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"ONE DAY, INSTEAD OF ONE NIGHT, A BURST OF MACHINE-GUN FIRE WILL FLASH, IF LIGHT CANNOT COME OTHERWISE", MILICA TOMIC, 2009, PHOTOGRAPHER: SRDJAN VELJOVIC. DEDICATED TO THE MEMBERS OF THE ANARCHO-SYNDICALIST INITIATIVE - BELGRADE, 3. SEPTEMBER, 2009.

ART AND ACTIVISM

IN YU AND EX-YU

1968-2008 /MISKO SUVAKOVIC/

The methods of political, cultural and art activism<sup>1</sup> take completely different forms, from individual actions, to different practices of self-organizing, to informal non-institutional or formally institutionalized activities. Types of activism range from protest by way of writing public messages to newspapers, electronic media, institutions or politicians, to cultural campaigns, to political, social, economic, or rather gender, racial, class actions in public marches.

<sup>1</sup> STEVEN M. BUEHLER, *SOCIAL MOVEMENTS IN ADVANCED CAPITALISM: THE POLITICAL ECONOMY AND CULTURAL CONSTRUCTION OF SOCIAL ACTIVISM*, OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS, OXFORD, 1999; MARINA GRZINIC (ED), *THE REAL, THE DESPERATE, THE ABSOLUTE - ESSAYS ON ART SYSTEMS, NARRATIVES OF POWER, STRATEGIES OF IMPLOSION, PERSPECTIVES ON DISASTERS, OBJECTS AS MONSTERS AND ACTIVISM*, GALERIJA SODOBNE UMETNOSTI, 2001

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strikes, protests, or subversive, that is to say, guerilla actions. Activism can be of a left (union activism, socialist activism, communist activism, activism for human rights, anti-globalist activism) or right (fascist activism, national socialist activism, religious activism, nationalist activism, racist activism) orientation, depending on which political goals it supports. Cultural activism is directed not so much towards protest against the state, as towards changing everyday public opinion towards society and culture. Art activism is based on the critical, the subversive and the performance of an artistic act in society and culture. In the age of globalism, activism is developing across a wide spectrum, from LIVE ACTIVISM TO NET ACTIVISM.

Art activism in the Yugoslav arts from the end of the sixties can be observed through several “cultural” and “activist” models of intervention practices. It should be taken into account that “activist practices” have been established and carried out in differing political conditions that emerged from the changes inside the state of the socialist Yugoslavia (SFRY), then the breakup of the SFRY and, finally, from the creation of “new” national transitional states and cultures.

## 1960s

During the sixties, we are talking about the emancipatory opening of the SFRY that arose from the establishment of important differences between Yugoslav self-management socialism and Soviet bureaucratic socialism. Yugoslavia proved itself as an open socialist state directed towards multilateral social, cultural and artistic cooperation with countries from both the West and East, but also with Third World countries.

Art activism in Slovenia is connected to the emergence of the OHO<sub>2</sub> group (1966–1971) and its intervention in cultural artistic practices. The OHO group carried out a number of actions, like the anti-war posters of Marko Pogacnik that were installed in public places in Ljubljana (1967), or a happening as the sum total of actions at the main city park Zvezda in Ljubljana (1969). Slovenian sociologist Rasko Mocnik, then a member of the movement OHO-Catalog, published the

<sup>2</sup> IGOR ZABEL (ED), *OHO RETROSPEKTIVA [OHO RETROSPECTIVE]*, MODERNA GALERIJA LJUBLJANA, 1994; MIŠKO ŠUVAKOVI; *THE CLANDESTINE HISTORIES OF THE OHO GROUP*, ZAVOD P.A.R.A.S.I.T.E, LJUBLJANA, 2010

manifesto “Revolution is without a project...”, which became the manifesto of the new left. With it, a “permanent revolution” was proclaimed, based on “po-etic subversion”. The Theatre group Pupiliija Frankeverk developed tactics of micro-activism and luddism in their public performances.

Practices of art activism in Croatia<sub>3</sub> were anticipated in the post-constructivist proclamations apropos the exhibition *HIT PARADE* (1967), then in the intervention actions in urban space by artists like Boris Bucan, Braco Dimitrijevic, Goran Trbuljak, Sanja Ivekovic, Dalibor Martinis, Dejan Jokanovic, Jagoda Kaloper and others. These authors are characterized by their engaged attitudes and demands that “plastic” or “post-objective interventions” and provocations of citizens-as-accidental-audience should be carried out in living surroundings or political contexts.

Art activism in Serbia is connected with the activities of the KôD<sub>4</sub> group from Novi Sad at the turn of the sixties and the seventies. The KôD group was characterized by art activism that developed on three planes: on the plane of urban behavioral actions, on the plane of private actions, the so-called, INVISIBLE ART, and on the plane of political activism through underground magazines and neo-revolutionary practices. The ideal of Kôdean activism was the articulation of alternative life styles and open artistic expression within socialist society. A Confrontation between two KôD group members, Slavko Bogdanovic and Miroslav Mandic, and the state apparatuses led to their arrest and sentencing to months in prison.<sub>5</sub>

## 1970s

During the seventies a complex process was taking place in the SFRY, a process of enforcing state repression over alternative, subversive and critical artistic practices. The state repression begins with a showdown with the film neo-avant-garde, and it was also being carried out in other fields of culture and art.

<sup>3</sup> MARIJAN SUSOVSKI (ED), *INOVACIJE U HRVATSKOJ UMJETNOSTI SEDANDESETIH GODINA [INNOVATIONS IN THE CROATIAN ART OF THE SEVENTIES]*, GALERIJA SUVREMENE UMJETNOSTI, ZAGREB, 1982

<sup>4</sup> MIŠKO ŠUVAKOVIĆ (ED), *RETROSPEKTIVA: GRUPA KôD, [O] [O] KôD [RETROSPECTIVE: GROUP KôD, [O] AND [O] KôD]*, GALERIJA SUVREMENE LIKOVNE UMETNOSTI, NOVI SAD, 1995

<sup>5</sup> MIŠKO ŠUVAKOVIĆ, DRAGOMIR UGREŠIĆ (EDS), *EVROPSKI KONTEKSTI UMETNOSTI XX VEKA U VOJVODINI [EUROPEAN CONTEXTS OF THE XX-CENTURY ART IN VOJVODINA]*, MUZEJ SUVREMENE UMETNOSTI VOJVODINE, 2008

One part of experimental artistic practices was placed in “cultural reservations”, above all, students’ cultural centers that were being founded all over Yugoslavia during the sixties. The Students’ Center in Zagreb was established, as well as the Tribina Mladih in Novi Sad, the Students’ Cultural Center in Belgrade and SKUC in Ljubljana. These centers were the “spaces” of monitored artistic and cultural freedom.

