



TWO LINES OF LIFE

(Or why a rabbit loves weeds)

RADOŠ ANTONIJEVIĆ, DAMIR AVDIĆ, BOOGIE, UROŠ ĐURIĆ,
VLATKA HORVAT, IRWIN, ALEKSANDAR JESTROVIĆ JAMESDIN,
ALEKSANDAR MAĆAŠEV AND STEPHEN GEE, VLADIMIR
NIKOLIĆ, ZORAN TODOROVIĆ, RAŠA TODOSIJEVIĆ

As part of the european project *A.C.T. Democ[k]racy*, with the support of the Culture programme of the European Union.

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Exhibition

18 January - 10 March 2013

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Opening

Friday 18 January 2013, 6:30pm

Demokratija, performance, Damir Avdić, 7pm

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**Meeting with Mia David and Zorana
Djaković Minniti**

Saturday 19 January 2013, 3pm at La Criée

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Guided Tours

Friday 25 January 2013, 5pm

Thursday 14 February 2013, 5:30pm

—
In parallel to the exhibition
« **A.C.T. in residence, Cluj in Rennes** »
At the EESAB - Rennes

Exhibition from Jan. 18th to Feb. 1st, 2013

Opening: Friday 18 Jan. 2013, 5:30pm

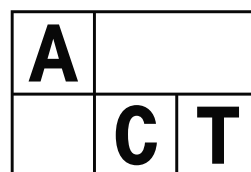
EESAB - Rennes

34 rue Hoche

F-35000 Rennes

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Curators

Mia David and Zorana Djaković Minniti,
Cultural Center of Belgrade, Serbia



BELGRADE
CLUJ
EINDHOVEN
RENNES

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Communiqué

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«Two Lines of Life (or why a rabbit likes weeds)» is an exhibition featuring 11 artists and art groups from Belgrade, Pančevo, Bečej, Čakovec, Zagreb, Tuzla, Ljubljana (cities of the former Yugoslavia, today cities located in Serbia, Slovenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia) and the joint work of two curators from Belgrade, which could be described as a process.

Proceeding from the notion of democracy to begin with, we asked ourselves to what extent politics actually influences our lives. After some research conducted among our friends, it turned out that there existed two parallel flows of life: one is personal, which we can influence to a greater degree, and the other is political, which we cannot quite influence directly. Dealing with this relationship between the personal and the political, we explored what democracy meant to people around us. We invited artists from Serbia, as well as several artists from the region of the former Yugoslavia, being of the opinion that it is precisely these great differences, both in terms of artistic expression and in terms of political views, which actually constitute the meaning of democracy to us.

Mia David et Zorana Djaković Minniti

The «A.C.T. Democ[k]racy» project
Two Lines of Life is part of the first phase of the *A.C.T. Democ[k]racy* project, an initiative that brings together seven institutional players, more than forty artists and over a score of researchers. Combining residencies, seminars and exhibitions, *A.C.T. Democ[k]racy* will move on from Rennes to Eindhoven in the Netherlands, Cluj in Romania, and finally Belgrade in Serbia, through to August 2014.

Because the withdrawal into separatist identities that occur in many European countries are alarming symptoms of a crisis of democracy within Europe, the partners of *A.C.T. Democ[k]racy* choose to promote art as a critical space in the fundamental debate on the future of democracy. This is both to recognize the importance of creative freedom, while questioning the training procedures and registration of artists works in the social space.

The *A.C.T. Democ(k)racy* project is passionately in favour of movement, interchange and openness as the first conditions for the free circulation of ideas and works.

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In parallel to the exhibition
« **A.C.T. in residence, Cluj in Rennes** »
At the EESAB - Rennes
From January 18th to February 1^{rst}, 2013
Hermina Csala, Christian Norbert,
Filex Opris, Anton Razvan.

Feedback on works made during the residence in November 2012 in Rennes by students and professors from the University of Arts and Design of Cluj, Romania.

Statement

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TWO LINES OF LIFE (or why a rabbit likes weeds)

As long as we are children, the world seems big to us. When we are young, it seems to be waiting for us only, that possibilities are endless, that we can change it. Then we grow up and life happens to us.

And then many people forget about their beliefs, justify their acts by the necessity of survival. The rhetorical and the real do not always coincide, while the feeling that there exist “silent” borders between various groups, policies and economies sometimes makes our decisions hysterical. Not aspiring to change anything with this exhibition, and aware that we are moving within a vicious circle of the all-too-familiar, we speak of life and circumstances.

In the words of Mikhail Ryklin, we live in times when meaning is elusive, which is manifested, among other things, in its endless multiplication, while social success increasingly depends on neglecting the interests of others. The word democracy is very often used in such times. And the critical function of art in society is of no interest to the majority of people, as evidenced by real life, where democratic values are observed on paper rather more than in reality.

In the meantime, the population of rabbits in Europe is decreasing. The reasons for such a state of affairs are many, and the ones considered to be the most important are predators, intensification of agriculture and traffic, hunting, poaching... In addition to the above, climatic factors or diseases also have a considerable impact on the decrease of the rabbit population. A combination of these factors additionally aggravates the situation.

Surveys have shown that the decrease of the number of rabbits is not due to decreased fertility in she-rabbits. The increase of the rabbit population in the course of any year is directly dependent on the rate of survival of young rabbits, and not on the fertility of she-rabbits. Whether they migrate has not been established positively, but scientists have established that the population density of rabbits manifests a positive correlation with the degree of weed infestation of plots of land (Predator, monthly magazine for hunters). But not all rabbits are the same, just as not all weeds are the same. Still, if we start comparing them, we may end up in banality.

The life of the individual is both the political and the public, it is made up of and influenced by political and private events happening under different circumstances, in various more or less weed-infested areas.

We ask: what is the connection between rabbits and weeds, and “art and democracy”? There is one, for just as rabbits need weeds, so democracy needs art.

The artists featured in this exhibition deal with both the private and the political, with “rabbits and weeds” alike; not all of them live and work in Serbia, some of them are not Serbian artists, but they are all prepared to initiate a dialogue on what democratic values are today.

Mia David et Zorana Djaković Minniti
Curators

Visuals for the press

Please, respect captions and copyrights..



Radoš Antonijević
Is There a Life after Death (Pneuma), 2009
Sculpture
Courtesy Radoš Antonijević - Photo: Radoš Antonijević



Damir Avdić
photo: Damir Salama



Boogie
Untitled

Visuals for the press

Please, respect captions and copyrights..



Uroš Đurić
Art for the Class Society
Landscapes for the ruling class on MDMA, 2012
Courtesy Uroš Đurić - photo: Uroš Đurić



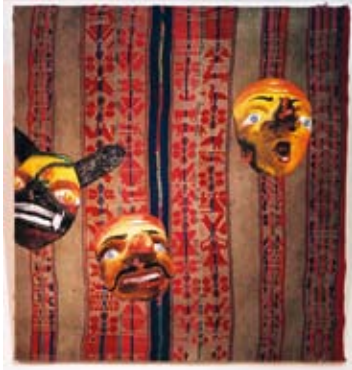
Vlatka Horvat
After Tito, Tito (9), 2011
Courtesy Vlatka Horvat



IRWIN
First NSK Citizens' Congress,
Berlin, October 2010, participants
Courtesy IRWIN - photo: Christian Ditsch

Visuals for the press

Please, respect captions and copyrights..



