated to perform other functions as well. In such a situation, the artist is forced to enter the market, and it is quite certain that those artists who elaborate and interpret familiar principles fare better than those who invest time and effort in discovering new ones. It is for the latter that full-time employment should be envisaged, so that they could be fully engaged in dealing with the problems they are capable of solving. If we analyse our situation, we shall see that there exist museums and galleries exhibiting the works of artists that employ, on a full-time basis, art historians and administrative staff whose monthly earnings are guaranteed, whereas the artist, whose work is bought up and on account of whom the museum in question exists, cannot count on being able to work in peace over a long period of time, for the buying-up of his works is no guarantee of that; and while we are on the subject, what is this buying-up anyway? It is a kind of charity. People get employed even when they have not proven themselves professionally, and the artist is required not only to mature artistically and to prove himself, but also to give his work to the public for free, without anything in the way of remuneration. All artists, with the exception of fine artists, even reproductive artists, are paid on the basis of performance, presentation, reproduction and the like. Only fine artists do not get anything out of exhibiting their work, except for hope in it possibly being bought up, even though they often invest years of work in a single exhibition. And we are all aware of the significance of the fact that several good

exhibitions are held in the city, bringing us new knowledge, provoking us to think, write, profit, interpret or even, most important of all, find grounds for our further advancement in art and new paths in art in general.

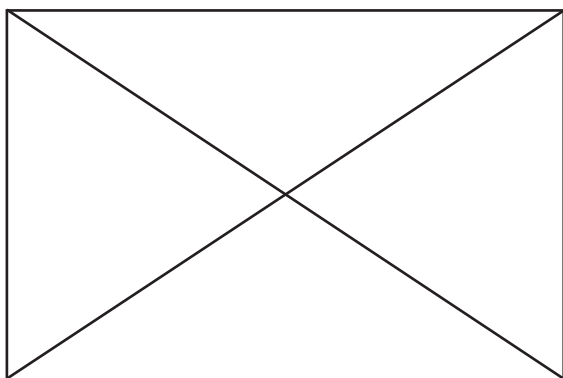
...It is symptomatic that, in this country, people still do not speak and write about new art gladly, even though it should be similar to a situation wherein one opens a public facility of general social import. I think that right now one can perceive a lack of politicising in the broadest sense of the term. For, the way things are now, in most cases art is manifested as a private matter of certain artists, which results in a great number of intimists, expressions of the inner being, personal visions, that is, a great number of "geniuses". Which is the origin of this opinion about art that it is as personal as is emotion or the subconscious, and is virtually unfathomable for that reason...

A possible solution for this situation in art lies in radicalising the methodology of informing the public, with full engagement, where, as opposed to the current practice, various artistic achievements would be expertly presented, without mystifying the personality of the artist and without neglecting those achievements that do not belong to tradition in terms of their morphology and language...

...Through an effort to involve art, on an equal footing, in the current social and, especially, economic relations, as an independent economic and social factor, which does not lack influence on the actual society, it is possible to ensure for art the kind of freedom which will not have the need to mystify and abuse the very notion of art.

Vladimir Gudac

ART AS STYLE



...Style, as a category through which one evaluates the quality of a work of art, has its theoretical “background” in the works of many art theorists, from literature to music. All those works dealt with clarifying the notions surrounding the issue of style as the personal imprint of a given author or a characteristic of a certain group of artists, as the case is, for example, with various “isms” in art.

If style, as a category come into being on the basis of previous artistic practice, is reviewed from the point of view of recent developments in that area, it is not difficult to see that, as such, it is inapplicable... And it is not inapplicable because it has been changed, but because preconditions for (any) artistic

work in today’s era have changed, in keeping with the social aspirations of a certain environment. What has changed, then, is what ART is. In such a situation, these works of “new art” should be reconsidered. It should be stressed that not only artistic practice has changed – changes have been happening on a more general level.

From the point of view of today, it is not difficult to see the presence of an OBSESSION with style, giving style almost the most important position when it comes to evaluating a work of art. What is demanded is a “mature” work, which, naturally, means a stylistically rounded off personality of the artist. If an artist exhibits his works that belong to the criteria of traditional art criticism (being traditional themselves), what is demanded of him is style...

One should have style so that an artist could be easily and immediately recognisable even from a distance. But such a style is difficult to find, for it should be different, original, and must fit in with one of the stylistic movements. It is attained “with great effort”...

When a graphic designer possesses the style of a poster maker, then his poster for a horse race is the same as his poster for a performance of Hamlet. And this is good, we say – the boy had got style, and one should have style...

Those artists who are not designers or some such kind of creators, and who have remained in the sphere of investigating something called art, cannot be evaluated from the point of view of style, for they speak through another way of evaluating a CULTURAL activity, differently connected with the overall social order.

AND WHAT WE NEED IS NOT STYLE BUT AN ATTITUDE.

Bojana Pejić

ART AS DECORATIVE AUTHORITY



The basic misconception following fine arts from their very inception is the one about the autonomy of art. Viewed historically, this idea appeared in a latent form very early on and was manifested in the tendency of art to rid itself of any “extra-artistic authority” (myth, religion, science, ideology, politics). It was only at the beginning of this century that explicit views to the effect that the field of activity of art was art itself were formulated. Reviewing the work of art, however, brought art itself in a cul-de-sac. Proposals to the effect that all the issues were to be “resolved in its own house” were short-lived. The first reaction was the negation and destruction of art itself and its protagonists (the system of identification expressed through

the thesis of “living art”). As it transpired, the way out of the existing situation proved exhausting very soon (dada, conceptual art). There was no solution, and the old fallacy lingers on.

The fallacy of the autonomy of art originates from the insufficient pointing to the fact that art is a social phenomenon. Being a part of the social structure, it, like the other parts of the structure, succumbs to the well-known process of “severing the hand from the head”, which is inevitable in any society divided into classes...

If the structure of society is understood as “social interaction”, then the fact that art is a mental activity should not be disturbing, for in this case art represents a necessary element (understood in a non-static sense) of the structure, and therefore has the same role and import in society as politics, science, technology and philosophy.

However, the development of art and, more broadly, the development of culture, is based on a deviant view that art is not necessary to society, for society can painlessly survive even without art. All this is based on the mechanistic view of the basis-superstructure relationship. The situation becomes even more strained if the actual superstructure is broken down (mechanistically again), and it is shown that some of its elements exert more and some less of a return influence on the basis (which is the case with science, some of whose results are directly applicable, and philosophy, art)...

A different kind of mistake is when art, under the auspices of science, philosophy or politics, tries to improve its status in the community (the theory of the “scientific character” of art, the “philosophy” of art, politically engaged art). All of this arises out of the renegade complex that art suffers from and that, paradoxically, it turns into its own synonym. Thus the renegade status becomes a synonym for art, that is, becomes a necessary positive quality of artistic creation (escape from reality, individualism, the myth of the “god-given” creator, “talent”, “extraordinary sensitivity”, “genius”). Art as a whole remains a “social outsider”, assumes the character of a “social valve”, which is further interpreted as a “freedom of choice”.

This state of affairs has become so deep-rooted that it is almost impossible to have a different view of art. The ballast of the past is such that we, who have different social circumstances today, and therefore greater possibilities for ANOTHER ART, are incapable of understanding correctly the need of society for art. Even though we have perceived that the classical antagonism of class provenance concerning the division into two “types” of labour should be overcome, even though art has the status of an equal-footing phenomenon in society, that same art, endangered and confined for centuries, is showing its old class face again.

Why?

The social conditions have changed. In a social sense, our environment is privileged in relation to the social environments prevalent in other parts of the world. In ideological and practical terms, we wish to prove that we have made a step towards overcoming precisely the difference between these “types” of labour. Finally, art possesses a recognised, legalised status of being co-present with all the other social phenomena. But this very art, “socially oppressed” in the course of history, now that it is in a position to exist without restrictions, deals with the same problems as before. That very art still reviews the results of its work (objects), not what is essentially immanent to artistic creation – the process. Again, it appears to repay a debt to the society it exists in, repay it in a material (tactile, visible) form. Again, it remains on the level of the phenomenality of things.

And what “use” can a society like ours have from art that has not overcome the characteristic of imitation, metaphor/metonymy? What is the use of “nice” pictures, nicely sung operettas, the umpteenth theatrical production of a play by Nušić, pretty films about war, hermetic poetry and non-functional architectural design? Is that the image of an art that we need or just toying with the thesis about freedom of creation? Can we have the sort of art we need when, burdened by the myth of the misunderstood artist, we leave various academies where we spend years learning that an artist is like a wolf to another artist? Can we develop a critical attitude after being lectured that art history is a history of objects? Does organising salons and little salons testify to the fact that creative freedom exists in this country? Or is it proved by the fact that artists go abroad and then their work (results) and the “fame” that only comes to them “over there” become subject to manipulation? Is our art really what we see in the form of “mixed packages of cultural services” at exhibitions of Yugoslav art at home and abroad?

What, finally, is that art of ours, unfettered by social restrictions? It is that same art against which we fight and towards which we are very critical. It will remain as it is – alienated, misunderstood, unless we stop treating it favourably, in a conformist manner. Only when we really come to understand that art is a SOCIALLY RESPONSIBLE ACT, the same as any other social act, shall we be able to say that art has finally been released from its decorative authority.

THE STRIKE IN ART PRODUCTION

The 'New artistic practices' of the 1970s kept putting its self-critique in the service of liquidation of the last remnants of traditional aesthetic experience. Liberating itself from the imaginary and physical experience of art and canceling the leftovers of representation, style, individuality and craft, it conditioned the major and paradigmatic change in the post-WWII production of art. Some of the protagonists of the 'New artistic practices' have literary redirected this mimetic relation to the very ideological apparatus, analyzing and criticizing precisely those social institutions which produce administrative logic of the art system and determine the conditions of cultural consumption. The so-called 'Institutional Critique' art develops through the complex transaction between the artists and institution in which the artist often act as a 'free-lance' bureaucrat who points to the 'irregularities' of the institutional work. The art of Institutional Critique is the main topic of this series of documents.

Instead of taking over the bureaucratic methods and fabricating the 'aesthetic of administration', Goran Djordjević's call for the *International Strike of Artists* suggests the radical form of halting of art production. The correspondence with the various artists regarding the strike, which never took place, is less interesting here as the document about the call manifesting anarchist desire for full-frontal clash with the institutions — it is rather a document which discovers the variety of statements related to the one of the most important chapters of the Conceptual Art criticism, in its decline during the late 1970s, where the work of the harshest critiques has already been pacified and institutionalized.

The source of selected correspondence is 3+4 — Magazine of the Students of Art History, Belgrade, published in 1980.

Jelena Vesić

The international
strike of artists?

Beograd, 25. 02. '79.

Goran Đorđević

«Da li biste učestvovali u međunarodnom štrajku umetnika? Kao protest protiv nesmanjene represije umetničkog sistema i otuđenja umetnika od rezultata svog rada, bilo bi veoma važno pokazati da je moguće koordinirati aktivnosti nezavisno od umetničkih institucija, i organizovati međunarodni štrajk umetnika. Ovaj štrajk bi trebalo da predstavlja bojkot umetničkog sistema u periodu od nekoliko meseci. Dužina trajanja, tačan datum početka i forme bojkota biće određeni nakon kompletiranja liste prijavljenih umetnika i predloga. Molim vas da o ovome obavestite umetnike koje poznajete. Prijave/predloge poslati najkasnije do 15. 05. 79.»

Na ovo moje cirkularno pismo dobio sam oko četrdesetak odgovora. Većina umetnika je izrazila uzdržanost prema ovoj ideji ili sumnju u mogućnost njene realizacije, ali je bilo i pozitivnih odgovora.

Ideja o međunarodnom štrajku umetnika je u postojećim uslovima verovatno utopija. Međutim, kako se procesi institucionalizacije umetničkih aktivnosti uspešno primenjuju i na najradikalnije umetničke projekte, postoji mogućnost da ova ideja jednoga dana postane realna alternativa. Zato verujem da publikovanje odgovora koje sam dobio može biti od nekog interesa.

«Would you take part in an international strike of artists? As a protest against art system's unbroken repression of the artist and the alienation from the results of his practise, it would be very important to demonstrate a possibility of coordinating activity independent from art institutions, and organize an international strike of artists. This strike should represent a boycott of art system in a period of several months. Duration, exact date of beginning, and forms of boycott will be worked out on the completion of the list of enrolled artists and propositions. Please give notice of this to the artists you know. The deadline for applications/suggestions is 15. 05. 79.»

I received about forty replies to this circular letter. Majority of artists expressed their reserve to this idea or doubt to the possibility of its realisation, but there were positive answers too.

The idea of the international artists strike is under present circumstances probably an utopia. However, as the processes of institutionalization of art activities are being successfully applied even to the most radical art projects, there is a possibility that this idea could one day become an actual alternative. I therefore believe that publishing of the replies I received could be of certain interest.

Vito Acconci

131 Chrystie Street
New York, New York 10002
August 5, 1979

Dear Goran Dorđević:

I didn't answer your letter because I don't think I understood it: I'm not sure what an 'international strike' would mean, I'm not sure I know what it would be specifically directed against. In other words, as it stands now, the boycott could be just as validly directed against us -- artists -- ourselves.

I'd like to hear more. Thank you.



Vito Acconci

Nisam odgovorio na tvoje pismo jer mislim da ga nisam razumeo: nisam siguran da shvatam šta bi »međunarodni« štrajk značio, nisam siguran da shvatam protiv čega bi tačno bio usmeren. Drugim rečima, kako sada stvari stoje, bojkot bi isto tako mogao biti usmeren neposredno protiv nas — umetnika — samih. Voleo bih više o tome da čujem. Hvala.

Vito Acconci

Susan Hiller

Sept. 12, 1979

Constance

POST CARD

Dear Goran,

Thank you for your letter & apologies for not writing sooner.

I have, in fact, been on strike all summer, but it has not changed anything & I am anxious to begin work again, which I shall do very soon.

Good luck.



from: "Dedicated to the Unknown Artists" by Susan Hiller
V. 8804

Dugi Gorane,

hvala ti na pismu i oprostí što nisam ranije pisala. Ja, u stvari, štrajkujem celo leto, ali time se ništa nije promenilo i nestrpljiva sam da ponovo počnem da radim, što će biti uskoro.

Sa srećom
Susan Hiller



Goran Dorđević
111 bulevar 106/15
11070 N. Beograd
YUGOSLAVIA



Carl Andre

SMART9 PO BOX 1001 NY NY 10003 USA
DEAR GORAN DORDEVIC:

THANK YOU FOR YOUR LETTER OF
22 FEB 79. I THINK THE ART SYSTEM
HAS THE SAME RELATION TO THE
WORLD SYSTEM THAT A SEISMOGRAPH
HAS TO AN EARTHQUAKE. YOU CANNOT
CHANGE A PHENOMENON BY MEANS OF
THE INSTRUMENT THAT RECORDS IT TO
CHANGE THE ART SYSTEM ONE MUST
CHANGE THE WORLD SYSTEM.