One form of activist work was directed towards the foundation of communes. What we have here is, actually, radical activism directed towards forming of new types of living communities. The first commune was established in Slovenia, where the members of the OHO group founded their new “non-artistic” life in the village of Sempas in 1971.<sup>6</sup> Members of the Novi Sad groups KôD and ( established a city commune in 1973. Bosko Mandic with his family founded the commune “Porodica bistrih potoka” (“Family of Clear Streams”) in Brezovica, a village on the mountain Rudnik in Serbia.<sup>7</sup>

Another form of activist work in the seventies was connected to the ideas of “interventionism” in natural and urban space. The ecologically oriented group Tok<sup>8</sup> (1971-72) from Zagreb acted in this context. This informal group of “interventionists” acted under the premise that the city is a space of plastic occurrence. The A3 group (1970-1973) acted in Belgrade. The activities of this group were based on public intervention and behavioral actions in urban spaces of the city.<sup>9</sup> All these occurrences were characterized by the luddistic and luddistic-critical approach to social life and its manifestations in public space.

One kind of post-activism is peculiar to public actions in the urban spaces that were carried out by Tomislav Gotovac<sup>10</sup> and Grupa Sestorice<sup>11</sup> from Zagreb in the second half of the seventies. We are talking about „post-activism“ since these authors worked with the activist tactics of public city actions, but their goal was not direct political, ecological or cultural intervention in the society, but a change and opening of the artistic work to activism and critical engagement.

<sup>6</sup> MARKO POGACNIK, ZHAJEVE ORTE, EKOLOGIJA IN UMETNOST [LEY LINES, ECOLOGY IN ART], ZALOZBA OBZORJA, MARIBOR, 1986

<sup>7</sup> BOZIDAR MANDIC, PORODICA BISTRIB POTOKA [FAMILY OF CLEAR STREAMS], DNEVNIK, NOVI SAD, 1989

<sup>8</sup> MARIJAN SUSOVSKI (ED), INOVACIJE U HRVATSKOJ UMETNOSTI SEDAMDESETIH GODINA [INNOVATIONS IN THE CROATIAN ART OF THE SEVENTIES], GALERIJA SUVREMENE UMETNOSTI, ZAGREB, 1982

<sup>9</sup> SLAVKO TIMOTIJEVIC, EKIPA ZA AKCIJU I ANONIMNU ATRAKCIJU, EKIPA A3 [TEAM FOR ACTION AND ANONIMOUS ATTRACTION], FROM MARIJAN SUSOVSKI (ED), NOVA UMETNICKA PRAKSA 1966-1978 [NEW ARTISTIC PRACTICE 1966-1978], GALERIJA SUVREMENE UMETNOSTI, ZAGREB, 1978

<sup>10</sup> ALEKSANDAR BATISTA ILIC (ED), TOMISLAV GOTOVAC, HRVATSKI FILMSKI SAVEZ I MUZEJ SUVREMENE UMETNOSTI, ZAGREB, 2003

<sup>11</sup> GRUPA SESTORICE AUTORA [GROUP OF SIX AUTHORS], SCCA, ZAGREB, 1998

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REALITY CHECK

At the end of the seventies we witnessed the formation of the first feminist groups and debate gatherings. The first feminist conference took place under the title “COMRADE WOMAN... THE FEMALE QUESTION - A NEW APPROACH?”<sup>12</sup> in the Students’ Cultural Center in Belgrade in 1978. From the very beginning,<sup>12</sup> the feminist movements and groups were formed in three fields: feminist activism, feminist theory and feminist-motivated artistic practices. Feminist oriented artistic practices were realized by the artists Katalin Ladik, Sanja Ivekovic, Marina Abramovic.

1980s

The emergence of postmodern artistic practices, in the first place, the revival of trans-avant-garde and neo-expressionist painting, signified the disappearance of art activism from the mainstream scene. In Croatia and Serbia, activism managed to survive only at the level of feminist actions.

In Slovenia it comes to the activation of the radical alternative,<sup>13</sup> in the cultural scene of the new music (bands Laibach and Borghesia), as well as theatre and art activism that entered into the field of political interventionism in culture and society. We witness the emergence of gay and lesbian activism, namely, post-punk anarchism. Theatre, video and film artwork takes the form of provoking the socialist public and challenging the canonic dogmas of an “ordered society”. From the combination of theory from the Slovenian Lacanians (Slavoj Žizek, Rastko Mocnik), the art activism of NSK<sup>14</sup> (Neue Slowenische Kunst) and Borghesia,<sup>15</sup> and critical intellectual alternative emerges a movement for a civil society that led to Slovenia’s independence in 1991.

<sup>12</sup> ZARANA PAPIĆ (ED), DRUG-CA ŽENA ... ŽENSKO PITANJE - NOVI PRISTUP? [COMRADE WOMAN... FEMALE QUESTION - A NEW APPROACH?], SKC, BELGRADE, 1978

<sup>13</sup> ALES ERJAVEC, MARINA GRZINIC, LJUBLJANA, LJUBLJANA, MLADINSKA KNJIGA, LJUBLJANA, 1991

<sup>14</sup> MARINA GRZINIC, NEUE SLOVENISCHE KUNST (NEW SLOVENIAN ART), FROM MISKO SUVAKOVIC, DUBRAVKA DJURIC (EDS), IMPOSSIBLE HISTORIES - HISTORICAL AVANT-GARDES, NEO-AVANT-GARDES, AND POST-AVANT-GARDES IN YUGOSLAVIA, 1918-1991, THE MIT PRESS, CAMBRIDGE MA, 2003; AND NEUE SLOVENISCHE KUNST [NEW SLOVENIAN ART], GZ HRVATSKE, ZAGREB, 1991

<sup>15</sup> FV - ALTERNATIVE SCENE OF THE EIGHTIES, MEDNARODNI GRAFIČNI LIKOVNI CENTER, LJUBLJANA, 2009

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## 1990s and 2000s

With the violent breakup of the SFRY, beginning in 1991, comes complex military, political, social, but also cultural artistic conflicts. The last decade of the twentieth century was marked by “war” and as a response to war, the emergence of right-wing and left-wing activism. Activism on the right, above all in the parts of former Yugoslavia where the war was waged, signify a paramilitary nationalist engagement and, more seldom, cultural activism. Left-wing activism in all the countries of former Yugoslavia is marked by an orientation towards:

- # antiwar and peace activism,
- # anti-globalist activism,
- # gender – feminist, gay, lesbian and queer – activism, and
- # educational activism

All these political or cultural, that is to say, artistic options were directed against the nationalistic and capitalist political practices that stood behind the war occurrences. Besides all this, these “open groups”, “non-governmental institutions” or “movements” had different status depending on the role of the “state” in which they operated during the war.

Out of the activist and, afterwards, antiwar NGO practices of the nineties developed “post-activist” institutions – like Metelkova in Ljubljana, Slovenia, Mama in Zagreb, Croatia, Rex and THE OTHER SCENE in Belgrade, Serbia. These institutions were formally and informally established around non-governmental organizations and artistic groups that entered into the transition process of experimental, critical and, surely, educational work.