Aleksandar Jestrović Jamesdin
Ikokana, 2011
Oil on canvas
Courtesy Aleksandar Jestrović Jamesdin



Aleksandar Maćašev and Stephen Gee
Little Boxes, 2007
Video still
Courtesy Aleksandar Maćašev and Stephen Gee



Vladimir Nikolić
Rhythm, 2001
Video still
Courtesy Vladimir Nikolić

Visuals for the press

Please, respect captions and copyrights..



Zoran Todorović
Gypsies and Dogs, 2007
Video still
Courtesy Zoran Todorović



Raša Todosijević
Was ist Kunst Marinela Koželj?, 1978
Courtesy Raša Todosijević

Works exhibited

TWO LINES OF LIFE (or why a rabbit likes weeds)

Radoš Antonijević

Is There a Life after Death (pneuma)

2009

Sculpture

Courtesy Radoš Antonijević

Radoš Antonijević

Is There a Life after Death (in the mirror)

2012

Sculpture

Courtesy Radoš Antonijević

Damir Avdić

Demokratija

2013

Performance

Boogie

Untitled

Uroš Đurić

Art for the Class Society,

Landscapes for the ruling class on MDMA

2012

Courtesy Uroš Đurić

Vlatka Horvat

After Tito, Tito (9)

2011

Courtesy Vlatka Horvat

IRWIN

First NSK Citizens Congress. Berlin, October 2010.

Film

Courtesy IRWIN

IRWIN

First NSK Citizens Congress. Berlin, October 2010,

Haus der Kulturen der Welt.

Photography

Courtesy IRWIN

IRWIN

First NSK Citizens' Congress, Berlin, October

2010, Participants.

Photography

Courtesy IRWIN

Aleksandar Jestrović Jamesdin

Ikokana

2011

Oil on canvas

Courtesy Aleksandar Jestrović Jamesdin

Aleksandar Jestrović Jamesdin

Ikokana

2011

Coca leaves on the board

Courtesy Aleksandar Jestrović Jamesdin

Aleksandar Jestrović Jamesdin

Šverc komerc (Smuggle Trade)

2013

Text on the wall

Courtesy Aleksandar Jestrović Jamesdin

Aleksandar Maćašev and Stephen Gee

Little Boxes

2007

Video

Courtesy Aleksandar Maćašev and Stephen Gee

Vladimir Nikolić

Rhythm

2001

video

Courtesy Vladimir Nikolić

Zoran Todorović

Gypsies and Dogs

2007

Two channel video installation

Courtesy Zoran Todorović

Raša Todosijević

Was ist Kunst Marinela Koželj?

1978

Courtesy Raša Todosijević

Raša Todosijević

Volite Francusku kao što je Francuska volela Van

Goga 1886

2012

Suitcases

Courtesy Raša Todosijević

Raša Todosijević

Gott liebt die Serbien

2009

Courtesy Raša Todosijević

Biographies

Radoš Antonijević

Name: Radoš Antonijević
Year of Birth: 1969
Place of Birth: Pančevo (Serbia)
Where do you live? Smederevo (Serbia)
Family Status: Married, has 4 children.
Profession: sculptor
What do you do for work? Professor at the Faculty of Fine Arts in Belgrade.

Name five personal events that affected your life the most:

- When I left Factory and decided to study art.
- Marriage.
- Birth of my 4 children.
- Full time employment at the Faculty of Fine Arts in Belgrade.
- Buying my own house.

Name five political events that affected your life the most:

- The Fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989.
- Breakdown of Yugoslavia 1992 - 1995 (war in Croatia, fall of Krajna, war in Bosnia, signing of the Dayton Agreement).
- War in Kosovo 1999 (the NATO bombardment and signing of the Kumanovo Agreement).
- Breakdown of the Slobodan Milošević regime on October 5, 2000.
- Murder of the Prime Minister Zoran Djindjić on March 12, 2003.

What's democracy for you?

Democracy is an illusion of justice and the rule of scum, but unfortunately everything else is much worse.

Radoš Antonijević is visual artist. He finished Master degree on Faculty of Fine Art in Belgrade (Sculpture department) where he is currently finishing PhD project. He is an assistant professor at same Faculty where teaching Sculpture in metal and wood.

Educated as a classical sculptor he re-examines the medium of sculpture and its borders through the creation of artworks which problematize the questions of function, materiality and perception. This formal research is always involved in the topics that touch neuralgic points of life, dealing with the aspects of history, politics, culture and society. His works of art which confront the function and shape have the epic nature with the ingredients of comic and tragic in the same picture. This epic nature is evident in his need for monumental and self-sufficient forms which can be seen in his tents-churches, personal museums of contemporary art or a church military barbecue trailer.

Biographies

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Damir Avdić

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Name: Damir Avdić

Year of Birth: 1964

Place of Birth: Tuzla (Bosnia-Herzegovina)

Where do you live? Ljubljana (Slovenia)

Family Status: Married.

Profession: Musician/Writer.

What do you do for work? Make music & play, perform, write.

Name five personal events that affected your life the most:

- Parents.
- Love.
- Art.
- Child.

Name five political events that affected your life the most:

- Socialism
- War
- Media
- Capitalism
- Democracy

What's democracy for you?

Democracy

Democracy is a fallacy

A trick played by capitalism

So that organised crime

Can operate freely

Freedom is deceit

A revolution's lie

So that slaves march in line

With their bayonets held high

We believe in a single truth

We don't give a fuck for the misfortunate and the poor

We believe in a single truth

We don't give a fuck for the humiliated and the weak

Damir Avdić

Biographies

Boogie

Name: Vladimir Milivojević
Year of Birth: 1969
Place of Birth: Belgrade (Serbia)
Where do you live? Brooklyn (USA)/Belgrade
Family Status: Married.
Profession: photographer.
What do you do for work? Photofraphy.

Name five personal events that affected your life the most:

- When I was 12,13 I read a book Samurai (Saburo Sakai).
- Military service in 1989.
- Development of the first photography in 1993.
- Departure in USA in 1998.
- Birth of the children.

Name five political events that affected your life the most:

- War in ex-Yugosalavia.
- Overthrow of Knin.
- NATO bombardment of Serbia.
- 09/11 in New York City.
- Declaration of independence of Kosovo.

What's democracy for you?

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Democracy>

Born and raised in Belgrade, Serbia, Boogie began photographing rebellion and unrest during the civil war that ravaged his country during the 1990s. Growing up in a war-torn country defined Boogie's style and attraction to the darker side of human existence. He moved to New York City in 1998.

He has published five monographs, *It's All Good* (powerHouse Books, 2006), *BOOGIE* (powerHouse Books, 2007), *Sao Paulo* (Upper Playground, 2008), *Istanbul* (Upper Playground, 2008) and *Belgrade Belongs to Me* (powerHouse Books, 2009).

He has shot for high profiled clients and has been published in world renowned publications. His recent solo exhibitions include Paris, New York, Tokyo, Milan, Istanbul and Los Angeles. Boogie lives in Brooklyn and all over the world.

Biographies

Uroš Đurić

Name: Uroš Đurić

Year of Birth: 1964

Place of Birth: Belgrade (Serbia)

Where do you live? Belgrade

Family Status:

Profession: visual artist.

What do you do for work? Producing artefacts & Meanings.

Name five personal events that affected your life the most:

- Birth.
- School.
- Sex.
- Work.
- Death.