BE WELL

@carl andre



GORAN DORDEVIC
III BULEVAR 106/15
11070 N. BEOGRAD
YUGOSLAVIA



21 MAR 79 PO BOX 1001 NY NY 10003 USA
DEAR GORAN DORDEVIC - THANK YOU FOR
YOUR CARD - THANK YOU ALSO FOR YOUR CLEAR
HAND & MASTERY OF ENGLISH - THE PROBLEM
OF ART IN THE UNITED STATES IS DIFFERENT FROM
THAT IN EUROPE - ART HAS NEVER BEEN A PART
OF THE NATIONAL LIFE HERE EXCEPT AS AN
INCIDENTAL DIVERSION OCCASIONALLY IN PASTORAL
THIS WAS TRUE OF THE 1960'S BUT IS DEFINITELY
NOT TRUE NOW - ON ONE OF RICHARD NIXON'S
WHITE HOUSE TAPES HE WARNS HIS DAUGHTER TO
STAY OUT OF ART MUSEUMS & GALLERIES BECAUSE
THEY WERE FULL OF JEWES & HOMOSEXUALS - THE
AMERICAN NATIONAL BUDGET FOR ADVERTISING
IS \$42,000,000,000 WHILE THE NATIONAL BUDGET
FOR FINE ART IS CERTAINLY LESS THAN ONE
THOUSANDTH OF THAT (\$42,000,000) - ART SEEMS
TO BE NECESSARY TO ARTISTS HERE BUT TO NO
ONE ELSE - THAT DOES GRANT A KIND OF NEGATIVE
FREEDOM - FROM WHOM WOULD ARTISTS BE
WITHHOLDING THEIR ART IF THEY DID GO ON STRIKE
? - ALAS, FROM NO ONE BUT THEMSELVES - "THE
SUPERSTRUCTURE IS AUTONOMOUS, BUT THE
ORGANIZATION OF THE MEANS OF PRODUCTION IS
DETERMINING," K. MARX - THE BLESSING OF FREEDOM
TO YOU - BE WELL @carl andre

GORAN DORDEVIC
III BULEVAR 106/15
11070
N. BEOGRAD
YUGOSLAVIA



Hvala ti na pismu od 22. februara 1979. Ja mislim
da je umetnički sistem u istom odnosu
prema svetskom sistemu kao seizmograf prema
zemljotresu. Ne možeš izmeniti neki fenomen
instrumentom koji ga beleži. Da bi se izmenio
umetnički sistem mora se izmeniti svetski
sistem.

Budi dobro

Carl Andre

Hvala na karti — hvala ti i na jasnom rukopisu
i dobrom engleskom — problematika umetnosti
u Sjedinjenim Državama različita je od one u
Evropi — ovde umetnost nikad nije bila deo
nacionalnog života sem povremeno u vidu
slučajnih skretanja u modi-ovo je važno za
1960-te ali sada svakako ne važi. Na jednoj od
traka iz Bele kuće Ričard Nikson upozorava svoju
kćer da se drži dalje od muzeja i galerija jer su
oni puni Jevreja i homoseksualaca — američki
nacionalni budžet za reklamu iznosi 43.000.000.000 \$
dok je nacionalni budžet za lepe umetnosti
svakako manji od hiljaditog dela toga (43.000 \$)
— čini se da je umetnost ovde neophodna
umetnicima i nikome drugom — to pruža neku
vrstu negativne slobode — kome će umetnici
uskratiti svoju umetnost ako stupe u štrajk? —
avaaj, nikome sem sebi samima — »superstruktura
je autonomna, ali je određuje organizovanje
sredstava za proizvodnju.« K. Marks — blagoslovilo
te proleće — budi dobro.

Carl Andre

Daniel Buren

Paris March 28.79
 Dear Goran, Thanks
 for your letter.
 Personally I
 am already on strike
 of producing
 any new
 form in my work
 since 1965 (i.e.
 14 years) I don't
 know what I could do
 more (regard)
 13/11/79

CON IL BIANCO
 LAVORO IN SITU DI
 DANIEL BUREN

SABATO 24 MARZO 1979
 UGO FERRANTI
 VIA TOR MILLINA 26 ROMA
 TELEFONO 6542146

Foto Massimo Capone



Goran Đorđević
 III Bulevar 106/15
 11070 N. Beograd
 Yugoslavia

Pariz, 28. mart 79.

Dragi Gorane,

hvala ti na pismu. Ja lično, već štrajkujem u pogledu stvaranja bilo kakve nove forme u mom radu još od 1965. (tj. 14 godina). Ne vidim šta bih više mogao da uradim.

Nojbolji pozdravi,
 Buren

Hans Haacke

Hans Haacke
 463 West St.
 New York, N.Y. 10014
 July 19, 1979

Goran Đorđević
 III bulevar 106 15
 11070 Beograd

Dear Goran:

Thank you for your communication on the proposed International Strike for Artists. I did not respond because I do not believe that this proposal is either efficient nor sensible.

Museums and commercial galleries will go on functioning very well without the cooperation of socially concerned artist, and these of course would be the only ones to possibly join such a strike.

Rather than withholding socially critical works from the art-system every trick in the book should be employed to inject such works into the mainstream art world, particularly since they are normally not well received there.

Sincerely yours,
 Hans Haacke

Hvala ti na pismu o predloženom štrajku za umetnike. Nisam odgovorio pošto verujem da ovaj predlog nije ni efikasan ni razuman. Muzeji i komercijalne galerije će i dalje funkcionisati vrlo uspešno bez saradnje društveno svesnih umetnika, a ovi su naravno jedini koji bi pristupili takvom štrajku. Ne treba društveno kritičke radove uklanjati iz umetničkog sistema, već naprotiv treba koristiti sva zamisliva sredstva da bi se ta dela ubrizgala u glavne tokove sveta umetnosti, pogotovo što ona i ovako ne nailaze na dobar prijem.

Iskreno tvoj
 Hans Haacke

Sol Lewitt

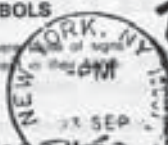
SEPT 21

AMERICAN INDIAN SYMBOLS
and their meanings

The earliest writings of the American Indians were made of signs and symbols. These symbols are always apparent in their art, craft and jewelry.

DEAR GORAN

THIS IS MY IDEA ON THE
ARTIST/DEALER RELATION-
SHIP: WHILE THE PEOPLE WHO
HANDLE MY WORK ARE DEDIC-
ATED & IDEALISTIC ABOUT ART
AND HONEST IN THEIR RELAT-
IONSHIP TO ME, I DETEST A
SYSTEM THAT MAKES ART INTO
A COMMODITY AND ASSIGNS MON-
ETARY VALUE TO IT (GERTRUDE STEIN
SAID: "A WORK OF ART IS EITHER
WORTHLESS OR PRICELESS")
I WILL SUPPORT YOU AND YOUR
STRIKE IF YOU SHOW ME HOW IT
WOULD WORK. GOOD LUCK
SOL LEWITT

Einstein
USA 15c

GORAN DORDEVIC

111 BULEVAR 106 15

11070 N. BEOGRAD

YUGOSLAVIA

Dragi Gorane, ovo je moje mišljenje o odnosu umetnik/galerista: s jedne strane ljudi koji rukuju mojim radom imaju idealističke poglede na umetnost, posvećeni su svom radu i poštenu u svom odnosu prema meni, s druge strane žalim zbog sistema koji pretvara umetnost u robu i pridaje joj novčanu vrednost (Gertruda Stein je rekla: "Umetničko delo je ili bezvredno ili bez cene"). Podržaću tebe i tvoj štrajk ako mi pokažeš kako treba da se odvija.

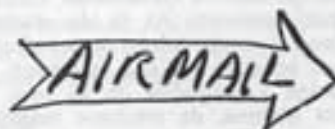
Srećno, Sol Lewitt

NARA FEB 23

DEAR GORAN

I SUPPORT YOUR
IDEAS. YOU MAY
USE MY LETTER IN
WHATEVER WAY
YOU CHOOSE. SORRY
I AM SO LATE
REPLYING.

Sol Lewitt

GORAN
DORDEVIC

111 BULVAR 106 15

11070 N. BEOGRAD

YUGOSLAVIA

Dragi Gorane, podržavam tvoje ideje. Možeš da koristiš moje pismo kako god želiš. Izvini što ovako kasnim sa odgovorom.

Sol LeWit

P.S. I'd be very interested to see the responses you've received.

Lucy R. Lippard

July 9, 1980
138 Prince St.
NYC 10012 NY
USA

Dear Goran Đorđević,

Sorry to take so long, but rather than strike I spend all my energy on striking back at the art system by working around and outside of it and against it and letting it pay for my attempts to subvert it. While I am well aware of the dangers of such a position, I have tried others over the last 12 years and have found this to be the one that is most effective. It permits me to work collectively with a large number of people, to set up small independent organizations which do their best to resist co-optation by not becoming too unwieldy or too ambitious. The three that I am most active in now are Heresies: A Feminist Publication on Art and Politics, Printed Matter Inc. (distributor of artists' books), and P.A.D., a newly formed international archive ("Political Art Documentation"), about which I enclose an info sheet. Another and far more ambitious organization is in the works now, intended to be a kind of "De-Center" beginning at the roots of art education to channel art toward social change.

As you can see, I place my faith in action, organization, networking, rather than in making voids which I fear would be invisible. At the same time, I am heartily in favor of communication between artists in all countries who are ~~renewing~~ rebelling against the repression (economic and political) and institutionalization of the idea of art, since the sterilization process that is under way must be stopped by some relatively drastic means. I hope that you will let Middle European artists know about PAD in particular; eventually we plan to find a way to reproduce the material we receive and send it back out in exchange to artists' groups all over the world. ~~That~~ The actions that could arise from such coordinated efforts will be, I think, far more effective than withdrawing from a system that would have no trouble attracting "scabs" to replace us.

All best,

Lucy R. Lippard

Dragi Gorane Đorđeviću,

Zao mi je što mi je trebalo toliko vremena, ali ja sam radije nego da štrajkujem trošila svoju energiju na to da vratim udarac umetničkom sistemu radeći u njemu i van njega i protiv njega i dopuštajući mu da plaća moje pokušaje da ga podrijem. Mada sam potpuno svesna opasnosti takvog položaja, u proteklih 12 godina isprobala sam i druge i zaključila da je ovaj najefikasniji. On mi dopušta da radim zajednički s mnogim ljudima, da osnivam male, nezavisne organizacije koje daju sve od sebe da se odupru asimilaciji time što ne postaju suviše glomazne ni suviše ambiciozne. Tri u kojima sam u poslednje vreme najaktivnija su Heresies: A Feminist Publication on Art and Politics (Jeresi: Feministička publikacija za umetnost i politiku), Printed Matter Inc. (distributer knjiga umetnika), i P.A.D. — novoosnovana međunarodna arhiva ("Political Art Documentation"), o kojoj ti šaljem informativni letak. Sada se stvara jedna druga i daleko ambicioznija organizacija koja treba da bude neka vrsta "De-centra" što počinje od korena umetničkog obrazovanja da bi usmerila umetnost ka društvenoj promeni.

Kao što možeš videti, ja više verujem u akciju, organizovanje, stvaranje mreže nego u pravljenje praznina koje bi, bojim se, bile nevidljive. Istovremeno sam svim srcem za komunikaciju među umetnicima svih zemalja koji ustaju protiv represije (ekonomske i političke) i institucionalizovanja ideje umetnosti, budući da se započeti proces sterilizacije mora zaustaviti nekim srazmerno drastičnim sredstvima. Nadam se da ćeš srednjoevropske umetnike obavestiti o P.A.D. pre svega; nameravamo da na koncu nađemo način da reprodukujemo materijal koji dobijamo i da ga, zauzvrat šaljemo natrag svim umetničkim grupama širom sveta. Akcije koje mogu proizaći iz ovakvih koordinisanih napora biće, po mom mišljenju, daleko efektivnije nego povlačenje iz sistema kome neće biti nikakav problem da privuče "štrajkolomce" što bi nas zamenili.

Sve najbolje,

p.s. Veoma bi me zanimalo da vidim odgovore koje si dobio.

Lucy R. Lippard

Tom Marioni

Dear Goran.

I have been ~~on~~ on strike
 against New York city ^(establishment) because
 they have no respect for art
 outside New York city. I have
 not shown my work there ever
 and I have been invited (under
 questionable conditions) although I
 have shown in Europe for years.
 I have no complaint with the
 rest of the world and don't see
 any reason to go on strike
 against places other than
 New York



Sincerely
 Tom Marioni

Dragi Gorane,

Strajkujem protiv establišmenta grada Njujorka jer uopšte ne poštuje umetnost izvan Njujorka. Nikada u tom gradu nisam prikazao svoj rad mada sam bio pozivan (uz sumnjive uslove), i mada sam godinama u Evropi izlagao. Inače ne mogu da se tužim na ostatak sveta, te ne vidim razloga zašto bi trebalo štrajkovati drugde sem u Njujorku.

Tvoj Tom Marioni

Zoran Popović



Roel Ooqo

Breda 28. 03. 79.

Dear Goran,

Your idea about taking part in an international strike of artists against art systems, is very important. However the concept is brilliant, I'm afraid working it out will be very hard. For example we will boycott culture centre 'De Beyerde' in Breda for almost the same reasons you did mention in your letter. If the director and his policy plan for the next five years, will be hold by the Mayor and Alderman of Breda, we will declare the culture centre as a contaminated area for artists so we hope there won't be any artist any more that wants to have an exhibition over there.

By the way I've got this letter trough the medium of Hary de Kroon. If you will need some aid in future, I'll do my best to be of any assistance. I do wish you good luck and I hope, when you have found out the forms of the boycott I will get some further information.

Goodby,

Roel Ooqo
Kerkpad 16
4818 PK Breda
Nederland

Dragi Gorane,

Tvoja ideja o učestvovanju u internacionalnom štrajku umetnika protiv umetničkih sistema, veoma je značajna. Ma kako zamisao bila sjajna, bojim se da će njeno izvođenje biti vrlo teško. Na primer, mi ćemo bojkotovati kulturni centar »De Beyerde« u Breda iz gotovo istih razloga koje ti navodiš u pismu. Ukoliko gradonačelnik i gradski većnik Brede podrži direktora i plan njegove politike za narednih pet godina, mi ćemo kulturni centar proglasiti zagađenom oblašću za umetnike te se nadamo da više neće biti nijednog umetnika koji bi želeo da tamo izlaže.

Uzgred, ovo sam pismo dobio posredstvom Hary de Hroona. Ukoliko ti ubuduće bude potrebna neka pomoć, daću sve od sebe. Iskreno ti želim sreću i nadam se da ću, kada iznađeš oblike bojkota, dobiti dalje informacije.

Zbogom,

Roel.

Mel Ramsden

MIDDLETON CHENEY
19 AVH.

DEAR HORAN,

THANK YOU VERY, VERY MUCH FOR THE PARCEL OF
SOCIAL REALIST LITERATURE YOU FORWARDED TO
ME. IT WILL BE MOST USEFUL + I APPRECIATE
THE AMOUNT OF EFFORT YOU PUT INTO
COLLECTING IT.

IF I CAN RETURN THE FAVOR — LET ME KNOW.

AS FOR YOUR 'ART STRIKE'. I WOULD NOT
TAKE PART IN AN INTERNATIONAL ART STRIKE.
IF THE ARTIST IS ALIENATED FROM THE RESULTS
OF HIS PRACTICE, ITS UP TO THE ARTIST TO
TAKE STEPS TO CHANGE THIS, NOT TO BLAME
ENTREPRENEURISM, ALLEGED 'CAPITALISTS'.

FINALLY, TWO THINGS: I DON'T HAVE THE
FINANCIAL FLEXIBILITY TO BOYCOTT THE
ART SYSTEM.

SECOND IN THE ART LANGUAGE RECORD, THERE
IS A SONG 'DON'T TALK TO SOCIOLOGISTS' ONE
LINE IS:

'DON'T UNITE ARTISTS, IF IT MAKES YOU THINK
THERE IS A RATIONAL CORE TO THEIR ACTIVITY,
AND NOT ONE MAINTAINED BY FORCE AND
VIOLENCE.'

BEST WISHES + THANK YOU AGAIN!

MEL RAMSDEN.

MEL RAMSDEN

Dragi Gorane,

Što se tiče ideje o «štrajku umetnika»: ne bih učestvovao u međunarodnom štrajku umetnika. Ako je umetnik otuđen od rezultata svoje prakse, onda je do umetnika da preduzme korake da to stanje promeni, a ne da krivicu baca na preduzetnike, i druge kapitaliste.