On the artistic plane, “activism”<sup>16</sup> in transition during the nineties and the 2000s mostly takes completely different forms,<sup>17</sup> of “cultural work” or “cultural activism”.

- # activism in the field of sociality that also has references to the artistic engaged interventions (Women in Black, Beogradski krug, Queer Collective, Led Art from Belgrade, Delavsko-pankerska univerza from Ljubljana),

<sup>16</sup> ALDO MILOHNIC, „ARTIVISM”, FROM „PERFORMING ACTION, PERFORMING THINKING” (TEMAT, *MASHA (MASH)*, št. 1-2 (90-91), LJUBLJANA, 2005, pp. 15-25

<sup>17</sup> RENATA FRANČ, VLADO SAKIĆ, JELENA MARIĆIĆ, *GRADJANSKI AKTIVIZAM U HRVATSKOJ (CIVIL ACTIVISM IN CROATIA), DRUSTVENA ISTRAZIVANJA (SOCIAL RESEARCH) VOL. 16 NO. 1-2, ZAGREB, 2007, pp. 111-132*

# transfer of activism from the field of sociology itself into the field of artistic critical and subversive actions (Tadej Pogacar from Ljubljana, Sasa Markovic Mikrob, the Skart group, the Biro for Culture and Communication, Slobodnakultura.org, Danilo Prnjat, the Spomenik group, Ranko Trvanj from Belgrade, the Apsolutno group and Art Klinika from Novi Sad, Igor Bezinovic, Igor Grubic from Zagreb and others),

# post-activist curatorial practices (the SCCA center from Sarajevo, the Container and WHW curatorial team, Natasa Bodrozic from Zagreb, kuda.org from Novi Sad, Marina Grzinic from Ljubljana/Vienna, the Kontekst Gallery from Belgrade),

# digital or net activism (Vuk Cosic, Davide Grassi, Igor Stromajer from Ljubljana, kuda.org and Andrej Tisma from Novi Sad).<sup>18</sup>

Activist operations in art, culture and society gained completely different “civil” orientations from gender to racial and class to global interventions. They are characterized by the intention towards networking and creation of mobile critical and, often, reformist interrelations on the global and local plane.

<sup>18</sup> TOMISLAV MILOVAC (ED), *NEPRILAGODJENI - KONCEPTUALISTIČKE STRATEGIJE U HRVATSKOJ SUVREMENOJ UMETNOSTI (THE MALADJUSTED - CONCEPTUALISTIC STRATEGIES IN CONTEMPORARY CROATIAN ART)*, MUZEJ SUVREMENE UMETNOSTI, ZAGREB, 2002; IGOR SPANJOL, IGOR ZABEL (EDS), 95-05 *TERRITORIJI, IDENTITETE, MREŽE / SLOVENSKA UMETNOST 1995-2005 (TERRITORIES, IDENTITIES, NETWORKS / SLOVENIAN ART 1995-2005)*, MODERNA GALERIJA, LJUBLJANA, 2005; BRANISLAVA ANĐELKOVIĆ, BRANISLAV DIMITRIJEVIĆ, DEJAN SREtenović, BORUT VILD (EDS), *O NORMALNOSTI: UMETNOST U SRBIJI, 1989-2001 (ON NORMALITY: ART IN SERBIA 1989-2001)*, MUZEJ SUVREMENE UMETNOSTI, BELGRADE, 2005; MIŠKO SUVAKOVIĆ (ED), *ISTORIJA UMETNOSTI U SRBIJI XX VEK - RADIKALNE UMETNIČKE PRAKSE 1913-2008 (HISTORY OF XX CENTURY SERBIAN ART - RADICAL ARTISTIC PRACTICES 1913-2008)*, ORION ART, BELGRADE, 2010



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"ONE DAY, INSTEAD OF ONE NIGHT, A REALITY CHECK OF MACHINE-GUN FIRE WILL FLASH, IF LIGHT CANNOT COME OTHERWISE", MILICA TOMIC, 2009, PHOTOGRAPHER: SRDJAN VELJOVIC. DEDICATED TO THE MEMBERS OF THE ANARCHO-SYNDICALIST INITIATIVE - BELGRADE, 3. SEPTEMBER, 2009.

KUNST OG AKTIVISME

I JUGOSLAVIA OG EKS-

JUGOSLAVIA 1968-2008  
/MISKO SUVAKOVIC/

Aktivismen, den være seg politisk, kulturell eller kunstnerisk kan ta i bruk et bredt spekter av metoder, fra individuelle aksjoner, ulike former for selvorganisering og uformelle, ikke-institusjonelle foretak, til formelle og institusjonaliserte aktiviteter. Det finnes en rekke typer aktivisme, alt fra protester i form av åpne brev til aviser og elektroniske medier, henvendelser til institusjoner og

1 STEVEN M. BUECHLER, *SOCIAL MOVEMENTS IN ADVANCED CAPITALISM: THE POLITICAL ECONOMY AND CULTURAL CONSTRUCTION OF SOCIAL ACTIVISM*, OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS, OXFORD, 1999; MARINA GRZINIC (RED.), *THE REAL, THE DESPERATE, THE ABSOLUTE: ESSAYS ON ART SYSTEMS, NARRATIVES OF POVER, STRATEGIES OF IMPLOSION, PERSPECTIVES ON DISASTERS, OBJECTS AS MONSTERS AND ACTIVISM*, GALERIJA SODOBNE UMETNOSTI, CELJE, SLOVENIA, 2001.

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politikere, til kulturkampanjer og politiske, sosiale og økonomiske aksjoner, eller aksjoner på basis av kjønn, rase eller klasse, som demonstrasjonstog, streiker og protester, og undergravende aksjoner eller geriljaaksjoner. Avhengig av hvilke politiske mål aktivismen har, kan den ha sitt opphav både på venstresiden (fagforeningsaksjoner, sosialistisk og kommunistisk aktivisme, kampanjer for menneskerettigheter, antiglobalisme) og høyresiden (fascisme, nasjonalsozialisme, religiøs aktivisme, nasjonalisme, rasisme). Kulturaktivismen tar ikke i samme grad form av protester mot staten, men har oftere som mål å påvirke den offentlige opinionen og folks holdninger til samfunn og kultur. Kunstaktivismen tar utgangspunkt i det kritiske og det subversive potensial som ligger i å utføre en kunstnerisk handling ute i samfunnet. I globaliseringens tidsalder utvikler aktivismen seg på tvers av et vidt spektrum, fra live aktivisme til nettaktivisme.

Kunstaktivismen i Jugoslavia fra slutten av sekstitallet kan ses i lys av flere "kulturelle" og "aktivistiske" modeller for intervensjonistisk praksis. Det er viktig å ta i betraktning at disse "aktivistiske praksisene" fant sted under svært forskjellige og skiftende politiske forhold, fra endringer innad i Den sosialistiske føderale republikken Jugoslavia (SFRJ), fulgt av splittelsen av den jugoslaviske republikken og til slutt, etableringen av de "nye" nasjonale overgangsstatene og deres kultur.