Name five political events that affected your life the most:

- Tito's Death 1980.
- Milošević's Rise 1987.
- Dissolution of Yugoslavia.
- UN Embargo 1991-1992.
- Anti-regime demonstrations 1996-1997.
- Elections 2000

What's democracy for you?

A right to be, to establish an attitude.

Biographies

Vlatka Horvat

Name: Vlatka Horvat
Year of Birth: 1974
Place of Birth: Čakovec (Croatia)
Where do you live? Most of my things are in London. I'm not there very much tho!
Family Status: in a relationship.
Profession: artist.
What do you do for work? Mostly I make work.

Name five personal events that affected your life the most:

Three of my five events are related to a change of place: going to the US from what was still Yugoslavia in 1991 (and then getting «stuck» there), moving to New York from Chicago in 2001, moving to London from New York in 2011. The other two are related to people: meeting someone, leaving someone.

Name five political events that affected your life the most:

Breakup of Yugoslavia is the big one. Various political events affect my life all the time but none that I would single out more than others. Obama winning in 2008.

What's democracy for you?

Something impossible to know.

After Tito, Tito

In 2011 I worked on a project in Tito's bunker in Konjic, Bosnia and Herzegovina (currently run and maintained by the Bosnian Department of Defense). During one of the early visits to the bunker I became interested in framed portraits of Tito which hung in many of the rooms in the bunker – the same portraits I grew up with, as they hung in every classroom, office, workplace, train station....

I re-photographed each of these portraits in situ, in place where they hung on the walls, and shooting them through the glass of the frame. I was interested in finding angles at which the light from the fluorescent tubes in each of the rooms

is reflected in the glass, consequently interacting with the image of Tito's face – melting it, distorting it, obscuring it – creating an evocative range of associations from the perceptual merger of a human face and a streak of light. Depending on the angle of looking at these portraits, the ceiling light tubes sometimes appear to enter the front of Tito's forehead, “emerging” again from the back of his head. Or the lighting fixture might reflect a band of light across his eyes, creating the “sun-in-his-eyes” effect and essentially “blinding” him. At other angles, the light reflected in the glass appears across Tito's neck like a blade or a guillotine, perceptually separating his head from his torso and virtually decapitating him.

The way these real effects of being in a specific space and time (light in the room, angle from which as a viewer you encounter these portraits) interact with and affect the images tend to insert some level of fiction into them – the “newly re-seen” images now depict Tito blinded, his sight obscured or compromised, the light piercing thru his head, or entering into his nose, or severing his neck... Other times the light reflected on the glass creates different optical effects – blends, waves, distortions – obscuring, abstracting, and compromising the image of Tito's composed and authoritative face and pointing to the idea that looking at any historical materials is always going to be distorted, affected by the “now”, contingent on the place where you happen to be standing and the vantage point from which you happen to be looking.

After Tito, Tito – which takes its title from a slogan from the 1980's Yugoslavia – plays past against present, convening an encounter between the historical Tito of the portraits and their contemporary distorted mirror images which have been produced in the troubled space of waiting, contemplation and *stasis* that is the Konjic bunker.

Vlatka Horvat

Biographies

IRWIN

Name: Roman Uranjek
Year of Birth: 1961
Place of Birth: Trbovlje (Slovenia)
Where do you live? Ljubljana (Slovenia)
Family Status: single.
Profession: artist.
What do you do for work? Design, art.

Name five personal events that affected your life the most:

- High school for design.
- Disco club *FV* in the eighties.
- Funding of *IRWIN* in 1983.
- Funding of the *Neue Slowenische Kunst* in 1984.
- *NSK State in the Time* in 1992.

Name five political events that affected your life the most:

- Life in Yugoslavia and non-aligned.
- Slovenia became State.
- Currency EURO – My Currency.
- Berlin Wall.
- *NSK State in Time*.

What's democracy for you?

Democracy is a dream that we would like to change for something better.

The *IRWIN* group consists of five artists: Dušan Mandič (Ljubljana, 1954), Miran Mohar (Novo Mesto, 1958), Andrej Savski (Ljubljana, 1961), Roman Uranjek (Trbovlje, 1961) and Borut Vogeljik (Kranj, 1959).

The group was founded in 1983 in Ljubljana and *IRWIN* was also a co-founder of the *NSK* organization and the *NSK State in Time*. Members of the group live and work in Ljubljana.

Biographies

Aleksandar Jestrović Jamesdin

Name: Jamesdin

Year of Birth: 1972

Place of Birth: SFRY (Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia)

Where do you live? Pankow (Germany)

Family Status: married.

Profession: technician.

What do you do for work? Student.

Name five personal events that affected your life the most:

- The lost of virginity.
- When I move to Belgrade.
- When I saw my grandmother after 10 years during the period I couldn't travel to Croatia.
- Contamination by parasites.
- My wife.

Name five political events that affected your life the most:

- Iggy Pop in the Belgrade Fair in 1991.
- Going to the Army.
- When I saw my grandmother after 10 years during the period I couldn't travel to Croatia.
- Bombardment.
- Emigration.

What's democracy for you?

Sport – YES, Drugs – YES.

Ikokana and Smuggle Trade

In the year before last, during my holiday in Machu Picchu, I learnt that the city had had a canalization designed in such a way that it could be used only for number one, while number two had to be done in the woods, over small holes dug in Pachamama (Inka supreme deity). Nibbling at coca leaves or drinking cocaa tea during the process was obligatory.

The insight and experience seemed very spiritual and inspiring to me, so I talked my girlfriend into smuggling two kilos of coca leaves in her rucksack. Now we drink tea in Berlin and then I do number one in the toilet while for number two I do the holes in the evening in the park.

I don't know any longer where to and how I've managed to drag all these works, for if it's not Požega or Smederevo, you always need some kind of permit or other. And now that I live across the border, it's even more of a hassle, I've been debating with these retards of ours on the border crossing whether it's an oil on canvas or an acrylic painting, and whether it's finished or just started, they are the very same Bosnian Comancheros from the Kelebija crossing who wanted to send me back to Bosnia on a truck, for I was born in Zagreb. It was even worse with those Hungarian nationalists, I was only centimetres away from a rectal examination. I somehow managed to convince those idiots on the Croatian border that I'm one of them and that I have a studio in the Croatian Zagorje region, the stress of it all cost my curator, who was driving me then, a bout of diarrhoea. I guess I'd better not even mention those poor wretches on the Slovenian border who are trying to practise Austro-Hungarian strictness... And when, after all that jerking off, you don't even come to see the exhibition, well, I feel like committing suicide.

Aleksandar Jestrović Jamesdin

Biographies

Aleksandar Maćašev and Stephen Gee

Name: Aleksandar Maćašev

Year of Birth: 1971

Place of Birth: Bečej, Yugoslavia

Where do you live? New-York (USA)

Family Status: married.

Profession: a degree in Architecture.

What do you do for work? visual arts.

Name five personal events that affected your life the most:

- Food poisoning in nursery school. I think I was two at the time.
- My high school Literature teacher told us once that what really matters is what we think about something, not what someone else has written about it.
- Witnessing the last days of Yugoslav People's Army.
- During the geometry class in the School of Architecture our professor, Nenad Grujić turned around and said: "Don't believe a single word I tell you. See it for yourselves." "But... this is an exact science." "Especially because of that."
- Accepting the fact that I can lean on someone.