I konačno, dve stvari: nemam tu finansijsku fleksibilnost koja bi mi dozvolila da bojkotujem umetnički sistem.

Drugo, na onoj Art & Language ploči ima jedna pesma pod nazivom «Ne govori sa sociolozima». Jedna strofa u toj pesmi kaže:

«Ne sjedinjuj umetnike, ako te to navodi da misliš da postoji neko racionalno jezgro u njihovoj delatnosti, a ne jezgro koje se održava snagom i nasiljem.»

Sve najbolje i još jednom hvala!

Mel Ramsden

Middleton Cheney
19. august

Raša Todosijević

aimer la France
comme la France
a aimé Van Gogh
en 1886.

Za i Protiv

Šta umetnik može da uradi danas 1980. godine?

Delimična rešenja, mali uzleti, bezbroj zabluda i razočaranja, naknadne popravke ili sitna preuređivanja stare fasade umetnosti. Eto, to je ono što umetniku preostaje u 1980. godini.

Kada sasvim nove socijalne protivrečnosti počnu da se približavaju svom klimaksu, kada postane sasvim jasno da stare vrednosti neće još dugo moći da vladaju, neki će umetnici, verujem, ponovo obući odela revolucionara: zauzeće svoja mesta na barikadi, svoje dugo prikrivane želje će uzvikivati po ulicama, uživati u toj ulozi, uveravajući čak i sebe da će staro zauvek nestati. Ponovo će govoriti o Dantonu, Robespjeru, Prudonu, Hegelu, Marksu, Lenjinu, Dadaizmu, Konstruktivizmu, Parizu iz 1968, o jednom Novom Maju, Avgustu, Septembru, Oktobru, o Novoj, Drugačijoj Umetnosti i Novom Životu. Jedna nova, naizgled divlja misao, vodiće ga k cilju o kome je razmišljao.

U stvarnosti, njegov duh, duh evropskog umetnika, oдавно je zamenio Kurbea za Pikasa: bedna zamena, bleđa senka, ali svakako vrlo korisna. Sve u svemu, on će svoju revolucionarnu umetnost želeti dobro da unovči.

Todosijević Raša

1980. April. Beograd

Pro et contra

What an artist could do today in 1980?

Partial solutions, small ascents, innumerable failures and disappointments, supplemental corrections or minor reconstructions of the old facade of the art. Well, this is what has been left over for the artist to do in 1980.

When totally new social contradictions start reaching their climax, when it becomes utterly clear that old values are no more able to reign, some of the artists, I believe, will put on their revolutionary clothes: they will take their positions on the barricades, crying out their wishes down in the streets, the wishes which they have been hiding for long, they will enjoy that role, convincing even themselves that the old will disappear forever. Again, they will speak about Danton, Prudhon, Robespierre, Hegel, Marx, Lenin, Dadaism, Constructivism, Paris in 1968, about a New May, August, September, October, about a New, Alternative Art, and a New Life.

A new mind, seemingly a new one, will lead them toward the goal they have been thinking of for a long time.

In reality, in their minds — minds of the European artists — Courbet has since long been exchanged for Picasso: a wretched exchange, a pale shadow, though by no means a useful one. All in all, they would like to make a good money out of their revolutionary art.

Todosijević Raša

1980. April. Belgrade.

Lawrence Weiner

13 Bleecker Str. New York City 10012 USA March 1979

Goran Đorđević
 III Bulevar 106/15
 11070 N. Beograd, Yugoslavia

Dear Goran Đorđević

Thank you for your kind invitation to join yourself & other artists in a General Boycot.
 I must decline.
 At this time I do not see a strike as useful in the attempt to break the cultural repression of the art system both commercial & academic. I must wish you well & again state that it is in my opinion just CUTTING OFF ONE'S NOSE TO SPITE ONE'S FACE

Your colleague in art,

Lawrence Weiner

Lawrence Weiner

* I shall pass your note on to other artist who may agree with your attempt at a solution

Dragi Gorane Đorđeviću,
 Hvala ti na ljubaznom pozivu da se sa ostalim umetnicima pridružim Opštem bojkotu. Ja moram odbiti.
 Ne smatram da je štrajk sada koristan u pokušaju da se slomi kulturna represija umetničkog sistema koja je i komercijalna i akademska.
 Moram ti zaželeći sreću i ponoviti da je to po mom mišljenju samo ono — NAŠKODITI SEBI PRKOSEĆI DRUGOME
 Tvoj kolega po umetnosti,
 Lawrence Weiner
 Preneću tvoju poruku drugim umetnicima koji će se možda složiti s tvojim pokušajem

13 Bleecker Str. New York City 10012 USA

Dear Goran Đorđević

Certainly not to say that one can (or should) work within the so-called system to bring about a different system BUT there may be a method of working around the system.

LEO CASTELLI
 420 West Broadway
 New York 10012

Perhaps by integrating the problems of the production of art & at the same time attempting to both make & show art.

When an artist no longer makes art

LAWRENCE WEINER
 March 31-April 21, 1979

they can no longer function as an artist but as a concerned citizen. The concerned citizen at the same time must work at their work & concern themselves with the level of the culture.
 Most best regards & warm greetings

LAWRENCE WEINER

Dragi Gorane Đorđeviću,
 Ne tvrdim da neko može (ili treba) da radi unutar takozvanog sistema da bi prouzrokovao drugačiji sistem, ALI može da postoji način zaobilazjenja sistema. Možda sjedinjavajući problem proizvodnje umetnosti, istovremeno pokušavajući da se proizvodi i prikazuje umetnost. Kada umetnik više ne proizvodi umetnost, on više ne može da funkcioniše kao umetnik, već kao zainteresovani građanin. Zainteresovani građanin istovremeno mora da radi svoj posao i da se interesuje za nivo kulture itd. Najbolje želje i tople pozdrave

Lawrence Weiner



AIR MAIL

Goran Đorđević
 III Bulevar 106/15
 11070 N. BEOGRAD

JUGOSLAVIA

AIR MAIL

AIR MAIL

L A Z Y A R T I S T S

The series of documents — which includes the performative gestures and verbal statements of Mladen Stilinović, Raša Todosijević, Goran Trbuljak as well as the memories of the doormen of *Salon de Fleurus* — deals with the questions of free time, work, production and money, claiming that creative work [even if it appears in the form of radical negation of work and institutionalized forms of creative production] is subjugated to the market economy as any other kind of work.

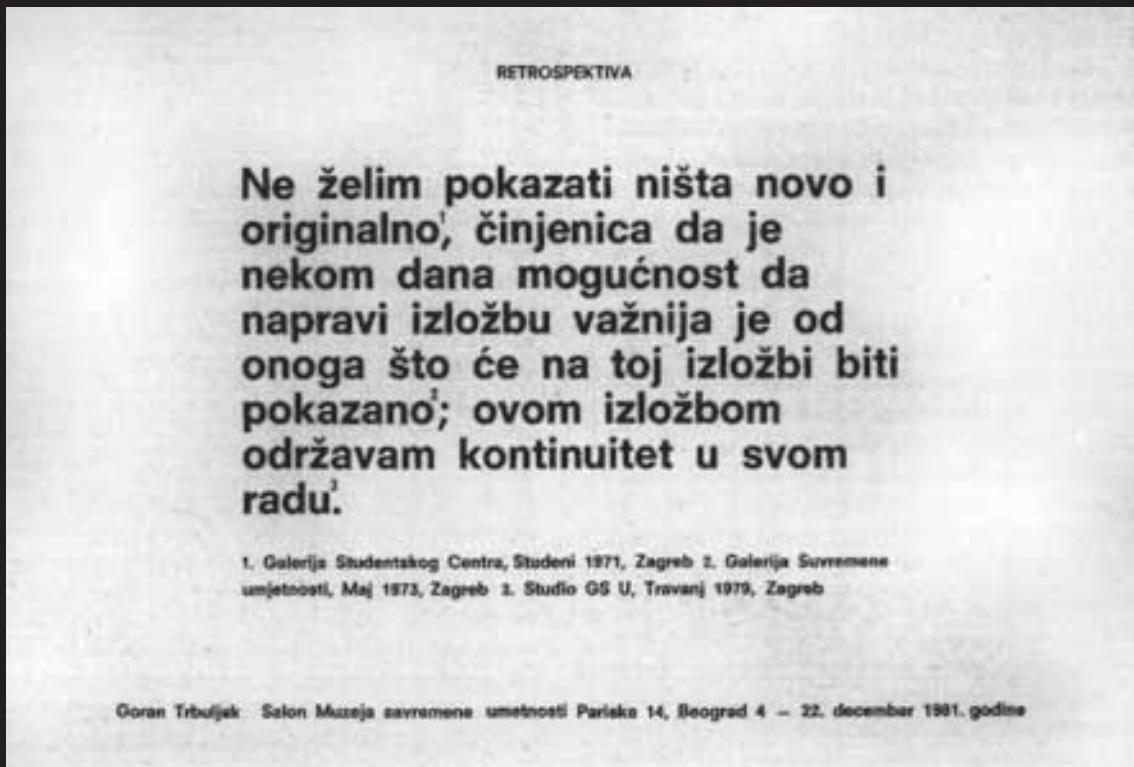
The displayed documents reveal the early consciousness about the dangers and misleadings in understanding the function of immaterial labour within the upcoming transformation of capitalism, with its development of cultural industries and new ‘attention’ and ‘experience’ economies. Conceptualist systematic negation of manual work and marketable value of an artwork/object, on the other hand, leads to the fetishization of the idea, and it is precisely “the idea” that becomes the most valuable and marketable product in the last few decades.

Documents contain the series of images from artists and art-historical books, produced in [ex] Yugoslavia from the 70s — onwards and audio files from the archive of www.radiodays.org.

Jelena Vesić



Mladen Stilinović, *Artist at Work*, 1973-1983



RETROSPECTIVE

I don't want to exhibit anything new and original. ¹⁾ The fact that somebody is given a possibility to make an exhibition is more important than what will be shown at the exhibition. ²⁾ With this show, I maintain the continuity in my work. ³⁾

1) Gallery of the Students' Centre, November 1971, Zagreb

2) Gallery for Contemporary Art, May 1973, Zagreb

3) Studio GS U, April 1979, Zagreb



NIJEDAN DAN BEZ LINIJE / NOT A DAY WITHOUT A LINE

Sto hiljada linija, in private, olovka na zidu, Beograd, 1976
Hundred thousand lines, in private, pencil on wall, Belgrade, 1976

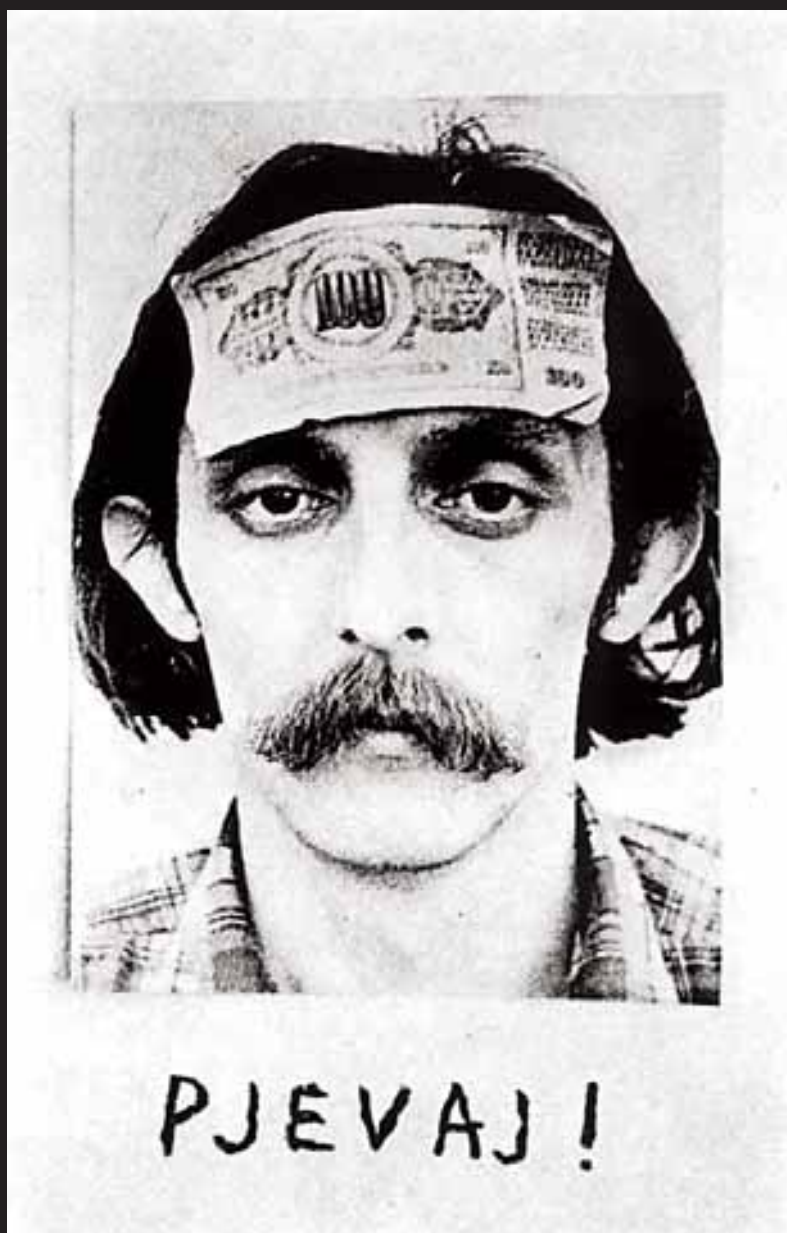
Dvesta hiljada linija za Pariski Bijenale, olovka na zidu, Pariz, 1977
Two hundred thousand lines for Biennial in Paris, pencil on wall, Paris, 1977

Deset linija u galeriji, Galerija Wspolzesna, Varšava, 1976
Ten lines in the gallery, Gallery Wspolzesna, Warsaw, 1976



Deset hiljada linija u galeriji, olovka na zidu, Art-Tape 22, Firenca, 1976
Ten thousand lines in the gallery, pencil on wall, Art-Tape 22, Firenze, 1976