## 1960-tallet

På sekstitallet handler det om den frigjørende åpningen av Jugoslavia; det ble skapt større avstand mellom den jugoslaviske selvstyringssozialismen og den sovjetiske, byråkratiske varianten av sosialisme, og Jugoslavia viste seg som en åpen sosialistisk stat innrettet mot multilateral, sosial, kulturell og kunstnerisk samhandling med land fra øst og vest, så vel som fra den tredje verden.

I Slovenia er kunstaktivismen nært forbundet med etableringen av gruppen OHO<sup>2</sup> (1966–1971) og denne gruppens kulturelle, kunstneriske intervensjoner. OHO-gruppen gjennomførte en rekke aksjoner, fra å henge opp Marko Pogacniks antikrigsplakater på offentlige steder i Ljubljana (1967), til en happening som besto av totalsummen av alle de handlinger og hendelser som fant sted i bypar-

<sup>2</sup> IGOR ZABEL (RED.), *OHO RETROSPEKTIVA*, MODERNA GALERIJA LJUBLJANA, 1994; MISKO SUVAKOVIC; *THE CLANDESTINE HISTORIES OF THE OHO GROUP: ZAVOD PARASITE*, LJUBLJANA, 2010.

ken Zvezda i Ljubljana (1969). Den slovenske sosiologen Rastko Mocnik som på den tiden var medlem av bevegelsen OHO-Catalog, utga bullen *REVOLUSJONEN STÅR UTE* (NOE PROSJEKT ...), og dette ble den nye venstresidens manifest. Og med det, ble det erklært permanent revolusjon, basert på "poetisk undergraving", og teatertruppen Pupilija Frankeverk utviklet en taktikk for mikroaktivisme og "luddisme" – eller modernitetsmotstand – i sine forestillinger.

I Kroatia<sup>3</sup> ble kunstaktivismen foregrepet i de postkonstruktivistiske opprop som kom i forbindelse med utstillingen *HIT PARADE* (1967), og deretter med en rekke intervensjonistiske aksjoner i byrommet, utført av kunstnere som Boris Bucan, Braco Dimitrijevic, Goran Trbuljak, Sanja Ivekovic, Dalibor Martinis, Dejan Jokanovic og Jagoda Kaloper, kjent for sitt engasjement og for sitt krav om at "plastiske" eller "post-objektive intervensjoner" og provokasjoner av borgerne-som-vilkårlig-publikum skulle utføres i levende omgivelser eller politiske kontekster.

I Serbia er kunstaktivismen forbundet med gruppen KôD<sup>4</sup> fra Novi Sad og deres aktiviteter i overgangen mellom seksti- og syttitallet. KôD kjennetegnes av en kunstaktivisme som utfoldet seg på tre nivåer: som urbane atferdsaksjoner, som private aksjoner (såkalt *USYNLIG KUNST*), og som politisk aktivisme gjennom undergrunntidsskrifter og ny-revolusjonære praksiser. Den "KôD-iske" aktivismens ideal var å utvikle alternative livsstiler og åpne kunstneriske uttrykk innenfor det sosialistiske samfunnet. En konfrontasjon med statsapparatet fra KôD-medlemmers side, Slavko Bogdanovic og Miroslav Mandic, førte til at de ble arrestert og dømt til flere måneders fengsel.<sup>5</sup>

## 1970-tallet

På syttitallet fant det sted en kompleks prosess i SFRJ, der staten intensiverte undertrykkelsen av alternative, subversive og kritiske kunstpraksiser. Det begynte med at statsapparatet tok et oppgjør med filmens neo-avantgarde, men kontrollen ble senere overført også på andre felter innen kunst og kultur. En

<sup>3</sup> MARIJAN SUSOVSKI (RED.), *INOVACIJE U HRVATSKOJ UMJETNOSTI SEDAMDESETIH GODINA* (NYVINNINGER I DEN KROATISKE KUNSTEN PÅ SYTTITALLET), GALERIJA SUVREMENE UMJETNOSTI, ZAGREB, 1982.

<sup>4</sup> MISKO SUVAKOVIC (RED.), *RETROSPEKTIVA: GRUPA KôD, [ ] i [ ] KôD* (RETROSPEKTIV: GRUPPE KôD, ( ] OG ( KôD), GALERIJA SUVREMENE LIKOVNE UMJETNOSTI, NOVI SAD, 1995.

<sup>5</sup> MISKO SUVAKOVIC OG DRAGOMIR UGREN (RED.), *EVROPSKI KONTEKSTI UMETNOSTI XX VEKA U VOJVODINI* (EUROPEISKE KONTEKSTER I 1900-TALLSKUNSTEN I VOJVODINA), MUZEJ SUVREMENE UMJETNOSTI VOJVODINE, 2008.

del av de eksperimentelle kunstnerne ble plassert i "kulturelle reservater", da først og fremst studentenes kultursentre som var blitt etablert overalt i Jugoslavia på sekstitallet. Blant disse finner vi Studentsenteret i Zagreb, senteret Tribina Mladih i Novi Sad, Studentenes kultursenter (SKC) i Beograd og SKUC (Studentenes kultur- og kunstsenter) i Ljubljana. Disse sentrene ga rom for en viss, om enn overvåket, kunstnerisk og kulturell frihet.

En type aktivistisk aktivitet hadde som siktemål å opprette kollektiver. Det var her faktisk snakk om en radikal aktivisme som ville skape nye bo- og samfunnsformer. Det første kollektivet ble dannet i Slovenia da medlemmene av OHO-gruppen to fatt på sitt nye "ikke-kunstneriske" liv i landsbyen Sempas i 1971.<sup>6</sup> Medlemmene i gruppene KôD fra Novi Sad og ( etablerte et bykollektiv i 1973. Og sammen med familien grunnla Bosko Mandic kollektivet "Porodica bistrih potoka" (De klare bekkers familie) i Brezovica, en landsby i fjellet Rudnik i Serbia.<sup>7</sup>

En annen form for aktivistisk arbeid på syttitallet var knyttet til tanker om "intervensjonisme" i naturen og i urbane rom. Den økologisk orienterte gruppen Tok<sup>8</sup> (1971-72) fra Zagreb virket innenfor en slik kontekst. Denne løst sammensatte flokken med "intervensjonister" hadde som premis at byen er et rom for plastiske hendelser. Gruppen A3 (1970-1973) holdt til i Beograd, og drev med offentlige intervensjoner og atferdsaksjoner i byrommet.<sup>9</sup> Alle disse eksemplene kjennetegnes av en luddistisk eller luddisme-kritisk tilnærming til samfunnslivet og hvordan det kommer til uttrykk i det offentlige rom.