Name five political events that affected your life the most:

- The death of Josip Broz- I was eight at the time and I didn't quite get the full meaning of it, but it seemed like things were going to change.
- Transition from Yugoslavian internationalism to Serbian nationalism.
- 5 October 2000 in FR Yugoslavia. The moment when we mistakenly thought that we grew up.
- March on Washington. "Stop the war. Now! 15 September 2007.
- Barack Obama supports the initiative not to defend DOMA (Defense of Marriage Act), an act that on the federal level defines the marriage as a union between a woman and a man.

What's democracy for you?

Sociopolitical framework that should enable undisturbed cohabitation.

Name: Stephen Jordan Gee

Year of Birth: 1962

Place of Birth: Columbus, Ohio (USA)

Where do you live? New York City (USA)/Erbil (Iraq)

Family Status: married.

Profession: diplomat.

What do you do for work? I'm a U.S. diplomat, currently posted to the Kurdistan region of Iraq.

Name five personal events that affected your life the most:

- Growing up in my family.
- The HIV epidemic.
- Joining the Peace Corps.
- Learning to play an instrument.
- Meeting Sasha.

Name five political events that affected your life the most:

- Weekly Sunday morning meetings of the local Democratic Party branch at my house when I was a child. My Dad would buy Krispy Kreme donuts for the group and I always got an extra cruller.
- The worldwide response to the HIV epidemic.
- The September 11 attacks.
- The NATO intervention in Yugoslavia.
- The invasion of Iraq.

What's democracy for you?

Using my voice and tolerating others.

Biographies

Aleksandar Maćašev and Stephen Gee

Aleksandar Maćašev (1971, Bečej, Yugoslavia) is a visual artist whose practice often blurs the boundaries between applied and fine arts. He graduated from the Faculty of Architecture at the University of Belgrade in 1998 and he is a member of AIGA (American Institute of Graphic Arts).

His diverse body of work that includes graphic/web design, illustration and various forms of fine art were collected in *Aleksandar Macašev / Book*, (Mikser Books, 2010).
Maćašev lives and works in New York City.

Stephen Gee is a US Foreign Service Officer, currently posted to Iraq. He graduated from Columbia University in New York (major in sociology). He has served in Moscow, Vladivostok, Belgrade, Washington and New York.

He reinvents himself periodically and in other incarnations has been a Peace Corps Volunteer in Ukraine, a mortgage banker, an actor and a playwright, waiter, truck driver and tour guide. He is married to Aleksandar Maćašev.

Biographies

Vladimir Nikolić

Name: Vladimir Nikolić

Year of Birth: 1974

Place of Birth: Belgrade (Serbia)

Where do you live? Belgrade

Family Status: married.

Profession: artist.

What do you do for work? Art.

Name five personal events that affected your life the most:

- Death of my father.
- The night when somebody stole my guitar in Barcelona.
- Marriage.
- Child n° 1.
- Child n° 2.

Name five political events that affected your life the most:

- Civil manifestations, March 9, 1991.
- Student manifestations 1991.
- Student's manifestations 1996 - 1997.
- Breakdown of the Slobodan Milošević's regime, October 5, 2000.
- Assassination of the prime Minister, March 12, 2003.

What's democracy for you?

An illusion of free choice and a lesser evil.

Five people are filmed standing on a stage while making the Christian-Orthodox sign of the cross, repetitively, following the techno music beat. What is in fact striking in Nikolic's powerful video work *Rhythm* from 2001 is that it brings its viewers back to one of the first ideological formulas, which was written in the 18th Century by Blaise Pascal:

Kneel down, move your lips in prayer and you will believe.

Ideology is in material practices, it resides in bodies and their rituals, and Nikolić renders these rituals redundant.

Branislav Dimitrijević, «A (Re)Construction of the History of Art in Eastern Europe», in *The New Moment Magazin*, n° 20, special edition – East Art Map

Biographies

Zoran Todorović

Name: Zoran Todorović
Year of Birth: 1965
Place of Birth: Belgrade (Serbia)
Where do you live? Belgrade
Family Status: complicated.
Profession: visual Artist.
What do you do for work? Professor at the Faculty of Fine arts in Belgrade.

Name five personal events that affected your life the most:

- Birth.
- Love and different breakdowns.
- Faculty of Fine Arts.
- Birth of the children.
- Death of the parents.

Name five political events that affected your life the most:

- Death of the Josip Broz Tito.
- Fall of the Berlin Wall.
- Breakdown of the Yugoslavia, USSR and Czechoslovakia.
- The NATO bombardement of Serbia.
- Realization of some art works that had political consequences.

What's democracy for you?

As a matter of principle, an ideal that establishes people as free social agents, which is in itself a scandal that is constantly brought into question and must always be advocated anew..

Gypsies and Dogs II

Symptoms and traces of public reception

The work *Gypsies and Dogs* was initiated by a campaign carried out in the streets of Belgrade during the summer of 2007 in the following manner: children begging in the streets and stray dogs were equipped with special micro cameras, with which they recorded their everyday life, that is, some of its symptomatic segments. The view being offered here, however, is not the view of a child or a dog, but that of a device for a potential investigator or witness, someone who

listens in on others and interprets the relations manifested there or the conditions under which a life unfolds. The work was presented for the first time in 2009, in the form of a two-channel video installation at the Museum of Contemporary Art of Vojvodina in Novi Sad, under the title of *Gypsies and Dogs*. Such a title did not suggest the ideological position of the author, but was conceived with a view to creating expectations of a racist discourse among the audience, who interpreted the images on the basis of such expectations. However, the images were technically realised in such a way that they did not provide too much information about the event recorded. This information gap, which was the result of the conception of the work, or to put it in more operative terms, which was the result of the cheap recording technology used, was filled in by the audience, reading into it their own contents, depending on the position taken by each individual viewer in relation to the racist political code, or the code of the politically correct, which is also a form of designating the other, provoked by such a title. At the same time, the work was guided by the need to examine the possibilities of working with the audience in such a way that would enable them to place themselves, in a certain sense, within the process of its coming into being, so that the work would be finished thereby, or kept constantly open to a possible debate that would form it temporarily. In this sense, the work came to life especially after being exhibited at the Belgrade October Salon in 2009, within the framework of polemics, protests of various political, activist and art circles that resulted in some very interesting theoretical analyses. These polemics make up the content of the publication, which, in its printed version, has become an integral part of this work; however, this does not mean to say that the work receives its final form thereby, nor is the intention of the text to underline or point to a conclusion in the polemics partially presented here, but to try to legitimise any possible text as a documentary contribution towards realising this work.

Zoran Todorović

Raša Todosijević

Name: Todosijević Dragoljub Raša

Year of Birth: 1945

Place of Birth: Belgrade (Serbia)

Where do you live? Belgrade

Family Status: in a relationship with Marinela Koželj.

Profession: artist.

What do you do for work? Art.

Name five personal events that affected your life the most:

- Abandoning the Military Aviation Academy in Mostar.
- Understanding that the Academy of Fine Arts in Belgrade is institution without any cultural and educational significance.
- Work and life in the UK.
- Meeting Marinela Koželj.
- Heart surgery.

Name five political events that affected your life the most:

- War in Vietnam.
- Student manifestations in 1968 in Belgrade and Europe.
- Fall of the Berlin Wall and decay of communism.
- War in the Balkans.
- Breakup of Yugoslavia.

What's democracy for you?

When can I go into the supermarket and buy what I need with my good looks?