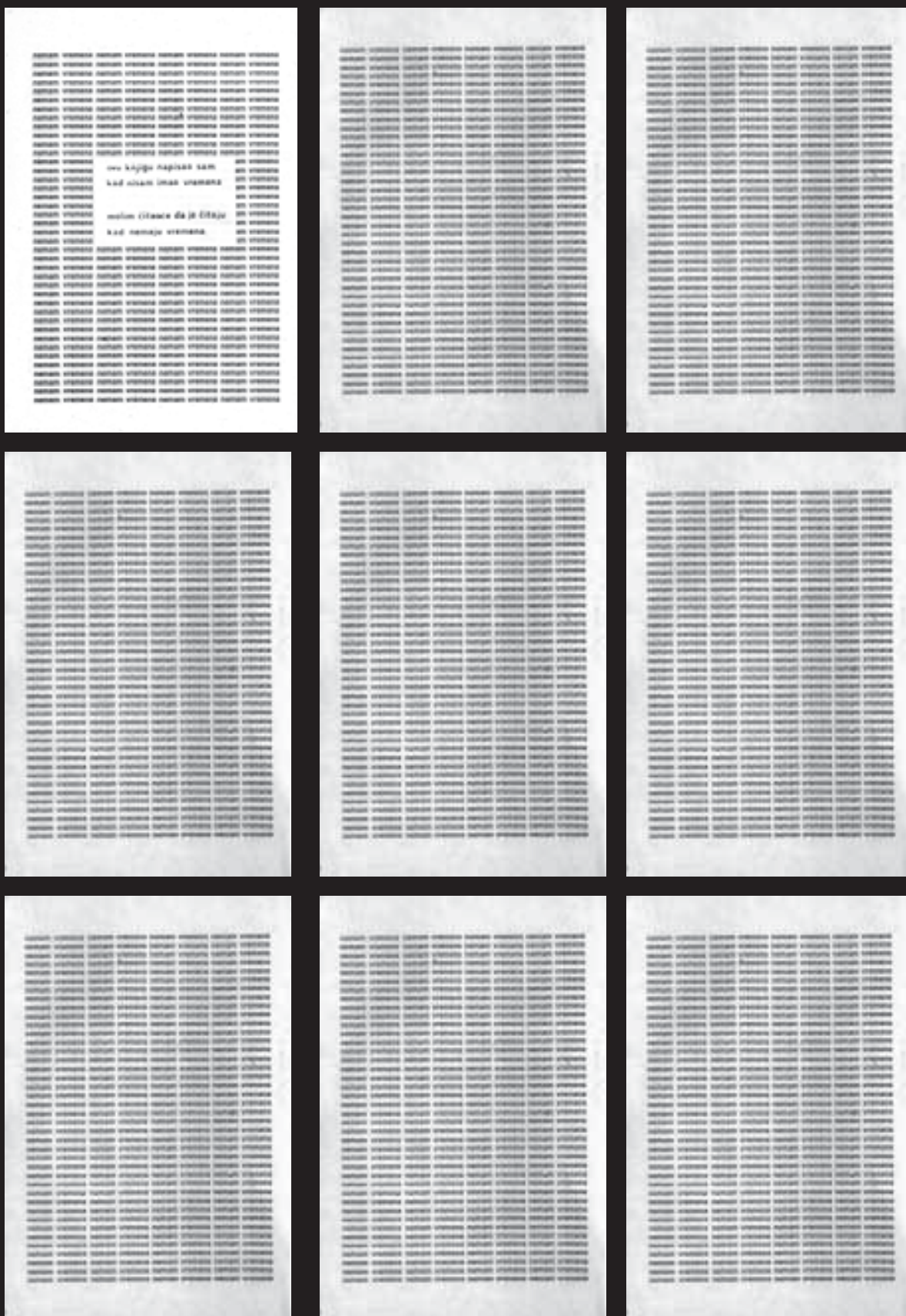
Jedna linija u napuštenoj kući, olovka na zidu, Follonica, Italija, 1976.
One line in an abandoned house, pencil on wall, Follonica, Italy, 1976



Mladen Stilinović, Sing!, *Reflections on Money*, 1980



Raša Todosijević, *Not a day without a line*, Ink on paper, March 1976



EDINBURGH STATEMENT

WHO MAKES A PROFIT ON ART, AND WHO GAINS FROM IT HONESTLY?

The author wrote this text in order to profit from the good and bad in art!

The factories, which produce materials, are necessary to artists.

The firms, which sell materials, are necessary to artists.

Their workers, clerks, sales personnel, agents, etc...

The firms or private business owners who provide the equipment or decorate the work of artists.

The carpenters who make frames, wooden structural supports, etc...

The producers of glass, paper, pencils, paints, tools, etc...

Their workers, clerks, sales personnel, retailers, etc...

The real estate agencies which collect rent for: studios, lofts, living quarters or for the holes where artists live.

Their employers, clerks, etc...

All those producing and selling either wholesale or retail everyday items to artists.

All those producing and selling either wholesale or retail footwear and clothing to artists.

All those who create and sell either wholesale or retail cultural requisites to artists.

All those produce and sell, either wholesale or retail drugs, sanitary supplies, and alcohol, contraceptives, cigarettes and sporting goods to artists.

All those collecting taxes on artists' incomes.

Municipal clerks and other administrative personnel.

The banks with their higher and lower-ranking staff members.

Small craftsmen: tinsmiths, doctors, frame-makers, shoemakers, and gravediggers.

Professional mosaic craftsmen who execute someone else's mosaics.

Professional casters who cast someone else's sculpture.

Gallery owners, gallery administration, gallery curators and their personal secretaries and friends.

The subsidized gallery council.

The voluntary gallery council which collect money because they are not paid.

Purchasing commissions, its members and consultants.

Extremely well trained conference experts having both good and bad intentions concerning art.

Managers, retailers, dealers and all other small-time or big-time art profiteers.

The organizers of public or partially public auctions.

The collectors.

Those shrewd profit makers who profit from finer or capital works outside of public collections.

«Anonymous» benefactors.

The well-known and respected benefactors.

The low, higher and highest-ranking personnel of cultural institutions and the organizers of art, cultural and educational programs. The staff members involved in the organization of an exhibition.

All administrative employers.

The clerk, who orders, issues and accounts for the necessary materials for an exhibit.

The account office.

The janitor.

The secretaries of other persons related with institutions, which provide funds for cultural programs.

All technical personnel.

Professional and non-professional managers.

The designer of the catalogue, of invitations and posters.

The messenger.

The fire inspector.

The critic, writer or other individual responsible for

Audio document

Raša Todosijević - Edinburgh statement: Who is making profit on art and who is earning honestly, 1975
(Reading of the text: Huib van der Werf, Radiodays project, De Appel, Amsterdam, 2005)
www.radiodays.org

duration: 20 minutes

PRELON: *Copies of The Harbingers were exhibited in Berlin, Zagreb, Belgrade, Ljubljana and Sarajevo. How did the public react to the copies?*

[REDACTED] I remember, for example, that not many people came to the exhibition in Ljubljana. One of the visitors came in and instantaneously stood in front of the first painting, he did not even look at what else was being exhibited. He looked at the painting for a while, analysed it carefully, and then went on to the next painting and began to analyse that one. When he realised that they were the same, he turned towards the third one and then all puzzled, started looking around him. Realizing that all the paintings were the same, he hurriedly left the gallery. It was obvious to him that what he had seen was something utterly different from the conventional painting, or exhibition. Because the moment the spectator starts analyzing the copy as a painting, which has all the painting elements: technique, composition, motive and a story, he is on the wrong path. This is the paradox of the copy, which I perceived then. It still contains the original within, it is its essence. A copy needs to be materialized, even though the meaning of the copy is outside the material in which it was made. The copy needs to be made, it has to exist, both as an image, an object, or the material; and as a representation – while actually the very image, its content, its representation in principle does not have any significance for the interpretation of the copy.



Audio document

Story on copy: Radio monodrama made after the recollections of the doorman of Salon de Fleurus, 2005
(Reading of the text: Kathrin Jentjens, Claire Staebler, Jelena Vesic and Veronica Wiman, Radiodays project, De Appel, Amsterdam, 2005)
www.radiodays.org

duration: 30 minutes

SKC AND

SELF-MANAGEMENT

: Note

Cultural Politics in the SFRY After 1968: SKC as an Institution

Cultural life of the socialist Yugoslavia was becoming more liberalized and relaxed after the turning point of Yugoslav socialism in the period 1948 – 1953. It characterized by condemnation of soc-realism in art and of the entire Stalinist cultural model, as well as the opening to Western cultural influences. A number of important cultural events were established throughout Yugoslavia during the 1960s and the 1970s – such were the “New Tendencies” in Zagreb and the Yugoslav film festival in Pula, or, in case of Belgrade, the international film festival FEST, the experimental theatre festival BITEF, and the musical festival BEMUS.

At the same time, various cultural producers and artists, emancipated from the obligation to put their work in the service of immediate socio-political ends, have turned their attention towards the issues of everyday life in socialism, its contradictions, paradoxes and antagonisms. It formed – especially after the relatively stabile and outstandingly prosperous decade that ended up in the mid-1960s – an alternative to the mainstream culture. In the media and, especially, within local, municipal and youth branches of the Communist League this tendency was recognized as “pessimism in culture” with a potential danger for dwindling down the enthusiasm and the belief in the unstoppable progress of the socialist society. There were important debates and clashes within the literary circles, dissident intellectuals gathering around the summer school in Korčula and the Praxis journal, the “black wave” of Yugoslav cinema picking up the pace, while the various experimental art groups and projects multiplied.

The second part of the 1960s brought up the efforts for a comprehensive social reform that made the existing political arrangements volatile. Among other voices of dissent, the students were rebelling against bureaucratic tendencies, representing the need for generational change in the leading ranks of society. The June 1968 protests on the Belgrade University, with echoes in Zagreb, Novi Sad and Ljubljana, stemmed from the demand for the continuation of the socialist revolution taking thus the form of a leftist critique. The slogan “Down with the red bourgeoisie” summarized the mixture of a radical move to abolish the rigid and hierarchical communist party politics and a legitimate demand for deepening the socialist self-management, representing thus ideological/theoretical combination of the then popular French Maoism and the official Yugoslav humanist Marxism. Students were influenced by hippy-culture together with the New Left.

Belgrade’s Students’ Cultural Center came into the being as the result of political action of a group of young intellectuals that lead the protests and that made up the Students’ League Presidency. Since the reconstruction of the former house of the state security agency was already under way, the building was given to the University at the very end of the 1960s. This move is interpreted in two ways: either the SKC was a kind of an “organized margin”, a place where the critical ideas and practices could have been enclosed and kept under surveillance, or it was a conquered place of unfettered freedom of artistic and cultural expression of a new generation. Anyway, certain people took this opportunity and started working there, thus making an important and one of the most interesting experiments in cultural history of the SFRY.

The case of Belgrade’s Students Cultural Center during the 1970s reveals a complex mode of functioning which is in a number of ways parallel to the contemporary cultural institutions. Even though it was established and budgeted by the government – i.e. the “society” – and judicially founded by the Belgrade University and the Students’ League, it represented a space for a critical cultural production. Although it was organized as a professional institution of culture with the administrative distribution of roles, it operated in a non-hierarchical way, without any respect for traditional divisions between the cultural producers and the audience or towards disciplinary and professional divisions. Being, of course always insufficiently, budgeted from the official cultural funds, it had over the half of its programs in collaboration with the institutions from abroad. Its mode of functioning was introducing the new forms of cultural activism by combining the enthusiast, voluntary work with the professional, paid labor. It represented variety of free collective ventures that aided to cultural education, production and dialogue by using the offered social means of production and the infrastructure, but, at the same time, providing a “proof” for the progressiveness of the official self-management socialism. All those contradictory traits allow us via this historical example to examine the possibilities of different and defying practices within the cultural institutions and to shed light on the possibilities of critique within them.

Dušan Grlja





The Students' Cultural Center will certainly not be the only place where the students of Belgrade University can satisfy their cultural needs. On contrary, there are a lot of the existing cultural institutions that produce authentic cultural values and, also, a lot of places for "consumerist" or "mass" culture. Therefore, the capacities for affirmation of students' creative work in the sphere of culture are insufficient. It is precisely this that makes up the main reason of the Center's existence and for its presence on Belgrade's cultural map.

Although the wanted aims and activities surpass the current material possibilities of the Center, the fact that it should be a students' – meaning academic – institution calls for a scientific approach for planning and realizing of all the ideas. Therefore, the segment of the Program that involves discussions, panels and encounters is of importance. Students' intellectual and political interests for the crucial issues of the development of our socialist society and for the socio-political aspects of art and cultural life, as well as for theoretical foundations and contradictions of art and culture, necessitate a carefully articulated plan for the Center's tribune program. Its main criteria should be contemporariness, documentarity and scientificity.

Without the serious and consistent efforts to ensure the quality of its program the Center will become more or less successful institution similar to the existing ones. Either it will become simply a clubbing space, if the programming appeals to "mass" or "consumerist" culture, or it will become a usual meeting place for the conservative upbringing of "decent" youth, if the programs boil down to the usual "dancing" and "folklore" activity. Therefore, in order to exit those alternatives, the Center will focus on creating its own audience. It should be done with the efficient and synchronized propagation of all that the Center is realizing and offering, meaning that the functional photo documentation, posting service, distribution of tickets and invitations, etc. must be achieved. It is also necessary to provide a clear and easily recognizable symbol for the Center as a "sign" of its activities.

In the process of creation of the Center's audience will have to counter the dominant laziness of the intellect and the insufficient spiritual effort for adopting the authentic cultural properties characteristic for our social environment. That could be achieved only by affirmation of the progressive cultural and artistic heritage, having in mind that the manner of selecting, exhibiting and developing that heritage are crucial for a positive public reception.



June 3rd, 1968

The students have, during the course of past two days, among other things, displayed their dissatisfaction with the following phenomena in our society and set the following demands:

- 1) We hold that the fundamental problem in our society is social inequality. Therefore, we demand:
 - consistent distribution measured by work;
 - energetic action against enriching in a non-socialist manner, mode, way;
 - that the social structure of the students reflects the social structure in general;
 - abolishment of all privileges existing in our society.
- 2) One of the causes of student's anger is a large number of unemployed. Therefore, we demand:
 - abolishment of honorary employment;
 - reduction of managerial cadre without the adequate qualifications and employing, instead of them, young experts;
 - faster and more energetic enforcement of the Mandatory Internship Law and support for the young experts in order to stop their emigration abroad.
- 3) The existence of strong bureaucratic forces in our society calls for:
 - democratization of all socio-political organizations, especially of the Communist League of Yugoslavia;
 - democratization of all the media and of the process of making constituting public opinion;
 - freedom of gathering and protesting.
- 4) Students are particularly enraged by the present state of our universities. Therefore, we demand:
 - improvement of material state of the university;
 - equal participation of students in all the bodies which are solving the crucial problems of our society, especially those directly or indirectly connected with the students of students' interest;
 - condemnation of the cliques and monopolies at certain university departments and a harsh struggle against them;
 - complete and democratic re-electionality of the whole teaching staff;
 - free enrollment for the students.

The Students' Action Committee and the Students Convent in the Students' City



scenes from Željimir Žilnik's film "June Movements"

June 3rd, 1968

For some time now, within the students' ranks, the problems of employment are with a good reason set forth. Since the beginning of the reforms, the League of communists have clearly declared and fought for the position that there is no successful realization of the reforms without the opening of economic organizations to the young experts. Nevertheless, the results of this struggle have not been satisfactory. The Presidency and the Executive committee of the Central Committee of the Communist League of Serbia are inviting the communists in working organizations to start an energetic action for enabling employment and the adequate positioning of young experts. The constitutive part of this action must consist of making a new Law on the level of republic and other regulations, which would enable a new employment policy.

The Presidency and the Executive committee of the Central Committee of the Communist League of Serbia are determined to hold their position on that all problematic issues should be dealt only in a democratic manner, and not by using disorder and pressure. That method would pave the way for the state which would practically halt the course of democratic and self-managerial development of our society.

Supporting the positive students' demands, the Presidency and the Executive Committee of the Central Committee of the Communist League of Serbia, assuming the full responsibility, emphasize that in our complex economic and political situation are also active some forces that have no interest in developing socialist democracy, self-management and the equality of nations. They are trying to misuse a progressive students' political movement and to channel it for their own ends. Therefore, communists, especially the ones in the university, together with the whole Communist League of Serbia have an enormous responsibility to prevent the events taking a course which would slow down and endanger huge efforts of Serbian communists for a consistent development of democratic relations and the equality of nations. The students of Belgrade University have always upheld the real democracy and progress. We are convinced they are conscious of their full responsibility in these decisive days as well.

Announcement of
the Presidency and
the Executive Committee of
the Central Committee of
the Communist League of Serbia



June 4th, 1968

Approving, in principle, the full coincidence of students' political demands with the basic premises of our self-managerial society, the Executive Council of Socialist Republic of Serbia had thoroughly considered students' demands regarding the issues of social and material status of the University. Since a number of decisions and solutions for those issues have been previously prepared by the adequate bodies, the Executive Council of Socialist Republic of Serbia has committed to take them in considerations during the next session, together with the representatives of the Students and the University.

Expressing regrets for the clashes of students and the People's militia, both the Executive Council and Students' Action Committee have formed a joint commission which is to inspect the circumstances that have led to the clashes and responsibility for the eventual misuse of the officially given authorities.