De aksjonene som Tomislav Gotovac,<sup>10</sup> og Grupa Sestorice,<sup>11</sup> fra Zagreb gjennomførte i byrommet i siste halvdel av syttitallet, kan derimot karakteriseres som en form for post-aktivisme. Grunnen til dette er at selv om de benyttet seg av aktivistiske taktikker og utførte offentlige byaksjoner, hadde de ikke som mål å gjøre politiske, økologiske og kulturelle inngrep i samfunnet, målet deres var heller å forandre og åpne kunsten for aktivisme og kritisk engasjement.

<sup>6</sup> MARKO POGACNIK, *ZNAJEVE PRTE, EKOLOGIJA IN UMETNOST* (LEY-LINJER, ØKOLOGI I KUNSTEN), ZALOZBA OBZORJA, MARIBOR, 1986.

<sup>7</sup> BOZIDAR MANDIC, *PORODICA BISTRH POTOKA* (DE KLARE BEKKERS FAMILIE), DNEVNIK, NOVI SAD, 1989.

<sup>8</sup> MARIJAN SUSOVSKI (RED.), *INDOVACIJE U HRVATSKOJ UMJETNOSTI SEDAMDESETIH GODINA* (NYVINNINGER I DEN KROATISKE SYTTITALSKUNSTEN), GALERIJA SUVREMENE UMJETNOSTI, ZAGREB, 1982.

<sup>9</sup> SLAVKO TIMOTIJEVIC, "EKIPA ZA AKCIJU I ANONIMNU ATRAKCIJU, EKIPA A3" (LAG FOR HANDLING OG ANONYM ATRAKSIJON, LAG A3), MARIJAN SUSOVSKI (RED.), *NOVA UMJETNIČKA PRAKSA 1966-1978* (NYE KUNSTNERISKE PRAKSISER 1966-1978), GALERIJA SUVREMENE UMJETNOSTI, ZAGREB, 1978.

<sup>10</sup> ALEKSANDAR BATISTA ILIC (RED.), *TOMISLAV GOTOVAC*, HRVATSKI FILMSKI SAVEZ I MUZEJ SUVREMENE UMJETNOSTI, ZAGREB, 2003.

<sup>11</sup> *GRUPA SESTORICE AUTORA* (GRUPPEN AV SEKS FOREATTERE), SCCA, ZAGREB, 1998.

Mot slutten av syttitallet kom de første feministiske gruppene og med dem, debattmøtene. Den første feministiske konferansen som gikk av stabelen fikk tittelen "KAMERAT KVINNE ... KVINNESAKEN - EN NY TILNÆRMING?"<sup>12</sup> og ble arrangert i Studentenes kultursenter i Beograd i 1978. Helt fra begynnelsen av utspilte de feministiske bevegelsene og gruppene seg innen tre felter: feministisk aktivisme, feministisk teori og feministisk motivert kunstpraksis. En feministisk orientert kunst finner vi blant annet hos Katalin Ladik, Sanja Ivekovic og Marina Abramovic.

## 1980-tallet

Fremveksten av den postmoderne kunsten, som ble innvarslet med maleriets renessanse i transavantgarden og nyekspresjonismen, var et signal om kunstaktivismens forsvinning fra kunstens hovedscene. I Kroatia og Serbia var det bare i form av feministiske aksjoner at aktivismen klarte å overleve.

I Slovenia finner aktivismen et utløp i radikale alternativer på den nye musikkscenen (med band som Laibach og Borghesia), i tillegg til en teater- og kunstaktivisme som beveger seg inn på feltet til politisk intervensjonisme i kultur og samfunn.<sup>13</sup> På denne tiden gjør også den homofile og lesbiske aktivismen sitt inntog, nemlig som "post-punk-anarkisme". Vi får teater, video- og filmkunst som provoserer det sosialistiske publikum og utfordrer det "velregulerte" samfunnets kanoniserte dogmer. Ut fra en kombinasjon av teori utformet av de slovenske lacanianere (Slavoj Zizek, Rastko Mocnik), *Neue Slowenische Kunst*<sup>14</sup> (politisk kunstkollektiv; NSK) og deres kunstaktivisme, og Borghesia,<sup>15</sup> samt andre kritiske intellektuelle alternativer, oppstår den bevegelsen for en sivilisert samfunn som leder fram til Slovenias uavhengighet i 1991.

<sup>12</sup> ZARANA PAPIĆ (RED.), *DRUG-CA ŽENA ... ŽENSKO PITANJE - NOVI PRISTUP?* (KAMERAT KVINNE ... KVINNESAKEN - EN NY TILNÆRMING?), SKC, BEOGRAD, 1978.

<sup>13</sup> ALES ERJAVEC, MARINA GRZINIC, *LJUBLJANA, LJUBLJANA*, MLADINSKA KNJIGA, LJUBLJANA, 1991.

<sup>14</sup> MARINA GRZINIC, "NEUE SLOWENISCHE KUNST" I MISKO SUVAKOVIC OG DUBRAVKA DJURIC (RED.), *IMPOSSIBLE HISTORIES: HISTORICAL AVANT-GARDES, NEO-AVANT-GARDES, AND POST-AVANT-GARDES IN YUGOSLAVIA, 1918-1991*, MIT PRESS, CAMBRIDGE MA, 2003; OG *NEUE SLOWENISCHE KUNST*, GZ HRVATSKE, ZAGREB, 1991.

<sup>15</sup> *FV - ALTERNATIVE SCENE OF THE EIGHTIES*, MEDNARODNI GRAFIČNI LIKOVNI CENTER, LJUBLJANA, 2009.

## 1990- og 2000-tallet

Med den sosialistiske føderale republikkens voldsherjede splittelse som begynte i 1991, kommer det komplekse militære, politiske, sosiale og kulturelle, men også kunstneriske konflikter. Det siste tiåret i det tjuende århundret var preget av "krig", og som en respons på krigen fikk vi aktivisme fra både høyre- og venstresiden. Høyresidens aktivisme, fremfor alt i de delene av det tidligere Jugoslavia hvor krigen herjet, tok form av et paramilitært nasjonalistisk engasjement og til tider kulturell aktivisme. Venstreaktivismen i alle de tidligere jugoslaviske statene utspiller seg på følgende områder:

- # antikrigs- og fredsaktivisme
- # anti-globaliseringsaktivisme
- # aktivisme knyttet til kjønn og legning – feministiske, homofile, lesbiske og transpersoner
- # utdanningsaktivisme

Alle disse politiske og kulturelle – eller altså kunstneriske – alternativene ble rettet mot den spesifikke politiske praksisen, nasjonalismen og kapitalismen som sto bak krigshendelsene. Ved siden av dette, hadde disse åpne sammenlutningene, frivillige organisasjonene eller bevegelsene ulik status avhengig av "statens" rolle i det landet de opererte i under krigen.

Ut fra denne aktivismen, og senere på nittitallet, også fra antikrigsbevegelsenes frivillige organisasjoner, sprang det så en rekke "post-aktivistiske" kulturinstitusjoner – så som det autonome sosialsenteret Metelkova i Ljubljana (Slovenia), kultursenteret Magma i Zagreb (Kroatia), og Rex og THE OTHER SCENE i Beograd (Serbia). Disse institusjonene ble både formelt og uformelt etablert rundt frivillige organisasjoner og kunstnergrupper som tok del i overgangsprosessen med eksperimentelt, kritisk og selvfølgelig pedagogisk arbeid.