(Allen Ginsberg)

Short and embellish version of my miserable life in Belgrade

I was born on the second day of September in the year 1945 in Belgrade, in the People's Front Street; before Second World War the name of the street was Queen Natalia's Street. At first, we – my honest and righteous parents and me – we have lived in Romanian Street, up there, on Dedinje Hill (later Užička Ulica). Afterwards we have, and nobody knows why, moved to Šajkaška Street n° 17. You know, it's down there, next to "Danube" railway station. When city authorities, for no apparent reasons, have crashed that beautiful edifice in Šajkaška Street, we have moved to Cvijićeva Street n° 115, close to New Cemetery. After, let's say, ten years, and perhaps a few more, we've gone to the outskirts of the town, beyond nowhere, in Jablanička Street n° 21. Much later Marinela and me finally got our own flat, our own little room of freedom, on Senjak Hill, in Prahovska Street n° 4a – actually in former American Lane. When her parents had left this world we have settled downtown in General Zdanov Street n° 9, which regained, few years ago, its old, prewar name: Resavska Street.

Erstwhile, I tried to be an air force pilot. It was in Mostar. Since I was no good at this, nor did I like the boring company of the cadets, I have returned to Belgrade. For two years I've took courses in drawing and sculpture in Šumatovačka Street n° 122a. Finally, in the year of 1964 I've enrolled the Academy of Fine Arts in Belgrade. My professors at the Academy were people of unpleasantly low talent and even lower education. There was nothing left for me but to travel throughout the world and to educate myself, the ways only I did knew, in order to be able somehow to break, with my tiny powers, the invisible bondages of omnipresent provincialism. I've got my studio exactly after thirty years, at the so-called Old Fairgrounds, which during Second World War was a German concentration camp. Sometimes, when in my atelier I listen to the silent music, it seems to me as if souls of murdered camp inmates are visiting me.

Raša Todosijević

Biographies

— Curators —

Mia David and Zorana Djaković Minniti —

Full name: Mia David

Year of birth: 1974

Place of birth: Belgrade (Serbia)

Where do you live? Belgrade (Serbia)

Family status: divorced, live alone.

Profession: architect.

What do you do for a living? Currently working as a manager in the sphere of culture.

Name five personal events that affected your life the most.

- Growing up with my father.
- Living abroad for a year.
- The death of my father.
- Divorce.
- Changing my job.
- The death of my dog.

Name five political events that affected your life the most:

- Growing up in Yugoslavia.
- The break-up of Yugoslavia.
- The mass protest against the Milošević regime of 1996/97.
- The NATO bombing of Serbia in 1999.
- The overthrow of the Milošević regime on October 5th, 2000.
- The assassination of Prime Minister Zoran Djindjić.

What is democracy to you?

A system of values that has not proved viable in Serbia so far.

Full name: Zorana Djaković Minniti

Year of birth: 1976.

Place of birth: Belgrade(Serbia)

Where do you live? Belgrade.

Family status: married to Marco.

Profession: teacher of the French language and literature; manager in the sphere of culture.

What do you do for a living? Work as a project manager and curator.

Name five personal events that affected your life the most.

- Attending a French kindergarten.
- My father's hobby.
- The first ticket for a football match.
- Friends from the Dadov and reading theatrical plays with my friend Milena in secondary school.
- Marco.

Name five political events that affected your life the most:

- Being born in SFR Yugoslavia.
- Antigona
- The wars in Bosnia, Croatia, Kosovo...
- Serbia – my new State i.e. what is left of the state.
- The assassination of Prime Minister Zoran Djindjić.

What is democracy to you?

Freedom of the individual.

A.C.T. Democ[k]racy

—

Because the withdrawal into separatist identities that occur in many European countries are alarming symptoms of a crisis of democracy within Europe,

Because Europe is now reaching the limits of an economic model which is resulting in brutal social fragmentation and deepening inequalities between individuals and countries,

Because the conditions required for the exercise of democracy are now being suffocated by obsolescent administrative, legislative and communications structures,

Because the critical, educational and creative dimensions of art are fundamental conditions to the exercise of democracy,

Because in an era of globalisation, we believe that inter-relating between the commonplace and the singular must cultivate the difference, discontinuity and contradiction as the basis of our representations of reality,

We, the partners in the *A.C.T Democ(k)racy* project:

- _ **La Criée center for contemporary arts, Rennes – France** (coordinator)
- _ **Altart Foundation, Cluj-Napoca - Romania** (coorganisator)
- _ **Cultural Center of Belgrade – Serbia** (coorganisator)
- _ **Onomatopee research centre, Eindhoven – The Netherlands** (coorganisator)
- _ **European Superior School of Arts of Brittany – France** (coorganisator)
- _ **University of arts and design, Cluj – Romania** (coorganisator)
- _ **Fabrica de Pensule, Cluj-Napoca – Romania** (associated partner)

Uphold the following convictions:

- In the face of withdrawal into separatist identities, we believe that the ongoing progress of European democracies in the era of globalisation depends on our ability to cultivate a continuous, inter-penetrable, porous dynamic with respect to otherness.

- In the face of critical, educational and creative challenges, we believe that art has the capacity to bring historic, cultural and social elements into relationship with each other in order to generate unpredictable representations, unexpected encounters and innovative creations.

- Amid an over-administrated and decreasingly inventive Culture, we believe that the vitality of contemporary creativity involves constantly tending a dynamic encompassing tension, transformation and the invention of cultural and artistic projects.

We have thus designed the *A.C.T Democ(k)racy* project to encourage theoretical research and artistic creativity as tools of critical analysis and inventiveness with regard to new ways of engaging in democracy.

The *A.C.T. Democ(k)racy* project calls for a permanent commitment in favour of powerful experiments which can contribute to the practice of democracy in both art and thought, notably by devising constructive attitudes with regard to new cultural challenges, as well as encouraging diversity in aesthetics, thought and culture.

The *A.C.T. Democ(k)racy* project is passionately in favour of movement, interchange and openness as the first conditions for the free circulation of ideas and works.

A.C.T. Democ[k]racy

Art

Abroad
Access
Accentuate
Accord
Accumulate
Achieve
Acquire
Across
Activate
Acuteness
Adventure
Aesthetic
Affect
Affinity
Afraid
Aggregate
Agenda
Agitate
Aim
Audacity
Alert
Alive
Attention
Avid
Alliance
Allow
Alteration
Alternate
Astounding
Ambiguous
Amongst
Amorous
Analyse
Anchor
Another
Antagonism
Anthropology
Anticipate
Antiracist
Anywhere
Appetite
Ardent
Arise
Artist
Artschool
Artwork

Cooperation

Captivate
Culture
Carnal
Choose
City
Civilization
Coalition
Collaborate
Combination
Community
Confront
Connect
Context
Contradiction
Converse
Convivial
Critically
Creative
Contestation
Capable
Care for
Curator
Celebrate
Circulation
Citizenship
Coexistence
Collective
Come out
Common
Commutable
Confluence
Composite
Congregate
Contemporary
Contrast
Convention
Convey
Complexity
Caress
Catalyst
Change
Children
Cultivate
Coloured
Construct
Concept

Transmission

Transculture
Territory
Tender
Think
There
Threshold
Throughout
Tomorrow
Tough
Translation
Tribune
Tune up
Twinkling
Talented
Tension
Tell
Text
Texture
Thrive
Topic
Town
Transcontinental
Transform
Transversal
Tribute
Trusting
Turmoil
Twinning
Taboo
Tactile
Teach
Tempt
Testify
Thanks
Thoughtful
Together
Touching
Transcript
Transgress
Travel
Tremendous
Try
Talk
Team
Tackle
Tactile

A.C.T. Democ[k]racy

Programme 2012 - 2014

—

November 2012/Rennes, France:

Residences at the European Superior School of Art of Brittany, Rennes, France, of students and teachers from the University of arts and design of Cluj, Romania.