Announcement of
the Executive Council of
the Socialist Republic of Serbia

ON EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND CULTURE

The constitutive traits of the development of cultural and creative potentials of Yugoslav peoples are:

- unfettered development of national cultures on the basis of equality and creative cooperation between them;
- socialist democratization of the educational system, as well as of scientific, artistic and all cultural institutions;
- the liberation of educational, scientific, artistic and cultural life from the administrative intrusion of governmental bodies, from the etatist and pragmativist conceptions of cultural creative work, by building on and improving the system of social self-management in educational, scientific and other cultural institutions and organizations;
- Marxist critical attitude towards cultural creative works of all nations, towards cultural heritage of the Yugoslav nations, struggle against the mystification of cultural history and cultural values by bourgeois class, struggle against uneducated, primitive and sectarian underestimating of the cultural fund created in the past, which a socialist society, as the natural and historical inheritor of the positive cultural heritage, accepts and cultivates, making it one of the elements for building a classless civilization.

In order to fulfill our historical task of creating a socialist society in our country, we must engage all our powers towards that goal, by being critical towards ourselves and our work, by being relentless enemies of any dogmatism and by staying faithful to the revolutionary and creative spirit of Marxism. Nothing that has been created by now must not be that sacred to us to prevent us from making it more progressive, more free, more humanistic!

from the Program of the Communist League of Yugoslavia,
declared on the 7th Congress in Ljubljana, 1958





scenes from Želimir Žilnik's film "June Movements"

14. This kind of university has three basic principles:

- a) University as a structure has a transient character. It simply fulfills the socially ascribed authority to verify for a certain number of subjects the acquired knowledge, therefore to produce a specific type of experts. Since it has no character of a productive institution, it cannot insure a more stabile character of its subjects provided by the importance of its function for production in general. Since it, therefore, doesn't produce any value but only spends it, the university obviously has no prerogatives except to enable the transmission of the social knowledge and of the values and to issue formal symbols in the form of diplomas for certain types of professions. The university, for it only spends social funds and being just a channel for the improvement of the social status, is only a consumer of science. Therefore, science is not at the university. At its best, the university has a function of translating science's fundamental properties to its practical usage.
- b) University as organization is based on the principle of knowledge transfer, examination of knowledge and verification of its possession.
- c) University as institution represents a certain distribution of financial support and of the social power of teachers' structure. Within this kind of institution students can only be spectators in the process of self-managerial decision-making or, in a more sophisticated form, to participate in that process only in some predetermined aspects. The teachers' structure is using open calls to reproduce itself by cooptation of those students which have dedicated their extracurricular activities to scientific work. In that way those students enter the hierarchy of teachers' structure and the university as institution.

15. The transformation of the university, the so-called reform of the university, cannot originate only from within it. It's obvious that only students are those who are rising against this kind of university. In the last instance, all their demands boil down to a single one: to "enter" the university. The destruction of this kind of university is especially difficult in the field of its institutional functioning. It would have to annihilate the basic division which represents this fundamental structural trait: the division of teachers and students. Taking this into account, the students' demand for restructuring of the university must be articulated as a political demand and, in that way, to become the main task of the Students' League. Political character of students' demands makes the clash between teachers and students a political struggle. This clash could be surpassed with the emancipatory function of science which in its own transformed organizational production liberates the both categories.

written by Vladimir Gligorov
for the purposes of the working group for drafting
the program of Students' League of Yugoslavia



The Students' Cultural Center has, above all, an ambition to seek its audience among those students that have been – to a certain extent – excluded from the Belgrade's cultural curriculum. This determination represents an obligation for the future functioning of the Center, since its task is to create its own audience out of this kind of students by means of propagating, supporting and providing the infrastructure for active cultural life. Nevertheless, the program must not be subjected and adjusted to social or other constraints in order not to treat people as they were from some "other" social or cultural climate or not to succumb to the logic that distinguishes "high" from "low" cultural and artistic values.

The fact that the majority of students have dissatisfactory cultural education and that they adhere to mediocre or even primitive values does not absolve the Center from the duty to base each of its activities on an informed analysis of their cultural, aesthetical and scientific qualities. This fact of students' precarious socio-economical position as well as their underdeveloped cultural and aesthetic education will lead: either to covering-up and prolonging of this state – which would provoke demagoguery since the social investments and expectations are huge; or to creating a program that would produce such cultural values that could be immediately recognized as a integral part of the culture of our socialist society. Opting for the latter, the Center is determined to satisfy the broadest specter of cultural interests by diversifying its program: concerts of classical and contemporary music, exhibitions, discussions, film screenings, theatre plays, clubbing, and other appropriate entertainment contents.

To be up-to-date, to be engaged, to be direct or consciously distanced – in respect to the aesthetic components or the social implications of an artwork – are today's basic prerequisites for working in contemporary culture and art, or any cultural activity generally. The Center sets for itself the task to offer its facilities for realization of those prerequisites, being equipped with a big hall (250 seats), a smaller dancing hall, two galleries, a club space, restaurant and lounge.

Programming Principles
of the Students' Cultural Center, 1971

Having in mind various conceptual and explorative efforts of contemporary young creative workers
TOWARDS SURPASSING THE TRADITIONAL BOUNDARIES BETWEEN THE ARTS, AS WELL AS TOWARDS EXPANDING THEIR CHARACTERISTICS AND THE SPECTER OF THEIR MEANINGS,
 the Students' Cultural Center in Belgrade in cooperation with the University Committee of the Students' League of Yugoslavia wishes to support those individuals and groups whose interests belong to this area.
ON THE OCCASION OF APRIL THE 4TH – THE STUDENTS' DAY – IS ANNOUNCING AN OPEN YUGOSLAV COMPETITION FOR WORKS FROM THE FIELD OF EXPANDED MEDIA.

GENERAL REQUIREMENTS:

The competition is open for collective and individual projects from the fields of theatre, film, music, visual arts, architecture and design, which belong to the sphere of expanded media and which can be realized in the city's public spaces or within the Students' Cultural Center building. Submitted works must be explained in detail with plans, drawings, models, photographs, films, scenographic designs, musical scores, texts, etc., i.e. explained in a manner that illustrates authors' concept and the possibilities of its realization. The competition simultaneously represents the practical aiming for research in the field of media and in the new forms of expression, which are not determined by a professional orientation and which represent the common denominator of all the activities during the April Encounters.

COMPETITION RULES:

The author's or collectives' names should be ciphered and sent in a sealed envelope containing the materials as well as a separate one with the authors' full names.

Submitted works shouldn't be older than one year.

Participants agree to give their works to the Students' Cultural Center without any compensation.

The works (projects) that are going to be realized or exhibited will be selected by a professional jury by March 15th 1973.

The works should be sent on the following address:

Students' Cultural Center, Maršala Tita 48, post box 567



The Center's Gallery is equipped with all the necessary facilities for developing any particular art program. The fact that our time is the time of images, the time of communication brings about the importance of presentation and symbolic value of an image. This is nowadays all too well known in the fields of commerce and politics. Social sciences and art theory also emphasize the importance of the so-called visual culture and visual arts for the general development of cultural life and its forms. Certain art forms – interwoven with the socio-cultural functions of visual arts and their inherent values – are especially indispensable in this context: painting, graphics, drawing, sculpture, design, architecture, photography, visual qualities of film, etc.

Diverse tendencies exist on today's visual arts scene of our society. In spite of certain immobility and the prevalence of the status quo, there are efforts to experiment and explore beyond the existing art canon. Exchanges with the main visual arts centers in our country, as well as abroad, are intensifying and there is a large number of artists which are – despite occasional epigoneism and uncritical or indifferent attitudes with the remains of provincialism – creating authentic artworks and thus contributing to the development of new values in visual arts. Therefore, the main tasks of the gallery are: affirmation of the existing authentic expressions, making the explorations and experimentations publicly accessible, and keeping up with up-to-date developments in our country and abroad. Retrospective and thematic exhibitions will keep the audience in contact with classical and contemporary artists from Yugoslavia and abroad. The Gallery's art-policy will consist in clear differentiations in the affirmation of new, original and significant art developments, as well as in making connections with the historical, established and always relevant art practices. Collaboration with other galleries, museums and other art institutions, accompanied by the exchange with artists from all over our country and the world represent the main prerequisites of that policy.

Programming Principles of the SKC Gallery, 1971



The importance of commune within our social system consists in its two following aspects. It is, on the one hand, such a socio-economical community in which the basic harmonization of the individual interests of the working people with the collective interest of social community can be achieved. On the other hand, precisely because of such its character, it is the most suitable political form through which largest number of the working people could in an unmediated way participate in the governing of our society. Therefore, such forms direct broad masses of working people to a conscious social existence – meaning not to envision particular social problems through the eyeglasses of their individual interests – and, consequently, to become the informed masters of their destiny with a clear insight into the social needs and objective possibilities.

A commune is simultaneously a community of producers and a community of consumers. This fact enables each citizen not to approach concrete issues from the standpoint of this or that party demagoguery – as it is in other socio-political systems – but to participate autonomously and with the full responsibility in decision processes concerning the best ways of exploring the existing material possibilities. At the same time those kinds of tasks represent the basic citizen's education for approaching and tackling the social issues that are dealt with in higher social bodies. Our basic principle is, therefore, making a self-managerial commune the most important school of socialist democracy.

There is no doubt that such commune will become the basis of our entire political system, i.e. that it will be a constitutive part of every social body all the way up to the Federation. Further development of our political system obviously tends to make communes, as well as all self-managed organizations, the places where the citizens will acquire their social reputation and the abilities required for the functions of social governing in order to be nominated by the management of belonging organizations as candidates for higher representative bodies of social governance.

Edvard Kardelj's speech on
the new organization of municipalities and local communities
in the Federal Assembly of Yugoslav Peoples,
June 16th 1955



: Note

Self-Management As Economic and Political System

By the very beginning of the 1980s two of the most important Yugoslav revolutionary leadership and statesmanship figures were gone: Josip Broz Tito, the leader of Yugoslav Peoples' revolution, the president of Yugoslav Communist party and the president of the state, died in the May of 1980, and a year before Edvard Kardelj, the architect of the self-management socialist system, the creator of four Yugoslav constitutions and the author of the Communist party program. This marked the beginning of the crisis and of the spinout of always present centrifugal forces and antagonisms within the socialist Yugoslavia.

The social system of the Federative People's Republic of Yugoslavia until the end of the 1940s was administrative-centralist, with the federal state apparatus managing economy, culture, education, welfare, etc. After the clash with the Cominform the system of the so-called state socialism was declared to be an "imported" ideology, scorned as Stalinist and detrimental for emancipation of the working class. The adoption of a new law in the 1950 that judicially "handed the factories to the workers" meant the abolishment of the state ownership over the means of production and introducing the social one. Self-management as economic and socio-political system was established by this, based on the idea of the "withering of state" as the passageway to communist society.

The self-management system was based on a notion of socialism as a transitional period, therefore, clearly necessitating a substantive amount of flexibility and of constant adjustments. Political, social and cultural system of the Socialist Yugoslavia was a pragmatic construction within the parameters of a socialist society and the communist movement. The Yugoslav self-management socialism represented – historically very early – an example of a socialist "third way" politics: it was neither the classic multi-party system of representative democracy, nor the one-party system of the East European "real socialism". This kind of politics was successful on domestic level in adopting and co-opting the most of social, cultural, economic, political and national demands, while on the international, it was an acceptable model for the majority of the ex-colonial third-world countries that formed the Nonalignment movement, lead by the SFRY.

The period from the mid-1950s all the way to the mid-1960s – a decade of full industrial and economic development – was characterized by the processes of democratization, de-bureaucratization and de-eatization, of a general liberalization. The communal system was introduced in September 1955 marking the beginning of the process of creating the self-management local community as the basic unit of a bottom-up socio-political structure. It aimed to transfer the state competencies in economy, culture, education and other social activities to the local level. Nevertheless, the state had almost whole gross product at its disposal through the system of centralized investments and social funds.

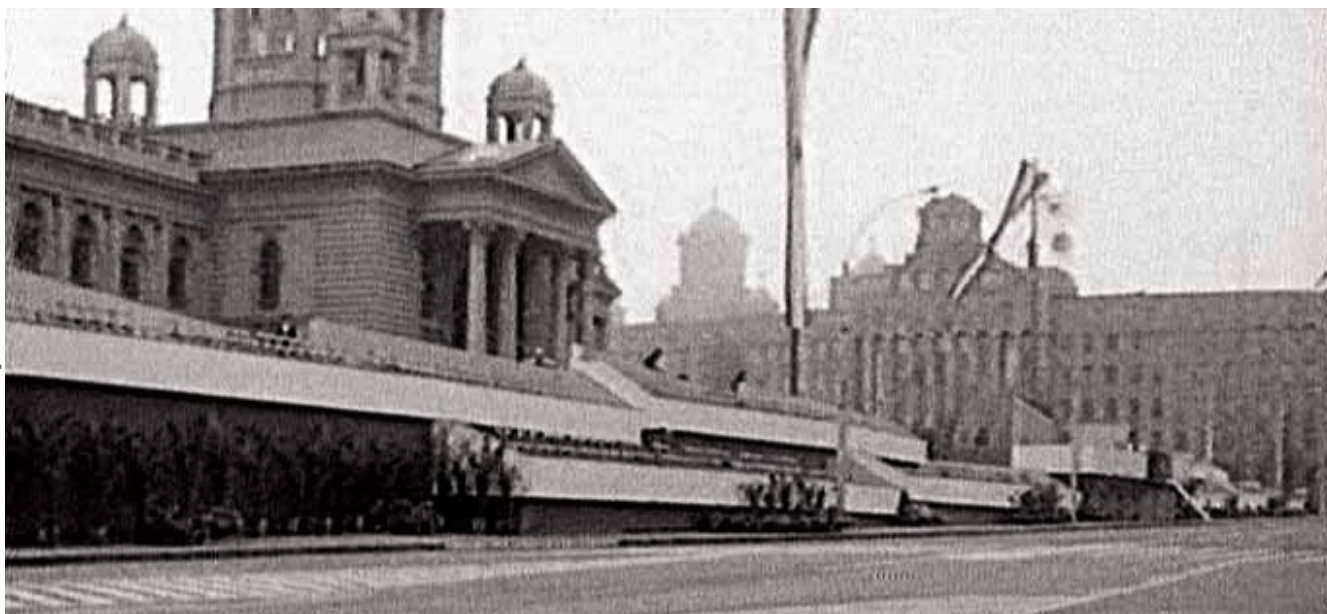
The ambitious social and economic reform was launched in the mid-1960s in order to suppress the remains of state-socialist tendencies and of administrative centralism after adopting the new constitution in 1963, marking thus the birth of the Socialist Federative Republic of Yugoslavia. The changes that started with the economic reform in 1965, the reorganization of Communist League of Yugoslavia and the state security agency in 1966, together with the constitutional amendments in 1967, 1968 and 1971 brought liberalization in economical market-relations, the transfer of the distribution of income from state to the level of labor organizations and the radical shrinking of federative centralism, as well as changes in politics concerning the introduction of pluralism in the decision-making bodies and of the principles of rotation and re-electiveness in the delegates' system. All those changes were summed up in the constitution adopted in 1974 and in the associated labor law in 1976, making up the "late" or "developed" Yugoslav self-management socialism.

This system, in some of its crucial aspects, shows striking and insightful similarities with the economical and, even, political logic of contemporary neo-liberal capitalism. The ongoing process of economic liberalization opened up the space for autonomization of the labor organizations in terms of their production, investments and income allocation, developing thus market relations and mechanisms. The basic organization of the associated labor – as a fundamental unit of the socialist self-management socio-economic system – was free to conduct its business entrepreneurially and to realize the gain in monetary form. In difference with classical capitalist entrepreneurship, the productive usage of socially owned means of production had to pass through a complex mediation of diverse interests and social obligations, making thus the enterprises collective undertakings and insuring fairly equitable distribution. Although the state or the leadership of the Communist League remained the largest entrepreneur, the vast and all-encompassing system of the mass socio-political organizations – the Socialist Alliance of the Working People, the Union's Alliance, the Youth's League, and the citizen's associations – ensured the involvement of the majority of the people as a kind of stakeholders.