Kunstnerisk sett antar "aktivismen"<sup>16</sup> i overgangsfasen på nittitallet og 00-tallet for en stor del forskjellige former,<sup>17</sup> som "kulturarbeid" eller "kulturaktivisme".

- # sosialt engasjert aktivisme som også har referanser til mer kunstneriske intervensjoner (Women in Black, Beogradski krug (Beograd-kretsen), Queer Collective, Led Art fra Beograd; Delavsko-pankerska univerza (Arbeidernes og pønernes universitetsforelesninger) fra Ljubljana)

<sup>16</sup> ALDO MILOHNIC, "ARTIVISM", I *PERFORMING ACTION, PERFORMING THINKING*, TEMANUMMER AV TIDSSKRIFET *MASHA*, NR. 1-2 (1990-91), LJUBLJANA, 2005, SS. 15-25.

<sup>17</sup> RENATA FRANČIĆ, VLADO ŠAKIĆ OG JELENA MARIČIĆ, "GRADJANSKI AKTIVIZAM U HRVATSKOJ" (SIVIL AKTIVISME I KROATIA), *DRUSTVENA ISTRAZIVANJA* (SÅMEUNNSØRSKNING) ÅRG. 16, NR. 1-2, ZAGREB, 2007, SS. 111-132.

# aktivisme med opphav i sosiologi, og som overføres til kunstfeltet i form av kritiske og subversive kunstaksjoner (Tadej Pogacar fra Ljubljana; Sasa Markovic Mikrob, Skart-gruppen, Biro Beograd za kulturu i komunikaciju (Biro Beograd for kultur og kommunikasjon), Slobodnakultura.org, Danilo Prnjat, Spomenik-gruppen og Ranko Trvanj fra Beograd; Apsolutno-gruppen og Art Klinika fra Novi Sad; Igor Bezinovic og Igor Grubic fra Zagreb med flere)

# post-aktivistisk kuratorvirksomhet (SCCA-senteret fra Sarajevo; Container, kuratorteamet WHW og Natasa Bodrozic fra Zagreb; kuda.org fra Novi Sad; Marina Grzinic fra Ljubljana/Wien; Kontekst Galerija fra Beograd)

# digital-/nettaktivisme (Vuk Cosic, Davide Grassi og Igor Stromajer fra Ljubljana; kuda.org og Andrej Tisma fra Novi Sad)<sup>18</sup>

I dag har aktivismen innen kunst, kultur og samfunn fått en helt ny "sivil" orientering, og er rettet mot problemer knyttet til kjønn, rase og klasse og tar form av globale intervensjoner. De kjennetegnes av en intensjon om å jobbe nettverksbasert og å skape mobile, kritiske og ofte reformistiske forbindelser på et globalt så vel som et lokalt plan.

<sup>18</sup> TOMISLAV MILOVAC (RED.), *NEPRILAGODJENI - KONCEPTUALISTICKE STRATEGIJE U HRVATSKOJ SUVREMENOJ UMJETNOSTI* (DE MISTILPASSEDE: KONSEPTUALISTISKE STRATEGIER I KROATISK SAMTIDSKUNST), MUZEJ SUVREMENE UMJETNOSTI, ZAGREB, 2002; IGOR SPANJOL OG IGOR ZABEL (RED.), 95-05 *TERRITORIJI, IDENTITETE, MREZE / SLOVENSKA UMETNOST 1995-2005* (TERRITORIER, IDENTITETER, NETTVERK: SLOVENSKE KUNST 1995-2005), MODERNA GALERIJA, LJUBLJANA, 2005; BRANISLAVA ANĐELKOVIĆ, BRANISLAVA DIMITRIJEVIĆ, DEJAN SRETENOVIC OG BORUT VILD (RED.), *O NORMALNOSTI: UMETNOST U SRBIJI, 1989-2001 (OM DET NOR-MALE: KUNST I SERBIA 1989-2001)*, MUZEJ SAVREMENE UMETNOSTI, BEOGRAD, 2005; MISKO SUVAKOVIC (RED.), *ISTORIJA UMETNOSTI U SRBIJI XX VEK - RADIKALNE UMETNICKE PRAKSE 1913-2008* (SERBISKE KUNST FRA DET 20. ÅRHUNDRE: RADIKALE KUNSTNERISKE PRAKSISER 1913-2008), ORION ART, BEOGRAD, 2010.





Trondheim

Dora

Construction of what was going to be the biggest German naval base in Northern Europe started in the autumn of 1941 one year after the WW II invasion of Norway.

Pictures: by Turrist

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After this war: The base was used briefly by the Norwegian Defence Forces, and two extra storeys painted in blue were built.

Remember, the war is not over





1.



2.



3.

## Greetings from Trondheim

1. Obioras Square: Obiora was denied financial assistance on social security office and was angry. The Police was summoned. Obiora died from injuries inflicted by police outside the social security office.

2. Stavne School: A school for “difficult” children. Famous for the cruelty and the secret stories about abuse and violence against a huge number of children for 82 years. The school is now closed.

3. Sandemoen Shelter: Children who live in Sandemoen reception centers in Heimdal, Trondheim has such poor upbringing that contrary to the UN Children’s Convention.

Say hello to someone you love or hate here .....

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Contact: [turrist.turrist@gmail.com](mailto:turrist.turrist@gmail.com)

Pictures: Stavne school and Sandemoen Shelter by Mona Undisdatter, Obioras square by Turrist



EXPANDING THE  
FIELD. POLITICS AND  
AESTHETICS IN AN  
UNBOUNDED AGE /ANDERS BURMAN/

It has been claimed that “What is beautiful?” was replaced by “What can be said to be art (and literature)?” as the fundamental aesthetic question of the 20<sup>th</sup>

century.<sup>1</sup> This is a decisive shift that can be traced back to Marcel Duchamp's undermining activities of the 1910s when, with his ready-mades, he transferred everyday objects – like a bottle rack or a urinal – from a context of domesticity to an artistic context and called them art. But it was, perhaps, not until the 1960s that people really began to understand the consequences of this action: that craft skills and the material production of items are subsidiary to meaning in creating works of art and that, in point of fact, anything can be art. It is the context rather than any universally accepted values that determine what is and what is not art.