—

January - March 2013/Rennes - France :

Exhibition *Two Lines of Life* at La Criée centre for contemporary arts Rennes, France. Curators: Mia David and Zorana Djaković Minniti from the Cultural Center of Belgrade, Serbia.

Exhibition at the European Superior School of Art of Brittany, Rennes, France. Feedback on works made during the residence in November 2012 in Rennes by students and professors from the University of Arts and Design of Cluj, Romania.

—

21 February 2013/Rennes - France:

Seminar at the European Superior School of Art of Brittany - Rennes, France. *Education and training in art in their contributions to democratic creativity.*

—

May 2013/Eindhoven - The Netherlands:

Residences at Onomatopee, Eindhoven, The Netherlands, of students and teachers from the University of arts and design of Cluj, Romania and the European Superior School of Art of Brittany, France.

—

June - August 2013/Eindhoven - The Netherlands:

Exhibition at Onomatopee, Eindhoven, The Netherlands. A curator from Cluj, Romania, invites artists from Cluj and elsewhere.

—

July 2013/Eindhoven - The Netherlands:

Seminar at Onomatopee, Eindhoven, The Netherlands. *Poetics: the role of art and poetry in the reinvention of the imaginary of democracy.*

—

October 2013/Cluj - Romania:

Residences at the University of arts and design of Cluj, Romania, of students and teachers from the European Superior School of Art of Brittany, France.

—

November - December 2013/Cluj - Romania:

Exhibition at la Fabrica de Pensule, Cluj, Roumania. A curator from Rennes, France, invites artists from Rennes and elsewhere.

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Decembre 2013/Cluj - Romania:

Seminar at the fondation Altart, Cluj, Roumania. *Urbanism: daily practices of democracy in European cities.*

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January - February 2014 /Belgrade - Serbia:

Residences at the Cultural Center of Belgrade, Serbia, of students and teachers from the University of arts and design of Cluj, Romania and the European Superior School of Art of Brittany, France.

—

Mars - mai 2014 /Belgrade - Serbia:

Exhibition at the Cultural Center of Belgrade, Serbia. A curator from Eindhoven, The Netherlands, invites artists from Eindhoven and elsewhere.

—

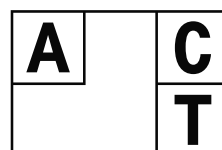
April 2014 /Belgrade - Serbia:

Symposium at the Cultural Center of Belgrade, Serbia.

This final symposium will extend the issues raised in the three first seminars and will examine the limits and possibilities of creativity freedom in Europe.

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August 2014 : Publication

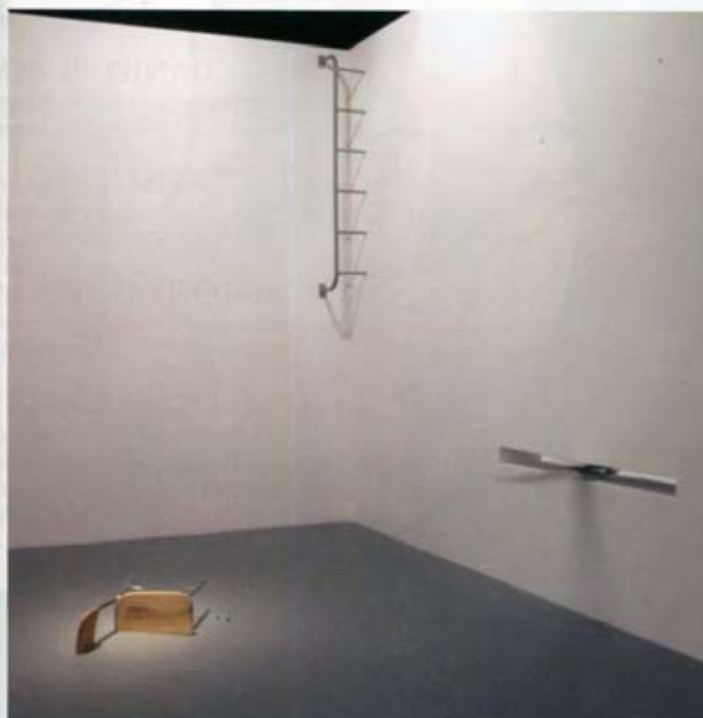


BELGRADE
CLUJ
EINDHOVEN
RENNES

Follow the various stages of the project «ACT Democ [k] racy» and take part of it on the website www.act-democracy.eu

Flash Art

BRAND NEW



Vlatka Horvat

Agnieszka Gratzka

AGNIESZKA GRATZKA: *Am I right in thinking that there has been a shift away from the representation of the human body in your recent work? Your own body has become less present in it, at any rate.*

Vlatka Horvat: That's absolutely right. Coming from a background in performance, I've always been interested in the human body, figure or presence, in relation to the built environment, to objects in space. A lot of my early work in photography, video and collage came at these interests directly — figuratively — but in 2009, for my first solo show at The Kitchen in New York, I began to wonder if I could deal with the same kinds of questions and issues without actually showing the body. I began working on installation and sculptural objects, and instead of representing a body I started to make work that made a

problem of the spectator's body in space. The presence of the spectator — as a subject negotiating space — became really important to me. **AG:** *So is that what you're exploring at the moment?*

VH: The way I've worked on pretty much all the shows since The Kitchen has been to approach them as rooms. I tell myself I'm working with rooms as opposed to making pieces that go into rooms. That distinction allows me to consider how a body fits in there, how a person who enters the space negotiates trajectories and animates the relationships between objects and elements of space. A lot of my work in the last couple of years has explored notions of frames and borders of space, approaching them as sites whose physical properties can be reconfigured and reorganized. I'm drawn to the idea of edges and pe-

Vlatka Horvat was born in 1974 in Čakovec (Croatia). She lives and works in London and New York. Selected solo shows: 2012: Rachel Uffner, New York; Boston University Art Gallery, Boston (forthcoming); 2011: Zak + Branicka, Berlin; Bergen Kunsthall, NO5, Bergen; annex14, Bern, 2009; The Kitchen, New York. Selected group shows: 2011: "Displaced Divisions," Galerija SKUC, Ljubljana; "Present Future" Artissima, Turin; 2010: "Greater New York," MoMA PS1, New York; 2009: 11th Istanbul Biennial, Istanbul. Agnieszka Gratzka is a writer and critic based in New York.

ripheries in two-dimensional work as well — the point where one thing meets another. So in my works on paper I've been working with gestures of folding, cutting and merging. For a while I have been thinking about this idea of making a room that would be entirely reduced to the edges.

AG: *Ground Coil, the spectacular floor piece that colonizes most of the walking surface in the main gallery space at Zak + Branicka in Berlin, does just that. It is made of coiled cardboard strips, 600 meters or so, bound with tape in places. What's the appeal of paper and its byproducts as an artistic medium?*

VH: I like paper as a medium because it's so ubiquitous and commonplace. I'm also drawn to it because it is flimsy, disposable and unprecious. As my work has been developing I've been increasingly

working with paper as a three-dimensional material rather than just a surface to make pictures on. I think that has to do with the shift I was speaking about before — the shift from representing something to trying to make something happen in the viewer's experience of space and time. My works on paper have become more performative, spaces to be reconfigured and reorganized. They invoke process and demand a different, more embodied relation from the viewer. They're objects, rather than images.