By making the plurality of self-management interests the basis of the system and fostering association from the bottom up within the confines of the so-called democratic centralism, socialist Yugoslavia was adopting an almost corporative model. Although quite distinct from the neo-liberal project of social free-market economy, the Yugoslav self-management experience shares with it the effort to displace and transform the competencies of administrative and governmental state apparatus in order to, eventually, dispose with the classical political mechanisms and to base, almost entirely, the governing process on the economic ones. In doing away with thusly conceived "state" the socialist Yugoslavia "withered" in a radical manner. The Yugoslav socialist self-management abolished politics as the struggle for creation and articulation of a "general will" unleashing thus – as the neo-liberal project today – the free play of various particularistic tendencies that lead to disintegration of the social bond that was holding it all together.

Dušan Grlja

scene from Dušan Makavejev's film "Parade"



Article 34

The right of each citizen to self-manage is inviolable.

In order to realize his self-managerial rights, it is guaranteed for every citizen:

- 1) the right to directly decide about social issues on the voters' assemblies, working peoples' assemblies, by the referendum and within other forms of direct decision-making;
- 2) the right to elect others and to be elected for the managerial bodies of a labor organization, for the representative bodies of the socio-political communities and for the other bodies of self-management system, as well as to nominate the candidates to elected in those bodies and to suggest and decide on recalls of the elected delegates;
- 3) the right to initiate the meetings of voters' or working peoples' assemblies and to propose issues for the referendums;
- 4) the right to be informed about the work of representative and self-management bodies, as well as of all institutions of public interest, and especially about the material and financial state of affairs of his labor organization;
- 5) the right to discuss the functioning of state and self-management bodies and of the organizations of public interest;
- 6) the right to submit petitions and suggestions to the representative and other bodies and to undertake political and other initiatives of public interest.

Constitution of the SFRY, April 1963

Article 10

The socialist socio-economic structure of the Socialist Federative Republic of Yugoslavia is based on the freedom of associated labor with the socially owned means of production and on the workers' self-management within production and distribution of social gross product in the basic organizations of the associated labor, as well as in the totality of social reproduction.

Article 251

The working people, as well as the nations and nationalities, realize their economic interests on the unified Yugoslav market. On the basis of the lawfulness of market and the social planning of the economic and social development, the Yugoslav market allows working people and the organizations of associated labor to be equal in performing their duties and in acquiring their income as the result of adjusting of the socio-economic relations through it.

Constitution of the SFRY, February 1974

Article 18

The whole added value created by the workers' own labor within the associated labor is social ownership. It realizes itself within the boundaries of socialist self-managerial socio-economical relationships in the monetary form as a total income of basic organizations, on the basis of the market regularities and within socially determined conditions of realizing it on the basis of self-management.

By their right to work with the socially owned means of production and thus realizing their social function within the process of reproduction, the workers acquire income for the basic organization depending on the realized productivity of their own labor and of the total social labor, on the managerial and productive results and on the successfulness in adjusting their economic or other social activity to demands of the market or to the self-management agreement.

The income of the basic organization of associated labor represents the material basis for realization of socialist socio-economic relations and the particular, collective and social interests, which constitute the workers' self-managerial rights and their social responsibility to ensure the unity of managing their own labor and its conditions, means and results within the totality of social reproduction, and to realize their power and control over financial and other material flow, as well as to guarantee the realization of their social, working, educational, cultural and other existential interests.

The Associated Labor Law, November 1976



Autobus by A3, 1973

ON POLITICAL OR SELF-MANAGERIAL PLURALISM

Despite the relative democratic progress that the development of human rights have brought, parliamentary political pluralism of the bourgeois state still represents man's alienation from governing the society and imposing of the monopoly of certain class and political forces. Nevertheless, this doesn't mean that we are or that we should be against every form of the democratic political pluralism in general. On the contrary, since there are a lot of interests stemming from the class, economic, political, social, and other existential conditions, it is clear that there could be no democracy or emancipation if those interests are not freely expressed. But, this still leaves unsolved the question of the form of such political pluralism.

The Communist League of Yugoslavia is not the only political force with the exclusive and monopolist right to govern, but it has a specific role as the ideological and political vanguard which it realizes through the democratic connectedness with all socialist and democratic forces of our society. Therefore, we have always strived and fought not to make the Communist party, i.e. the Communist League of Yugoslavia, the barer of a one-party system, as a classical communist party, although it must ensure that the decision-making power lies in the hands of those subjective forces that are on the side of socialism and socialist self-management.

The development of self-management and its gradual maturation into an integral socio-economic and political system has substantially expanded and transformed the original forms of our political pluralism. In the socialist self-management democracy the Communist League and other factors of the socialist social, scientific and cultural consciousness are formed and organized as the creative constitutive part of self-managerial and democratic community of free producers, and not as alienated political forces within the competitive power-struggle for governing the society, social labor and its products. The Communist League can achieve its historical role only as the constitutive part of such a system, and not as a force above or outside of it, what we have witnessed in our recent past.

Therefore, the starting point of further development of our democratic political system must be a gradual surpassing the pluralism of political monopolies by truly self-managed political pluralism, hat is the pluralism of the self-managing subjects' authentic self-management interests, both particular and social. This is because our society is neither monolithic nor amorphous. It is a totality of the socio-historically conditioned differential interests. Those do not include the remains of the counter-revolutionary forces or the dogmatic defenders of techno-bureaucratic monopoly based on the ideology of state ownership over the means of production, but only the verisimilitude of interests that are naturally arising in a socialist society of the transitional period.

from Edvard Kardelj's Trajectories of Development
of the Socialist Self-management Political System,
second and expanded edition, 1978



scenes from Željimir Žilnik's film "June Movements"



This is Not My World by Željko Jerman, 1976

26. Self-management society, which above all should be based on developing, organizing and destroying labor and, therefore, on the destruction of politics as the sphere of violence, authority and the competition between forces, must constitute the political representation in a different manner. In that sense the autonomy and equality of particular political interests and their “natural” articulation and mutual antagonisms is a fundamental principle of self-management politics. All social “arrests” of the labor process’ lawfulness, which is the basis for existence of political subjectivation and the irrational existence of the particular interests, must be destroyed. Within such a movement of politics, that is the democratization of politics and its rationalization, as a form of the articulation of the lawfulness of labor, which shows itself in general, special and particular interests, the students’ group as political organization finds the sole meaning and the necessity of its activity.

All the sediments of the classical concept of politics, of its system and its state are still present, and the destruction of them is still conceived only as a more functional and more humane organization of this kind of politics. In that sense the real continuation of the revolutionary destruction of politics must be aimed at autonomization and liberation of all the existing potentialities of the progressive structures, within which the emancipatory dialectic of labor can operate as self-abolishment of the society and the whole system of its functioning and organizing.

written by Vladimir Gligorov
for the purposes of the working group for drafting
the program of Students’ League of Yugoslavia



June 12th 1968

The Presidency of the Students' League of Yugoslavia salutes the words of comrade Tito, addressed to the students and to all working people of our country. In this important historical moment, he shows again, as many other times before, full understanding and support for the efforts of young generation. We have a firm belief that the working class, students and youth, as well as all progressive democratic forces of our society, lead by comrade Tito and the Communist League of Yugoslavia, will start a decisive battle for translating his words into action, into a revolutionary act, therefore opening a new era of our socialist revolution. The students of Yugoslavia support comrade Tito and are determined to preserve and create a permanent critical attitude towards the existing state of affairs and, in furthering the struggle, to unmask and add to destruction of all reactionary and bureaucratic forces which our socialist development has undoubtedly been sweeping off the historical scene.

The main causes of broad politicization of the Yugoslav students and of creating a progressive and democratic movement on new bases are in the existing opened issues of our socialist development and consciousness, in the existence of certain non-socialist phenomena, in the need for struggle to a consistent development of self-management and for realization of the goals of the social-economic reforms, as well as in determined will for their inclusion in that struggle. All this was due to students' dissatisfaction with the slow tempo of solving those open issues, as well as in immobility of the existing social institutions.

Constitutive traits of the students' movement are contained in a profound humanist attitude, in a broad democratic basis, in accepting the crucial tasks required by the present-day situation and in the will for consistent struggle for realization of the Program of the Communist League of Yugoslavia and the constitution of the SFRY.

Announcement
of the Presidency
of the Students' League
of Yugoslavia



Goranka Matić, Photo Series: *Belgrade's Shops and Windows on May 4th, 1980*

To the working class,
working people and citizens,
nations and nationalities of
the Socialist Federative Republic of Yugoslavia

Comrade Tito died.

On May the 4th 1980 in 15.05 h in Ljubljana, the big heart of the president of our Socialist Federative Republic of Yugoslavia and the president of the Presidency of SFRY, the president of the Communist League of Yugoslavia, marshal of Yugoslavia and the supreme commander of the Armed forces of SFRY sopped beating.

Enormous pain and deep sorrow shakes the working class, nations and nationalities of our country, each of our men, workers and comrades, peasants, intellectuals, each our creative worker, pioneer and youth-member, every girl and mother.

Proclamation of
the Central Committee of
the Communist League of Yugoslavia
and the Presidency of the SFRY

TESTIMONIES,
MEMORIES AND
INTERPRETATIONS



Testimonies, memories and interpretations of the SKC actors bring into the light a more differentiated and complex picture of art and cultural practices, than the smoothed and pacifying discourse of the dominant art histories. Less being souvenirs of the “good old times”, they depict the complex field of different practices, strategies and relations that made up the SKC. Those conflicting and, often, conflictual interpretations, also indicate political developments and shifting social positions that represent today’s stakes in the field of art and cultural production and, also, in a broader struggle for a unified ideological discourse of neo-liberal era.

PRELOM KOLEKTIV

- 1) with Miško Šuvaković
- 2) with Ješa Denegri
- 3) with Biljana Tomić
- 4) with Dunja Blažević

Dunja Blažević

SKC AND NEW CULTURAL PRACTICES

BEGINNINGS



The crucial fact is that the Students' Cultural Center was some kind of a result of the 1968.

After the demonstrations, the Students' League has been abolished as an autonomous organization and became a part of the Youth organization.

In political sense, that was very cunning, because students are potential rebels and could riot, and the generation in power knew very well that students should be pacified by being incorporated in a larger organization.

There was no more independent students' organization, but it continued to exist in a different context.

But now you have the SKC as a professional institution founded by the University.

The head of the Center was Petar Ignjatovic, art historian, who was the president of the Students' League Committee of Belgrade in the 1968 and who with other presidents the students'

crisis headquarters in some of the faculties coordinated the demonstrations.

Petar was the key figure, along with few young intellectuals who were active during the 1968.

The SKC wasn't a community center.

It housed no amateur workshops, but was a professional institution.

In search for the model, the SKC was closest to the structure of London's ICA (Institute for Contemporary Art), which also had in one place had professional programs and kept in track with the new developments.

The program that I was making, and after me Biljana Tomic also as the editor of the SKC gallery, could be termed as applied criticism.

That was the concept which led to the formation of a new model of cultural institution, and of the new relationships within it, as well as of the new collective cultural policy.

However, if I may add, it wasn't just about the SKC's programs that we are now focusing on.

They were both alternative and complementary in relation to what was happening in other institutions, representing thus some kind of filling the blanks.

The aim was to provide a space to what was still unperceivable or what still hadn't its place in public life, although it existed as an idea, intention or as artistic practice.

The SKC functioned as some kind of platform for cooperation with the colleagues, not so much with institutions, from other places with which we shared the same ideas.

That was the first time that the initiating, financing and enabling a new artistic production took place, and not just exhibiting the already produced works, the first time for a public space to function as some sort of a laboratory.

ART IN REVOLUTION

In the year 1973 on the second April Encounter our guest was Lutz Becker, English director of German origin, who made the film “Art in revolution”.

A group of artists gathered around the SKC gallery met him a year before that on a festival in Edinburgh where they met him and afterwards suggested to invite him.

Why was it so important for us to invite Lutz Becker?

Primarily because he achieved great success with his two documentary films on fascism: “Double headed eagle” and “Swastika”.

Although a visual artist, he made some documentary films in a very specific manner.

We didn't invite him because of those extraordinary films on fascism he was famous for, but because of his documentary entitled “Art in revolution”.

The film is about Soviet, Russian avant-garde, which was totally anonymous at that time in the West as well as in the East, because it was considered a pro-communist propaganda.

Lutz worked on this film for years, accompanying Camilla Gray who has making the first book about Russian avant-garde published in the West “The Great Experiment: Russian Art”.

She published it by the virtue of being allowed to access the East European museums' archives and depots, which no one else in the West had the chance to use at least in the 1960s.

It wasn't possible to gain access to this material because it was, of course, not yet exhibited in Western museums.

The film was shown during the Second April Encounters.

Projection was held in the large hall of the SKC and was seen by a huge audience.

Something happened between the audience and the film, especially between the artistic community gathered around the SKC and Lutz Becker.

It implied a utopian belief or enthusiasm, most of all the one of Lutz Becker, not only in relation with the material but also in relation with the whole project of Soviet avant-garde in its historical dimensions.

This kind of art was for a several years involved in a revolutionary social project: creating a new art and a new society.

And that was the starting point for our generation during the 1970s, not only in finding our origins and our own tradition in the historical avant-gardes, but in emphasizing the social dimension of art, especially of the avant-garde art.

After the projection a strong bond was established between us, as a group gathered around the SKC, and Lutz Becker, who recognized this social environment, its openness to artistic experiment of that time and the belief in possibility of a better or more progressive society.

In fact, Lutz Becker recognized this environment as his own.

ART AND SOCIETY: OKTOBAR 75

The story of Lutz Becker's film “Art in revolution” continued throughout the years, since it was connected to the issue of the social function of the new or “other” art.

Of course, we tried to find our origins in historical avant-gardes through questioning the social function of art, its position in a social context, through questioning how much can art contribute to the social change, whether as a critical position or an affirmative one.

Anyway as “other” art and not as the mainstream modernist art which was dominant in that time.

The questioning of art's sociability lasted all the time during the work within the visual arts and other programs in the SKC.

The continuation of the story from the 1973 and cooperation with Lutz Becker was a very important event for me.

It was during the last exhibition I organized as the editor or director of visual arts program in the SKC gallery.

The year was 1975 and the exhibition was called “Oktobar 75”.

We did the Oktobars every year as some sort of response to the “October Salon”, because at the time it was for us anachronous to name an exhibition a Salon.

In our perspective it was an expression of an utterly bourgeois practice.

For me personally it was important to see how far we had come.

At that time a big group of artists was working on that project, the so-called “six group” with Nesa, Zoran, Rasa, Marina, Era and Gera.

That group was considered as the one which had the monopoly of the SKC gallery with my support, since it was opened in the 1972.

That group had absolutely open ground for every initiative and every new aspiration to publicly show new ideas or actions.

I wanted to summarize my work and the work of the people important for me, not only of that specific art group, but of all the people gathered around the gallery in so-called editorial board.

It included a wide range of young people who were collectively creating the gallery’s policy.

I invited all of them to participate in the “Oktobar 75” with their texts.

In that way, through texts we were trying to articulate our own position in art, from the idea that the world can be changed by art, architecture, design, etc. to the idea that art has to have a critical position vis-a-vis social practice and that in that way it represents the corrective of it.

At that time Lutz Becker came to Belgrade.

The moment was very important to him, and we all wanted to make a sort of sequel of the “Great Experiment: Russian Art” in Belgrade and to name it “Cinema Notes”.

We were making the film in partizan way, and it is a very interesting story how the film was made and what was its destiny.

My colleague Dragomir Zupanc worked on TV at that time and he got us almost illegally a film role.