Ever since the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the century in which aesthetics became an independent discipline and in which the system of the fine arts was finally codified, art had defined itself in contrast to crafts. This division long seemed almost to be self-evident, but when artists began to study the question “What is art?”, this led not only to a new view of art but also to a questioned relationship between art, art crafts and handicrafts. If everything can be art, why should one make any theoretical distinction between art and craft? Why is a certain type of artwork shown at art museums but not items of craft art? Who is it that really decides what is to be reckoned as art and what is not? Such questions were subject to lively discussion during the late sixties and early seventies and, in due course, led to what might be termed the expanded aesthetic field, to paraphrase the American art historian Rosalind Krauss's much-cited article “Sculpture in the Expanded Field” from 1979.<sup>2</sup>

It was, however, not just the aesthetic sphere that expanded during the period under discussion. So did the political sphere. Increasing numbers of issues that had previously been regarded as non-political were now interpreted in political terms. In the same way that the focus in discussion of aesthetics was on the question “What is art?”, so “What is politics?” became a central question in the political field. An instructive example is to be found in the feminist slogan “The Personal is Political”, which was chanted at numerous demonstrations and that clearly expresses a view of the expanded boundaries of politics. Politics cannot be reduced to party-political squabbling or to the operations of government bodies but includes a great deal more; everything from a woman's right to her own body, a shortage of nursery-school places and the entire patriarchal hierarchy to questions about development aid and the place of Sweden in the world today. At the same time that everyday choices and actions were seen as

<sup>1</sup> JEAN-FRANÇOIS LYOTARD, “ANSWERING THE QUESTION: WHAT IS POSTMODERNISM?”, IN *THE POSTMODERN CONDITION. A REPORT ON KNOWLEDGE* (MINNEAPOLIS 1984), p. 75, WHICH, IN TURN REFERS TO THE ART HISTORIAN THIERRY DE DUVE.

<sup>2</sup> ROSALIND KRAUSS, “SCULPTURE IN THE EXPANDED FIELD”, *OCTOBER*, VOL. 8, SPRING 1979, PP. 30-44. SEE ALSO SVEN-OLOV WALLENSTEIN, “DET UTVIDGADE FÄLTET – FRÅN HÖGMODERNISM TILL KONCEPTUALISM”, I *KONSTEN OCH KONSTBEGREPPET, SKRIFTSERIEN KAIROS 1* (STOCKHOLM 1996), PP. 117-152.

political, the basic values of democracy as they pertain to freedom, equality, brotherhood and sisterhood were also emphasized.

The question as to how politics, society and democracy should be understood was also discussed among more academically oriented political scientists. Just as with the aesthetic development, the left-oriented theoretical discussion of politics during the sixties and early seventies – with figures like Herbert Marcuse and Louis Althusser – was actually an important background context to the craft art that was created at the same time. The aim of the present essay is to give an account of the major aspects of this political, but also aesthetic, context.<sup>3</sup>

## The dream of something

### different

During the sixties and seventies the balance of terror between the USA and the Soviet Union tended to polarize people's political views in accordance with a grotesquely simplistic logic: the USA or Soviet state communism – for or against? More nuanced positions and standpoints that tried to bridge the restricting dualism had difficulty in winning a serious hearing. At the same time it is evident that the sixties led to a geographical expansion of political consciousness. The process of de-colonization which got seriously underway in Africa during the fifties now intensified, receiving support from Western intellectuals.

<sup>3</sup> THERE IS CURRENTLY AN EXTENSIVE LITERATURE DEALING WITH THE POLITICAL AND AESTHETIC DISCUSSIONS OF THE DAY, EVEN THOUGH LINKING THEM TOGETHER IS NOT PARTICULARLY COMMON. SURVEYS IN SWEDISH THAT CAN BE RECOMMENDED INCLUDE LEIF NYLÉN, *DEN ÖPPNA KONSTEN. HÄPPENINGS, INSTRUMENTAL TEATER, KONKRET POESI OCH ANDRA GRÄNSÖVERSKRIDNINGAR I DET SVENSKA 60-TALET* (STOCKHOLM 1998), BEATE SYDHOFF, *SVERIGES KONST 1900-TALET, PART 2. 1945-1975* (STOCKHOLM 2000) AND KJELL ÖSTBERG, *1968 NÄR ALLTING VAR I RÖRELSE. SEXTIOTALSRADIKALISERINGEN OCH DE SOCIALA RÖRELSENA* (STOCKHOLM 2002). SEE ALSO ARTHUR MARWICK, *THE SIXTIES. CULTURAL REVOLUTION IN BRITAIN, FRANCE, ITALY, AND THE UNITED STATES, c. 1958-c. 1974* (OXFORD & NEW YORK 1998).

Even more people joined in the opposition to the Vietnam War, which television brought right into people's living rooms. In Göran Sonnevi's poem "Om kriget i Vietnam" [On the War in Vietnam] from 1965, which brilliantly links domestic life in a wintry province of Skåne with the appalling brutality being displayed on the other side of the world one can read the following lines:

On TV  
last night  
we saw a film clip taken with  
the Viet-Cong; we could hear  
the muffled fluttering  
of helicopter propellers  
from the ground, from the side being  
shot at. In another film  
a few weeks ago  
CBS interviewed American  
helicopter pilots. One of them  
described the release he got  
when he finally got a shot at  
a "VC"; the rockets  
threw the VC about nine feet  
straight ahead.<sup>4</sup>

The core of the protests against the Vietnam War was represented by the FNL movement (*FRONT NATIONAL POUR LA LIBÉRATION DU SUD VIÊT NAM*, i.e. South Vietnam's National Liberation Front), which, in due course, became a wide-ranging social movement. There was a vigorous reaction throughout the world when the then Minister of Education in Sweden, Olof Palme, took part in a demonstration against the war in February 1968, not to mention the occasion a few years later when, in connection with the bombing of Hanoi in Christmas 1972, he maintained that the violence had now – just as in Guernica and Treblinka – triumphed once again; adding the sobering words: "But posterity has condemned the perpetrators".<sup>5</sup>

China was another Asiatic country that received a great deal of attention in the West at that time. In 1966 Mao Zedong had started the "proletarian cultural revolution", which can be seen as a campaign to spread the Chinese form of communism throughout the vast country; with catastrophic results for millions of Chinese, particularly those who were well educated or wealthy. This did not

<sup>4</sup> GÖRAN SONNEVI, "ON THE WAR IN VIETNAM", IN *THE ECONOMY SPINNING FASTER AND FASTER* (NEW YORK 1982), p. 5.

<sup>5</sup> OLOF PALME, "HANOI, CHRISTMAS 1972", IN *OLOF PALME SPEAKING. ARTICLES AND SPEECHES*, ED. GUNILLA BANKS (STOCKHOLM 2006), p. 142. SEE ALSO KIM SALOMON, *REBELLER I TAKT MED TIDEN. FNL-RÖRELSEN OCH 60-TALET'S POLITISKA RITUALER* (STOCKHOLM 1996).

prevent many Western-oriented Europeans from supporting the cultural revolution and even regarding themselves as Maoists.<sup>6</sup> Something that contributed to this idealization was undoubtedly the relatively limited knowledge of the miserable conditions actually obtaining in China. The country served as a surface on which people projected their own fantasies about an alternative society.