From left: VLATKA HORVAT, *Or Some Other Time*, 2008. Installation view at The Kitchen, New York; *Hammered Out*, 2010. Installation view from "Vlatka Horvat: As Opposed to the Front, Back, Top and Bottom," Bergen Kunsthall, Bergen. Broken double-pane window, chair, tape. All courtesy the artist.

Texte :

Maja Ćirić, « Vladimir Nikolic - Brand New »,
in *Flash Art*, November-December, 2011

FlashArtonline.com
The World's Leading Art Magazine

VLADIMIR NIKOLIC

Maja Ćirić

Brand New



From left to right: Painting, 2009. Video, 13 :32 mins; Performance, 2009. Video, 8:51 mins. Courtesy the artist.

MAJA ĆIRIĆ: Where do you see yourself "at home" in the art world?

Vladimir Nikolic: "Home" is not stable in my case, it moves. I am not devoted to any subject and I don't have signature works, so to speak. I am mostly for open space.

MĆ: However, most of the time you are challenging the art system, which is not solely connected to Serbia, your country of origin. It seems that you are an artist capable of crossing simplified geopolitical art world niches.

VN: Most of the countries in the world have no art system. It exists only in a few rich countries. So challenging the system puts you out of your local position. But the art system is not my main preoccupation; I just need to show from time to time that I am aware of it. The moment I do that, I feel the need to escape from that subject.

MĆ: Your voice-over works were shown in the exhibition "The Power to Host" that I curated at the ISCP in New York this summer. These three videos deal with the studio situation, in a way that can be placed within the legacy of institutional critique. It resonated in the context of one of the most renowned international residency programs: both the residents and the general audience watched it repeatedly and laughed. What is it about?

VN: It's about all those voices surrounding an artwork, the interpretative apparatus, coming from different directions: art history, art theory, the institution that hosts an artwork, the critic, the audience. I got an idea to materialize them in the form of a dialogue performed by two actors (Mark and Mr. Q), recorded and placed inside the artwork itself. So one can hear them, not just be aware of them. It is similar to audio guides in museums, only the voice from an audio guide informs about an artwork in front of you, and here the voices are discussing it. But all those voices are also my voice. I am talking to myself, trying to interpret both the artwork and myself. So, Mr. Q — Q is for Curator — is not just any curator out there. It is my inner curator, it is me. I am not challenging the art system if at the same time I am not challenging an artist, myself. In the first two videos, Performance and Installation (both 2009), I recorded some simple activities in the studio, following the aesthetics of art from the '70s. They are just simple scenery where the meaning is constructed in the dialogue, in the text. The last video, Painting (2009), is mute; like a painting, there is no dialogue. I am "performing" the paintings in the studio, playing with the three-dimensional video image as a two-dimensional painting. This video is an attempt to escape from any subject in art, to escape to the purely visual, to pure painting. Of course, I am aware that such pureness doesn't exist, that no image is outside of a certain context. But look at it this way: people also know that life is not a sandy beach under the sun, yet they pay a lot of money to go there and hide from life. Just like that I am hiding in this last video under pure geometrical shapes and colors.

Vladimir Nikolic was born in 1974 in Belgrade (Serbia), where he lives and works. Selected solo shows: 2010: Galerija Dr. Vinko Percic, Subotica (RS). 2009: Salon of Museum of Contemporary Art Belgrade; NT Gallery, Bologna (IT). 2008: HO Galerie, Marseille (FR). 2003: City Gallery, Pozega (RS). 2002: Galeria »2META«, Bucharest. 2001: Gallery Dom omladine, Belgrade; Remont gallery, Belgrade.

Maja Ćirić is a curator and art critic based in Belgrade.

Texte :

Andrej Klemencic, « October Salon to focus on art's "raw energy" », in *Belgrade Insight*, September 21, 2012



Belgrade's annual art extravaganza offers an alternative view.

Photo courtesy of October Salon



This year's co-curator Mika Hannula.

Photo courtesy of October Salon

October Salon to focus on art's 'raw energy'

The biggest event in Belgrade's annual cultural calendar, the October Salon, will this year showcase fine art at a site which itself contains many artistic references.

Andrej KLEMENČIĆ

The October Salon will run from September 22nd to November 4th at Karadordeva 48. The show is open be-

tween noon and 8pm daily, except Monday.

Mika Hannula, one of the two curators of this major artistic event, says that this year's October Salon "will discuss the raw and energetic articulation of contemporary art".

He also says that the former Geodetic Institute in Karadordeva Street was chosen to host the salon because of its unique history and the cross references of styles represented in each of the rooms.

Hannula says that another important factor in the organisation of the show has been time constraints, which forced them to decide fast on which artists and contents were to be presented.

Just weeks before it was due to open, the City of Belgrade threatened not to issue a security permit for the event to take place, citing the building's derelict state.

Mia David, director of the 53rd October Salon, says that she hopes organisers will be able to overcome all technical issues and that a permit will be granted for use of the building.

There will be around 40 participants at this year's October Salon. Apart from Serbia, they come from Finland, Germany, Sweden, Slovakia, Turkey, Bulgaria, Croatia, Estonia, The Netherlands and the UK.

Their works connect many different forms of art – sculptures, installations, films, stories, essays, paintings, photographs, interviews, cartoons, interventions, documents, explorations and public discussions.

This year, the salon will not have a catalogue. Instead, the organisers will publish a book of essays and stories by internationally recognised writers, addressing key issues of contemporary society.

The Geodetic Institute was built in the early 20th century. Originally an office for bankers and stockbrokers, later it became the Geodetic Institute.

In recent years it hosted various events, mainly exhibitions, until the authorities decided it was no longer safe to host large numbers of visitors.

The October Salon was established by the City of Belgrade in 1960 to present the best works of contemporary fine art. In 1967 the organisers decided to include applied arts as well.

The concept of the salon is decided each year by experts in the field of the visual arts – historians, critics or artists – who are all appointed by the City of Belgrade. They then form a council, which elects a jury. This jury awards three prizes of equal merit to the three best works of the salon.

In 2005 the city and the Council decided to stop limiting the salon to Serbian artists alone and make the salon international.

In previous years the salon has used spaces that represented the grandeur of former Yugoslavia, such as the former military academy or the museum in the 25 May complex, which is dedicated to Yugoslavia's former president, Josip Broz Tito.

Last year the salon had 8,000 visitors, compared to 10,000 two years ago. This year, the city and the state gave the October Salon 25 million dinars [€218,000], which is one million [€8,700] less than last year, and ten millions [€87,000] less than three years ago.

Texte :

Ginanne Brownell, « Belgrade's Art Scene, Waiting for Its Moment »,
in *The New York Times*, June 29, 2012

The New York Times

Arts

ART

Belgrade's Art Scene, Waiting for Its Moment



Cultural Centre of Belgrade

"Martian Rock," an installation by the artist Dennis Oppenheim, in front of the Belgrade Cultural Center.

By GINANNE BROWNELL
Published: June 29, 2012

Ever since the Museum of Contemporary Art in Belgrade closed for renovations in 2008, the chief curator Dejan Sretenovic has been asked when the museum will reopen.

Sitting in the museum's temporary administrative digs earlier this spring, Mr. Sretenovic said that, unfortunately, he doesn't know.