Finding volunteers for help and all the rest that was needed came easily.

We succeeded in making a film called “Cinema Notes” because it was edited during night in the editing room on TV Belgrade.

The film disappeared since we were not aware of the importance of documenting.

For years we thought it was lost, but few years ago it was found thanks to Dragica Vukadinovic.

The film turned up a year ago, representing an authentic document of a specific time.

ART AND SELF-MANAGEMENT

Regarding the relations between the self-government and art, I was very interested in this new social project, which lost its charm as soon as it became a norm, and in the original idea of self-government which has its background in anarchist theory, in Prudhon’s idea of building a society from the bottom up.

That was a very attractive model for me.

I thought that this new artistic practice, the media expansion and the implicit issue of art’s sociability, should be recognized as the “new art for a new society”.

Our focus, the way in which way we defined our own position, was in opposition with the mainstream art, with that which was perceived as art or as some kind of an equivalent of modernism.

We didn’t feel that the party or state politics presented an obstacle to what we were doing, but we

clashed, in the domain of culture and art, with the dominant tendency of modernism or socialist modernism which was in power.

What we did was not underground in the sense of alternative or dissidency.

What we were doing and considering as the “new artistic practice”, as neo-avant-garde experimentation was on the other of what was going on in most of the galleries and museums and what was perceived as the true art.

It represented a kind of polarization between the leading art and other institutions, and the places that were very scrupulous in treating the new artistic practices.

In any case, what we were doing was not underground.

It was a really legitimate production of art and the way of thinking which articulated itself as the other side of what we called the mainstream.



NEW CULTURAL PRACTICES

Of course, the type of behavior established within our collective was very different from the hierarchical relationships, like directors-workers etc.

Our internal organization, the practice and the work we were doing developed in a different way than in other places, and this is obvious in the activities of the SKC.

The SKC, as an institution, had to respect all the judicial norms, but in respect to the work and the conception of the SKC, we can absolutely speak about a new model of cultural institution, which stemmed out of this new artistic, critical and social practice.



CRITICAL ART PRACTICES IN SOCIALISM

The initial critique which we insisted on as the first generation born after the war, in some kind of a conflict with our parent's generation, meant more true socialism or a return to basic values of the socialism.

I still really believe in self-management as a possible social project.

This wasn't the only nor the primary focus, especially for the artists gathered around the SKC gallery.

I was always interested in the social function of art, not just in revolutionizing of art within the art itself, in changing its means and strategies, etc., but in how far could that art reach out and what could it produce in a wider social context.

ALTERNATIVE CULTURE AFTER SOCIALISM

From the 1997 I am working in a structure that is representing again a new cultural model.

At first that was the network of Soros Centers for Contemporary Art interconnected in twenty or odd countries, and after that different NGO organizations.

I see the relation between the 1970s and the 1990s or the 2000s in the same task and the same mission, only nowadays in totally different social and political circumstances.

The function of Contemporary Art Centers was to maintain contemporary art in existence during the so-called transitional times in all those unfortunate countries especially our ex-Yugoslav countries.

In terms of practice and work a similar thing happened to me as in the SKC.

It is important that those places, those institutions or organizations have a clear programming platform and to act complementary and alternatively in comparison to the mainstream, thus supporting new artistic production and making it possible.

The function and the main task of those institutions is to make possible the art production and the visibility of it, all the things that artists as individuals can't achieve by themselves.

Miško Šuvaković

STUDENTS' CULTURAL CENTERS AS RESERVATIONS



What happened in 1968 or just after that is still not completely clarified in detail. Whether the students were disciplined in a way, or it was a hoax, an offer of a new model, or what actually happened was a simultaneous process of liberalization, i.e. the opening of institutional spaces for students' cultural life, and, at the same time, keeping them under control.

I believe that the two processes coexisted in some kind of dialectics. On one hand, you were offered the possibility to act, and, on the other hand, a socio-political control was established through the system of institutions.

That is only one aspect, but there is another one, concerning student centers themselves. Historically, from the Students' Centre in Zagreb, the Youth's Tribune in Novi Sad to the Students' Cultural Centre in Belgrade and the ŠKUC in Ljubljana, there was an almost fascinating cultural policy established in Tito's Yugoslavia: creating reservations in different social environments.

Therefore, the critical subversive practices from one context would be neutralized, without banning them, by transferring them to another one.

What does that mean? It means that, for example, the OHO group from Slovenia, which had been very provocative and counter-cultural, ranging from the New Left to hippie culture during the 1960s, was transferred and presented through the Students' centers in Zagreb, Belgrade and Novi Sad. Actually it was removed from a concrete social space to an ideal esthetic space of another environment. What was subversive in Ljubljana became an area of artistic and esthetic autonomy in Zagreb or Belgrade. The network of Students' centers enabled vitalization of artistic practices, their funding and their existence, but also their absence from the concrete social struggles in specific environments and relocation to a different environment.

It was a complex mechanism of the relations between those in power, art and culture, within the national cultures themselves and in relation to the West. An example which I recollect, being only 20 then, is a conversation in Belgrade's SKC in the 1974, during the "April encounters", when a number of important artists and critics attended, such as Joseph Beuys, Achille Bonito Oliva, Barbara Rose, etc. At that time more or less all the people from Belgrade were in an ecstasy of freedom, thinking: "We have proved that in a socialist country, in an institution, a completely open international festival which presents new artistic tendencies, can be organized". At one point Bonito Oliva got up and said: "But, that is not true. You are in a reservation which is completely closed and isolated from the culture in which it takes place, and the socialist bureaucracy shows by using you that it appreciates international art, but, actually, keeping its moderate modernist or social modernist practice away from you."

In reality, those were very controlled spaces. When I say "very controlled spaces" I don't mean that there was repression, none of those things which are associated with the Hungarian, Czech or Russian situation of the new artistic tendencies. It was, actually, a very delicate, careful, bureaucratically well preformed centering, enclosing and isolating.

HETEROGENEITY IN THE SKC



SKC did not comprise only a visual arts program. There was also a film program with some very influential people leading it. For example, Zečević was very involved from the early years of the SKC. The spirit of film, even the name of the festival “Expanded Media” derived from the English term used to describe expanded media experiments. Then, there was a tribune for social activities, for music, all of them were different programs.

Also, the SKC visual arts program itself functioned through two galleries which were, so to speak, in competition with each other. The small or “Happy New Art” gallery was focused on a somewhat imaginary market, but also on pop culture, and the large gallery was focused on experimental art, experimental work. People who made up those galleries had their own staff, which means that there was a curator or a gallery manager, and a certain number of artists and critics who were participating in the ongoing activities.

The involved individuals were very different. Three of them stood out due to their influence and the way they were setting up the conception of the SKC program. On one hand, there was Dunja Blažević with her connections, concepts and conceptual relations with the Croatian “New Tendencies”, as well as the whole tradition of the leftist art which was strong in Croatia, but which didn’t have such a prominent place and historical continuity in Serbia. On the other hand, there was Biljana Tomić, who had a completely contrary conception connected to experimental art, to the relations of experimental art and metaphysical symbols. It was, in a way, an opposite position to the former one.

The role of Ješa Denegri was also very significant. He came from the Museum of Contemporary Art and provided an important criteria, significant for that period, that consisted in “getting on the same train” with the West. I think that was the most important thing: to actually know what was happening outside the closed culture and trying to get out of it.

The groups were very different. There were individuals, strong and weak artistic groups. Then, there were the architects which were associated to different art practices and also musicians in different stages. In the early times the atmosphere of the hippie culture was very strong. For example, an interesting phenomenon is an almost forgotten group A3 which stemmed out of the pop culture and street activism. In its short life, this group represented an effort to move “outside”.

Also, in the later work of SKC, during the late 1970s, there was a large number of artists who were working through the forms or explorations of the analytical painting, analytical art, performance, ambient work. There was a group 143, in which I participated, then there were artists like Zoran Belić – Weiss or Jusuf Hadžifejzović, which in the late 1970s they were the key figures for problematizing the status of modernist artworks, and moving beyond the practices of painting.

In this whole blend of hybrid practices, of very different positions, there was a confrontation between the left and right option. What does that mean? The left option meant, at that time, identifying with the self-management socialism and the global liberalization politics of the Communist League of Yugoslavia. Most explicitly, it was represented by Dunja Blažević and a number of artists who recognized themselves in it. Then, there was another option, that I belonged to, which had the status of the formalist right or the analytical art, refusing cooperation and participation in the realization self-management Socialism. Today, there is a question which option was really leftist. Was it those who supported the system of domination, power and authority or the ones who were trying to escape out of that system?

There was a turning point in SKC in the 1976 when positions connected with the project of self-management in art and the project of the autonomy of art became polarized. I think that the autonomy of art is always political. The autonomy of art is not an ideal autonomy and freedom, but it is only a choice of function in relation to the system.

In that sense SKC was a very exciting and dramatic place, in other words that was a dramatic period. Things that didn’t make this dramatic period drastic, like it was politically in Novi Sad, were that Belgrade was a big city

and that the SKC was actually a reservation. The party focused on dissident, nationalistic positions, simultaneously collaborating with them and fighting them, while the SKC looked like something that was outside or, in Foucault's words, an "outer space". It was really an outer space, with very hybrid relations of power and influence.

The confrontation within the left option between Dunja Blažević, the directress of SKC at that time, and Zoran Popović and Jasna Tijardović, was about the third stance within the leftist perspective. That was New York's Art & Language activist practice which was predominantly focused on the critique of power of art institutions. In Belgrade's conditions existed only premonitions of this kind of critique. Zoran Popović and Jasna Tijardović took those ideas from Art & Language, and I think that it was a very important moment in the history of SKC when this communication was established, and when those two confronted the self-management conception.

At one moment three sides existed, but there was also a fourth side mediated by Biljana Tomić: the influence of artists from Novi Sad or the so-called [empasians], which had an idea of alternative forms of life, communes, living and creating one's own reservation and community which would bring about the change on a micro level. I think that was a very complicated situation, which can't be considered as a binary relationship, but involved, like in every such situation, a direct power struggle between certain groups.

ART AS INSTITUTION

Institution is a determined and formalized social relationship. Something in it was relatively nontransparent in those times.

It shouldn't be forgotten that the conceptual art, no matter as neo- or post-avant-garde, was a part or a final phase of modernism. This means that there existed a modernist belief in the ideal of the autonomy of art. Everyone believed it, even those who were involved in activist-political art or the ones who created alternative forms of life or those who practiced art as art in Kossuth sense. There was idealism and a trust in the art independent of institutions.

It was only during the next decade with the appearance of post-modernism that an important realization and recognition came about: the art itself is actually an institution, and art doesn't exist outside the institutionalization of it. Therefore, art is political not because it thematizes politics, but because the mechanism and type of work by which art realizes itself is, in fact, politically determined in a specific time, and that is what specifies the character of an art.

It is also important to say that at that time, not all artists started to practice art for the same reasons. What was specific about Belgrade's group of "six authors", from Marina Abramović to Neša Popović, Zoran Popović, Raša Todosijević, Gera Urkom and Era Milivojević, is that they didn't come from the counter-culture. They came from the Faculty of Visual Arts and their work was initially positioned as confrontation and criticism of the socialist moderated modernism. On the contrary, groups like the OHO or KOD in Novi Sad, or even 143 were coming from totally different milieus which weren't tied to fine arts schools and interests in artistic scene. In a way, this opened a possibility for the "six authors" group to have a direct interventionist relation with the official art context, with specific figures, from Lubarda, through Protić to Sribinović, and to effectively criticize their works thus positioning their own work.

As for other authors, from groups OHO, KOD, or 143, they took a stand that they were outside of the art system and that the art was for them only a form of moderate Socialist production of paintings and sculptures, so they were in some kind of a gap. It was between those possibilities that all those of events and actions were happening, but actually in the 1980s with the comeback of painting, with the post-modernism, came to the fore a brutal and important experience that the art itself is social relationship and institutionally determined, that it was not only a content in the empty shell of an institution.



SKC AS OTHERNESS

SKC was a place that signified the otherness to Belgrade's doxology on the issue of what art is and how can one experience it. Today you have a dominant part of public opinion in Belgrade involved in visual arts production entertaining an attitude that everything that is not a painting or a sculpture in the sense of modernism is not art at all. In this sense SKC was a place where a possibility or a potentiality for otherness has been made.

Those were conflictual times with a lot of freedom and non-freedom, with confrontations and struggles for meaning. In other words, SKC in different periods had different functions and relations with its social environment and towards art. That was very good because it was the other of Belgrade mainstream or the dominant socialist modernist artistic practice, but that doesn't make the SKC a "holly cow". The SKC wasn't the only place. Although it was the only place in Belgrade, but there were similar places in Novi Sad and Zagreb. This plurality of places and the relationships with private spaces is also something very important.

In other words, I am don't support the fetishization of the SKC as an ideal space of resistance and otherness, since that kind of space never existed (not even in Robespierre's era). Actually, it had always been a space in specific conditions and for a specific generation and situation.

Also, when I think of SKC today it comes to my mind that it had a positive role in terms of alternative education practice for graduated artists or art historians, such as Biljana Tomić was conducting for years. That meant a possibility for the people coming out from schools not to find themselves in a no man's land, but to enter different institutional situations through which they can reproduce their art. More importantly they had an opportunity, and this is still after 30 or 40 years crucial, to go outside the country and see how it looks like being out there.

The role of Biljana Tomić was significant for that, but then again we could speak about every participant individually, about that relation of pop culture and active artistic practice or elite artistic practice in the work of Slavko Timotijević, or about many art critics who formed themselves within the SKC. Nevertheless, SKC wasn't a unified and homogenous body, it represented different points in time with different identifications and rights for their own auto-historization.

What made me angry was the exclusive connection or identification of the SKC with the "six authors" group. The "six" was a very important moment, comprising some extraordinary artists, but it wasn't the only thing in the SKC. The SKC was a much more complex and hybrid field.



GROUP 143



Group 143 had a history typical for the SKC, although its center of action wasn't only the SKC. The first exhibition of 143 was held in Zagreb in gallery Nova and its activities were in a way more related to private spaces, while SKC was only a place of participation, how deep remains open to discussion.

Group 143 was founded by Biljana Tomić before she became the gallery manager. She gathered a group of art historians bringing them into the process of self-education or critical education towards a dominant art history which was taught in schools. In that group a couple of people, including me, found themselves there by accident, being a kind of outsiders, who had some sort of artistic production and theoretic interests.

At that time the group split very soon, taking a different form, with its core being set during 1975/76. The group consisted of Biljana Tomić, Jovan Čekić and myself, and some time

later of Paja Stanković, Maja Savić, Vladimir Nikolić, Mirko Dilberović and through all this period, Neša Paripović constantly participated as he didn't feel comfortable in his originating group, if such origins could be derived from any group ever.

Group 143 functioned as some sort of school, rarely as a production machine, more often as an educational one, creating specific type of knowledge in the empty place of art knowledge, a knowledge that was theoretical, philosophical or pro-scientific. It was a favorable time, on one side, since the traces of neo-constructivism connected to the fetishization of science were still present, and, on the other side, a number of conceptual artists were passing through the experiences of analytical philosophy and Wittgensteinian tradition. In other words, we found a connection sublimated in the questions: What is the role of theory? Where the place of theory? How theory is possible within the art?

For the actual dominant discourse in Belgrade, the dominant discourse of the Socialist modernism, theory was the source, while the artist was "half-idiot" who creates something he doesn't understand and the critic comes later explaining what that "ingenious half-idiot" had created because the latter is a failed artist himself and because of that, actually, a go-between the public of the audience in Socialist society, which is indifferent to the whole thing. Contrary to that model, it was our goal to show how theory participates in the production of meaning and the functions of art in different systems.

SELF-ORGANIZING: 1970S AND NOW

I don't advocate continuity, although I have been constantly linked with different groups over three decades, from the 143 Group to participation in TKH platform at the beginning of the 21st century, because I think that these things cannot be linked in a single continuum. It always boils down to reacting on specific historical, geographical, existential conditions and circumstances.

Similarity lies in a very general trait, that is a necessity for young people living in a society where the official education concerning contemporary developments does not exist and that could even be ideologically confronted to the contemporary perceptions of culture, to educate themselves or, more importantly, to self-organize and self-manage – I don't use the term self-management in Kardelj's way, but closer to the anarchist, local communities where individual responsibility is assumed for the process of education – and that people get connected through that process.

That may be the similarity, but only in terms of mechanism, while the contexts are fundamentally different. The first was a rigid self-management socialist system, and this takes place in a bourgeois-capitalist society with neo liberal aspects. Even though some global actors might be the same or similar, we have two entirely different historical situations.

There is one key change, the change in accessing information. At that time the connection to the outer world was indirect – you would have to get a catalogue, a magazine or, very rarely, to travel – while nowadays you can't lie the students that art looks like this or that.

It is very simple to use the Internet and see for yourself. You might be wrong about the dimensions of an artwork, or in the phenomenology of the artwork, but you are confronted with a completely different situation within the distribution of power and interest.

Also, for a socialist society culture was a very important area, while for the national-bourgeois neo-liberal society of today, culture is irrelevant unless it is national-bourgeois, and in that sense it is not an area of interest. At that time culture was interesting, your texts were read, you were put in some order of indexation, something non-existing today. On the other hand, there is something much more drastic today, because the time of the 1970s was the time of emancipation. It seemed that every year was more unbound than the last one, and nowadays we live in a time where every year is worse than the last.

This is a much more cruel time and in that sense I mean there are differences in organizing, because in those times nobody thought how they would sustain a NGO, or a group or a commune. It was simply the state of affairs and you were supported in a friendly, familiar or any other way. Today you have to move through a parallel system of established professional activity, not just in order to realize your work, but to provide for the existence.

What is also characteristic is that that was the time when Marxism was the official discourse, but Marx's idea of class social struggle was not transparent, it was rather a symbolic product. Today Marxism is something which is not an official discourse, but the class struggle is present in every element of our immediate existence. In another words, then the artist seemed to be outside the class struggle, feeling free. Today, even when he seems to be working autonomously, the artist is faced with a distribution of capital, even if it were cognitive.



SKC

IN PUBLIC

SKC in PUBLIC

Selected articles from Yugoslav press during the 1970s provide a mosaic of complex interplays between public opinion, official statements and the SKC. Generally seen as a part of "pessimism in culture" movement since the 1960s – countering technocratic progressivist and growingly petit-bourgeois bureaucratic ideology – the SKC received very contradictory treatments. On the one hand, it was depicted as the evidence of providing youth culture with the necessary infrastructure, while, on the other, it was scorned as a locus of then called anarcho-liberal, anti-socialist tendencies. The clippings also include articles on SKC programs as the beginnings of an informed cultural journalism, various statements of party and cultural officers on the SKC, debates on financial sustainability of such institutions, etc. thus piecing a picture of the presence of the SKC in a broader social and cultural life of the SFRY.

ODJECI TREĆIH APRILSKIH SUSRETA U BEOGRADU

PROŠIRENI MEDIJ · UMJETNOST BUDUĆNOSTI

U vremenu od 16 – 22. 4. trajali su ove godine Aprilski susreti u Beogradu, organizirani u povodu Dana studenata; ove manifestacije održavale su se u prostoru zgrade Studentskog kulturnog centra. O ovom skupu jugoslavenskih i svjetskih kazališnih, eksperimentalnih filmskih i likovnih manifestacija i umjetnika, malo se zna i to samo zbog toga što je mali broj kritičara i izvjestitelja informiran (ne samo o ovom skupu) o suvremenim kretanjima i njihovoj teorijako-estetskoj pozadini kako i o umila te nove umjetnosti.

Od velikog broja skupa, bilo glazbeno-scenika, bilo likovnih, koje smo tih dana mogli pratiti, potrebno je reducirati broj na one najznačajnije i najzanimljivije, jer bi opisi svih skupa zahtijevali mnogo prostora i zadržavali na nebitnim problemima. Sam pojam „prošireni medij“ jedan je bliži oblik „mimo-media“, tj. ometačica i djelovanje u sebi one grane klasičnih umjetnosti koje se takve podjele više ne daju, nego su na granici napr. klasičnog filma i speči, animiranog i kompjutorskog, a na području likovne umjetnosti uključuje djela koja se ne mogu nazvati ni konceptualnom umjetnošću ni happeningom.

Da bih tek donekle opravdala postojanje ovakve umjetnosti i ovakvih Susreta, spomenut ću da se slično jedinstvo svih umjetnosti u stvaranju ambijenta i prostora, odigralo u povijesti umjetnosti u onom stilskom razdoblju kojeg dobro znamo i koje se zove „barok“. Kao i svi skupovi i svi festivali i festivali, i ovaj susret imao je svojih dobara i loših i krivo shvaćenih manifestacija, tj. bilo je i svojevrsnog bohémiziranja i podcrtavanja svoje plitkosti i nezamisljivosti osnovnih razloga ovakvih akcija pod „umjetničko stvaranje“. Najveće zanimanje i interesi pobudili su tih dana prisutnost nekih stranih poznatih umjetnika i teoretičara kao što su Ugo la Pietra, Joseph Beuys, Luz Becker, Jā Etherley, odnosno projekcije njihovih filmova i predavanja. Od jugoslavenskih autora bili su prisutni grupa „Bosch i Bosch“, Studio za savremeni plakat, „Universitas zagrebiana studiorum“, Braco Dimitrijević, Nela Paripović, Radomir Damjanović, Marina Abramović, Vladimir Gudac, Rala Todunjević, Katalin Lulik, Nela i

Pojam „proširenih medija“ ujedinjuje u sebi one grane klasičnih umjetnosti koje se takve podjele više ne drže nego su na granici klasičnog filma i riječi, animiranog i kompjutorskog, a na području likovne umjetnosti uključuju djela koja nisu ni konceptualna ni umjetnost happeningsa.

Šećo Dragas, teatro „Pekarna“, Vladimir Fetek i drugi. Glavna ideološka i teoretička okosnica strujanja u umjetnosti Zapada dao je, što je vrlo indikativno, bivši profesor sveučilišta u Dusseldorfu Joseph Beuys. Njegovu predavanje izazvalo je bućni polemika, najviše zbog lošeg i nalnog tumačenja Marxovih teza, što je doprinijelo da se zabave osnovu Beuysova izlaganja. Govoreći o tome da se kulturom ne stvara bježenje jednom od umjetničkih djelatnosti i razlažući se za umjetnost ne stiti u stiježima, nego umjetnosti koju stvaraju radnici u tvornici (koliko je sopcje ima), on je naglasio važnost povezivanja umjetničkog kulturnog djela društva i produktivnim, privrednim i ekonomski i zakonodavstvom. U nekom budućem društvu socijalističkog tipa organsko jedinstvo i pretapanje umjetnosti za proizvodnja materijalnih dobara, zakonodavstva i kulture, stvorila bi, po njegovu mišljenju, svojevrsan „Plan energije“ koji bi oslobodio čovjeka od zamora rada na teškoj vijci i otuđenja. Ipak, sve prisutne najviše je nervirao njegov „pastirski“ i šatalanski tip provodjavanja čovjeka koji se smatra porvanim sa svjetovni i spalavati socijalističke i komunističke ideje na Zapadu, a kad se nađe u državi kao što je naša, onda te ideje dobijaju sasvim drugi prizvuk.

Ukoliko je, saditi po skicijama na Aprilskim susretima, u zapadnoj Evropi raste interes za, uvjetno rečeno, komunističke ideje i njihov odraz u umjetnosti.



Joseph Beuys uoči predavanja

U tom smislu orijentiran je i autor filmova o Kazimiru Maljeviču i „Art in revolution“, Luz Becker. Ako bi se tražio ikakav primjer koji bi mogao poslužiti modelom budućih akcija konceptualističkog tipa i koji bi imao svojih društveno opravdanih razloga, onda bi to mogla biti akcija Marine Abramović „Zvezda od vatre“. Ostale skicije, ma koliko one bile zanimljive

MISAOCT 2.05.74.

BEOGRAD

STUDENSKI KULTURNI CENTAR

ZABAVLJAJU SE - UČEĆI

Studentski kulturni centar je, tvrde oni koji su u njemu makar jednom bili, jedino mesto u Beogradu gde za stolom mogu sedeti samo dve devojke, da se prijatno osećaju, a da to ne bude nikom čudno i upadljivo.

To nam je potvrdila i devetnaestogodišnja Biljana Andonovska, studentkinja I godine solo pevanja na Muzičkoj akademiji u Beogradu jedna od onih nekoliko stotina devojaka koje svaki svoj slobodni trenutak provode u Studentskom kulturnom centru. Ona je sa drugaricama tu prvi put zakoračila još prošle godine, odmah po dobijanju indeksa. I od tada do danas, postala je redovni posetilac pa se na prste jedne ruke mogu pobrojati oni dani kada u Centar nije navraćala.

TRI GODINE CENTRA

Studentski kulturni centar u Beogradu otvoren je pre nešto više od tri godine. Prostorije ovog akademskog Centra, koje mogu da prime preko 1.500 posetilaca, dobijene su adaptacijom jednog starog zdanja zgrade. Sredstva za to obezbedili su osnivači: Univerzitet i Odbor Saveza studenata.

Studentski centar, omiljeno sastajalište mladih, ima nekoliko »punktova«. To je u prvom redu biblioteka sa preko 6.000 naslova domaćih i inostranih časopisa, koje podjednako koriste i studenti i profesori Univerziteta.

Uz to, u biblioteci koja je otvorena preko čitavog dana, mogu se naći i neka veoma stara izdanja domaćih i stranih knjiga i udžbenika.

Centar ima i savremenu koncertnu dvoranu sa 248 me-

sta, zatim teatar-salu za 170 posetilaca u kojoj se uglavnom održavaju večeri poezije, malu salu za tribine i razgovore, klub u kome se može popiti sok, pojesti sendvič...

Tu su još izložbene i prodajne galerije, knjižara, jedina u gradu u kojoj se može kupiti sva inostrana stručna literatura i drugo.

Sve predstave i manifestacije koje Centar organizuje besplatne su i uz indeks ih može videti svaki student Beogradskog univerziteta. Rad Studentskog literarnog centra finansira najvećim delom osnivač, dok se ostali deo sredstava obezbeđuje od Republičke zajednice kulture i Zvezdane kulture grada, preko konkursa sa odgovarajućim programom.

Za sve ono što su tokom protekle godine posetioći Studentskog kulturnog centra videli i čuli bilo je potrebno obezbediti 261 milion starih dinara. Svakako, ta suma bi bila i znatno veća da većina dramskih i muzičkih umetnika, koji gostuju u Centru, za svoje nastupe ne traži ni dinara.

Sredstva su — kaže Nedeljko Babić, sekretar Studentskog kulturnog centra — naš najveći problem. Sa ovim čime sad raspoložemo nije moguće učiniti nešto više. Kada bi uspeali da obezbedimo više para, svakako da bi i Centar pružao studentima još kvalitetniji i raznovrsniji program.

RAZNOVRSTAN PROGRAM

Program koji Studentski kulturni centar realizuje i pored svih materijalnih teškoća veoma je bogat. Studenti su tako za vreme FEST-a videli 30 festivalskih filmova



Sa razgovora u Centru o proširenim medijama umetnosti

koji su prvi put tad prikazani. Za stanare iz Studentskog grada sa Novog Beograda za vreme projekcije ovih filmova Centar je organizovao besplatni prevoz. Tako je nekoliko hiljada studenata videlo zanimljiv repertoar filmova.

Pre nekoliko dana završeni su **Aprilski susreti**, međunarodna smotra umetničkih ostvarenja mladih ljudi. Za sedam dana, koliko je trajala ova manifestacija, preko stotinu gostiju, od kojih većina iz inostranstva, učestvovala je u programu. Među učesnicima Aprilskih susreta bili su i mladi stvaraoci iz Londona, Pariza, Dizeldorfa i drugih gradova, kao i mladići i devojke iz Ljubljane, Zagreba, Novog Sada i ostalih većih mesta Jugoslavije.

Sav kulturni program priprema i organizuje određena redakcija koja ima svog urednika. Urednici redakcija uglavnom su diplomirani studenti, a istovremeno afirmisani ili nagrađivani mladi stvaraoci iz tog područja.

Svaka redakcija (njih ima pet — za društvene aktivnosti, muzička, za filmski i pozorišni program, likovna i za spoljni program) na početku godine predlaže svoj plan rada za tu godinu, koji kasnije usvaja i Savet Studentskog kulturnog centra. Svakako u izradi programa učestvuju i studenti — oni kojima je taj program u prvom redu i namenjen.

Zbog svega toga, zbog raznovrsnog i bogatog programa, zbog prijatnog i lepog ambijenta Studentski kulturni centar postao je omiljeni kutak studenata. Oni tu dolaze da bi videli program, da bi popričali, slušali muziku — rečju da bi se proveli i odmorili. Da bi po nešto i naučili.

C. GOLUBOVIC

SKC in PUBLIC

: Notes



SCREENING
ROOM

Screening Room

Ongoing:-

LU TZ BECKER, CINEMA NOTES, 1975

This, for many years lost and recently found experimental film, was produced in 1975 by British-German director Lutz Becker in collaboration with Dragomir Zupanc and the group of artists, curators and critics gathered around SKC. The film includes verbal statements and performative gestures of the numerous protagonists of the 'New artistic practice' in former Yugoslavia, referring to the role of art in society and re-thinking the concepts of 'form', 'autonomy', 'economy', 'politicality' and 'institutionalization' of contemporary art. Participating: Bojana Pejić, Raša Todosijević, Goran Đorđević, Ješa Denegri, Jasna Tijardović, Marina Abramović, Dragica Vukadinović, Slavko Timotijević, Zoran Popović, Dragomir Zupanc, Biljana Tomić, Dunja Blažević, Nebojša Filopović, Goran Trbuljak, Gergelj Urkom.



Film evening 1: Tuesday, May 20, 19:00

LU TZ BECKER, ART IN REVOLUTION, 1972

A famous documentary movie 'Art in Revolution' by British-German film director Lutz Becker, dedicated to the Soviet Avant-garde art, which was considered to be controversial at the times and had difficulties to be publicly presented both in the West and in the SSSR itself. 'Art in Revolution' presents Lutz Becker's view on Camilla Gray's research trips around Soviet Union in the sixties, during which she collects the material for the future book 'Russian Art Experiment' - the first comprehensive art-historical analysis of the social and cultural circumstances under which Soviet Avant-garde appeared. Until then, no foreigner had the opportunity to get in the archives and depots of museums where original artworks and related documents were stored. The publishing of the book 'The Great Experiment: Russian Art 1863-1922' in 1962 had radically changed the art-historical landscape of European art. It was tremendously influential to the formation of neo-avantgarde movements during 60s and 70s in Europe and US, as well as in the former Yugoslavia.



Film evening 2: Thursday, May 22, 19:00

ŽELIMIR ŽILNIK, JUNE MOVEMENTS, 1968

This documentary film – done in a recognizable Žilnik's style – deals with the events of students' demonstrations in Belgrade at the beginning of June 1968. It comprises the students' statements concerning the infamous clash with People's Militia at the underpass in New Belgrade. It also depicts exuberant atmosphere in the courtyard of the Philosophical faculty, which was one of the centers of students' rebellion. Students were demanding the deepening of socialist revolution and clampdown on the "red bourgeoisie". At the end of the video, the actor and ex-Auschwitz prisoner Stevo Žigon shouts, impersonating Robespierre: "Revolution shall not be a profession!"