The museum, which opened in 1965 and is one of Europe's oldest contemporary art museums, has a fantastic collection of modern and contemporary art spanning the 20th century, including works by artists like Andy Warhol, David Hockney and Joan Miró, as well as some of the former Yugoslavia's most important artists and sculptors, including Marina Abramovic, Rasa Todosijevic and Milica Tomic.

The situation the run-down museum finds itself in — long on enthusiasm but short on funds — is emblematic of the contemporary art scene in Belgrade. It has world-class artists and thought-provoking art, but not much of a market and not many appropriate showcases for the work.

Texte :

Ginanne Brownell, « Belgrade's Art Scene, Waiting for Its Moment »,
in *The New York Times*, June 29, 2012

In bad need of maintenance and updating, the contemporary museum space was closed and the administrative offices were moved to space near the memorial complex that houses the tomb of Marshal Josip Broz Tito in Belgrade. Three small galleries scattered across the Serbian capital are being used to exhibit parts of the collection and shows by contemporary artists.

Construction hummed along the first year, with the roof and the underground space reconstructed, but by 2010 budget cuts and the global financial crisis had combined to bring work on the museum to a halt. The €6.5 million, or about \$8 million, needed to finish the project has proved hard to come by.

Because of frustration over its future, the museum is staging an exhibition in the partially reconstructed space of the museum titled "What Happened to the Museum of Contemporary Art?" The show (through Sept. 30) includes a timeline with documentation and debate about the reconstruction from newspaper articles, photographs, interviews, government statements and a video with curators talking about the problems of working in a museum without a building.

Mr. Sretenovic also commissioned artists and designers to intervene in the space, which still has remnants — including floor installations, posters and wallpaper by the artist Phil Collins — from the last show the museum held on British contemporary art in 2008.

"Even for a poor country in a deep crisis, I do not think it is a big amount of money to finish this reconstruction," Mr. Sretenovic said. "It is more a matter of political will. We need the public to support our pressure on the government and decision makers to finally decide if they need a museum of contemporary art or not."

The situation with the museum is not an isolated example; Belgrade's National Museum, which includes in its collection works by Matisse, van Gogh, Titian and Picasso, closed its permanent collection to the public 10 years ago. It remains unclear when reconstruction on the floors where the collection is housed will begin, though the museum still holds exhibitions in its foyer and in various spaces across the city.

Many artists and curators, frustrated by the lack of institutional support for contemporary art and a nonexistent art market, have either left the country or spend a good portion of their time seeking exhibitions, residencies, commissions and gallery representation outside of Serbia.

Aside from the October Salon, an annual international contemporary art show that is organized by the government-financed Belgrade Cultural Center, there are very few contemporary art programs supported by the state. It is mainly left to the private initiatives of artists, curators and foundations to organize exhibitions, festivals and discussions on contemporary art.

Texte :

Ginanne Brownell, « Belgrade's Art Scene, Waiting for Its Moment »,
in *The New York Times*, June 29, 2012

“We cannot offer infrastructure to young people,” said Vladan Jeremic, an artist and curator. “How can you graduate with a degree in the history of art and curating and have never been to the National Museum to see what we have? Or to have never had a chance to go to the Museum of Contemporary Art? An entire generation has never seen these collections in their lives. How is that possible?”

Two decades ago, before Yugoslavia split apart, Belgrade was not only at the heart of the progressive Yugoslav art scene but was also a thriving center in Europe for conceptual and performance art.

“We had lots of movements and important events for world art history,” said Sasa Janjic, a curator with Belgrade's Remont Independent Artists Association. “In the 1970s, the gallery at the Student Cultural Center was one of the most important points in all of Europe — so the foundations were strong, especially in terms of conceptual art.”

The Student Cultural Center was where many artists involved in the Nova Umjetnicka Praksa (New Art Practice) movement — which included people like Ms. Abramovic, Mladen Stilinic and Tomislav Gotovac and was focused on mixing new media with a social context — held some of their earliest performances and events.

By the late 1980s, Mr. Jeremic said, there was a strong drive to create an art market in Belgrade. “There were serious professional galleries running in the end of the 1980s and beginning of the 1990s and hosting really international events,” he said. “We had a stronger position in 1989 or 1991 than we do now. Since that time, the art market doesn't really exist here.”

Because of that and the lack of exhibition space, many artists who continue to live and work in Belgrade have developed strong international contacts.

“I knew from the very beginning that was part of the whole package,” said Vladimir Nikolic, one of Serbia's most celebrated young video artists. “You make connections, people start seeing your work and after awhile you start receiving invitations to participate in events and residencies. So I am suffering for living in Belgrade because of that but it still works somehow.”

Vesna Milosavljevic, the director and co-founder of the cultural portal seecult.org, described the art scene in Belgrade as being in a “primal phase” of artistic production.

“We do not have an artistic system where everything in that chain — from artists to galleries, curators, dealers, collectors, the media and museums— is connected,” she said. “But I think we are used to working in such circumstances because organizations that were active in the 1990s during the wars, when we had no support, still exist. I think the problem is how to continue that independent cultural and artistic production in the future.”

Texte :

Ginanne Brownell, « Belgrade's Art Scene, Waiting for Its Moment »,
in *The New York Times*, June 29, 2012

One group interested in helping tackle that issue is the *Asocijacija Nezavisna Kulturna Scena Srbije* (Association of the Independent Cultural Scene of Serbia), which formed last year and is made up of more than 50 independent cultural organizations across the country. The group works to promote, coordinate and develop the country's cultural and artistic spheres.

Based in Belgrade, the organization helps independent arts groups, including dance and theater, with everything from managing public relations to holding workshops on applying for European Union funding.

Last October, running partially in tandem with October Salon, the group coordinated the festival "Self-Powered," which helped promote various independent cultural events taking place across the capital.

"We are definitely becoming a voice," said Boba Mirjana Stojadinovic, an artist who is the coordinator for the group. "I think people who deal with cultural policy in government realize that independent organizations are one of the main representatives of culture in this country. So they actually need us, but they do not want to give us money."

According to Mr. Janjic, the curator with Belgrade's Remont Independent Artists Association, there are estimates by researchers at the University of Arts in Belgrade that 70 percent of all cultural programming in Serbia is organized through independent groups and individuals, yet they receive only about 20 percent of state funding.

"Definitely I think the independent sector is driving contemporary art," said Ms. Milosavljevic. "I was in Holland recently and they were talking about budget cuts and the difficulties in funding for culture. For me, their support of the cultural and artistic scene is paradise because we do not even have any money to cut from."

Despite all the problems, many people remain optimistic that things will improve.

"There is a huge field of creativity, enthusiasm and energy," said Miroslav Karic, also a curator with Remont. "There are a lot of interesting artists, groups and initiatives that are fighting on a daily basis against these problems. I see great potential for this scene."

Visiting information

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ADDRESS & OPENING HOURS

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From Tuesday to Friday 12noon-7pm
Saturday and Sunday 2pm-7pm
Closed on Mondays and public holidays
Easy access to people with restricted mobility

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VISITS

INDIVIDUAL

A «visitor document» explaining the exhibition is at your disposal in the art center. Visitor assistants from La Criée are very pleased to answer to your questions and talk about exhibitions.

GROUPS

Groups are welcomed to visit La Criée either freely or with our Visitor Service professional. Only upon reservation - From Tuesday to Friday :
Children: from 10am to 12noon
Adults: from 2pm to 6pm

Information and reservation:

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