As this shows, the late sixties and early seventies were not just a period of greatness for the left in Western Europe – when the leftist parties enjoyed considerable success and, to a large extent, determined the political agenda – but they were also a time in which it was still possible to dream of a radically different society. Many people, not least young people and students, were not satisfied with merely dreaming but tried in various ways to make a contribution to realizing what they saw as an achievable ideal society, understood in socialist or communist terms.

The desire to change things was clearly manifested in the spring of 1968 when there were student uprisings at a succession of universities around the world from Columbia in New York and the Sorbonne in Paris to the university in Stockholm; even if the uprising in Stockholm did not go further than the students occupying their own student-union building. In Paris things were more violent with the Latin Quarter being occupied and barricaded at the same time that hundreds of thousands of factory workers supported the students with wild strikes. Even among the intellectuals this created great enthusiasm. For example, it is noteworthy that the summer number of the influential avant-garde periodical *TEL QUEL*, which counted Philippe Sollers and Julia Kristeva as contributors, opened with a unanimous statement of support for the revolt (without neglecting the usual concern with abstract, theoretical problems). A few months later it was all over. There was no revolution and order was restored. Disappointment was profound but the conviction that another world is possible lived on. The political swing to the left that characterized the 1960s continued well into the 1970s.

<sup>6</sup> FOR INFORMATION ABOUT THE EXTRAORDINARY INTEREST IN CHINA THAT GREW UP IN SWEDEN, SEE ANNE HEDÉN, *RÖD STJÄRNA ÖVER SVERIGE. FOLKREPUBLICEN KINA SOM RESURS I DEN SVENSKA VÄNSTERRADIKALISERINGEN UNDER 1960- OCH 1970-TALEN* (LUND 2008).

<sup>7</sup> "LA RÉVOLUTION ICI MAINTENANT", *TEL QUEL*, No. 34, ÉTÉ 1968, p. 3 f.

## Western Marxism

It is important to point out that, at this time, there was also a living interest in Marxism. Marx and Engels' own writings were re-printed in large editions, and even books by Lenin, Trotsky, Stalin, Mao and other Marxist theoreticians reached large numbers of readers. Allied with this was a rise in interest for what is usually termed Western Marxism; that is to say the tradition of European and American left-wing theorists who sought out the important insights and perspectives, particularly in the works of the younger Marx. The aim was to shape a critical theory of capitalist society and, at the same time, to propose alternative forms of society which would better answer people's needs and their opportunities for development.<sup>8</sup>

From Marx's "Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts" written in Paris in 1844, they took the notion of alienation that played a key role in the political discussions of the sixties.<sup>9</sup> Based on the firm conviction that human beings can only realize their potential through work, Marx had come to the conclusion that this was hardly possible any more. In the ruling capitalist system of production with its machines and growing specialization, work instead became a product that caused the worker to be alienated from what he was producing and, in the long run, in himself too. The worker has no control over production but becomes a victim of forces that he seems unable to influence. All this causes the worker to be alienated, i.e. foreign to himself and to feel powerless and lacking identity. The solution that Marx proposed in order to resolve the situation was that the workers should take control of the means of production and that private property should be abolished, which turned into an argument for revolt and revolution.

Hegemony is another concept in the tradition of Western Marxism. The notion originated with the Italian philosopher Antonio Gramsci who developed it during the 1920s as a direct answer to the question as to how it had been possible for the Italian workers to support Mussolini and the Fascists rather than the socialists and communists who claimed to be defending their interests.<sup>10</sup> According to Gramsci this was because the ruling classes determine the world view even for the lower classes. Since hegemony is thus concerned with control over modes of thinking, the idea of raising consciousness became

<sup>8</sup> PERRY ANDERSON, *CONSIDERATIONS ON WESTERN MARXISM* (LONDON 1977) AND *IN THE TRACKS OF HISTORICAL MATERIALISM* (LONDON 1983).

<sup>9</sup> KARL MARX, *ECONOMIC AND PHILOSOPHICAL MANUSCRIPTS OF 1844*, ED. DIRK J. STRUIK (NEW YORK 1964). SEE ALSO JOACHIM ISRAEL, *ALIENATION. FROM MARX TO MODERN SOCIOLOGY. A MACROSCOPICAL ANALYSIS* (BOSTON 1971).

<sup>10</sup> ANTONIO GRAMSCI, *PRISON NOTEBOOKS*, ED. JOSEPH A. BUTTIGIEG, VOL. 1-3 (NEW YORK 1992-2007).

central to the left in the 1960s. This was a task that many intellectuals and even certain artists and poets willingly undertook: enlightening the workers both about American supremacy and the pernicious nature of the capitalist system as well as informing them that they were oppressed – even though they might not realize this themselves.

Leftist groups in the sixties adopted these ideas about alienation and hegemony and many also shared the view that a revolution in order to bring about a fundamental change in the social order. An important figure in this context is Herbert Marcuse, one of the most widely read theorists of the time. He originally belonged to the Frankfurt School and, like the other members of the school, he was forced into exile in the USA during World War II. Unlike his colleagues, after the war he did not return to Germany but remained in the USA where he was to become a key theorist to the radical student movement of the sixties. One of Marcuse's central ideas is that the contemporary capitalist and technological society promotes one-dimensional thinking that only focuses on how things can be made more efficient and that this goes against natural human needs and seriously reduces people's developmental opportunities. Thus we need to free ourselves from this mode of thought and adopt other ways of thinking and living. In order to succeed in this one needs, above all, critical analysis, Marcuse insists, but he also points to the importance of the imagination and the liberating potential of art, thus giving theoretical legitimacy to the efforts of the time to find alternative ways of expressing oneself and living one's life.<sup>11</sup>

Along side the humanist oriented Western Marxism that Marcuse represented, as well as the considerably more orthodox Marxism-Leninism that continued to attract a lot of people, structuralist Marxism assumed a prominent position in leftist political theory around 1970. This form of Marxism is especially associated with the French philosopher and communist Louis Althusser who is best-known for his structuralist reading of Marx in which he entered into open polemics with the humanist interpretation that Marcuse and others proposed.<sup>12</sup> Just like other structuralists, Althusser stresses the primacy of the structure over the individual: just as "mankind", the subject and what is individual and particular is of subsidiary interest. Accordingly he tones down the importance of the young Marx's ideas about the individual person's alienation and possibility of liberation. Instead of the ideological problems in Marx's youthful works that Althusser rejects as pre-scientific, he stresses the importance of CAPITAL and the other late writings in which Marx is claimed to have launched a

<sup>11</sup> HERBERT MARCUSE, *ONE-DIMENSIONAL MAN. STUDIES IN THE IDEOLOGY OF ADVANCED INDUSTRIAL SOCIETY* (LONDON 1964).

<sup>12</sup> SEE, E.G., LOUIS ALTHUSSER, *FOR MARX* (1967) AND ALTHUSSER & ÉTIENNE BALLIBAR, *READING CAPITAL* (1965).

new science about the history of social formations but also a new philosophy: dialectical materialism. In their reading of Marx, Althusser and his students also developed a succession of their own terms in order to fulfil the analysis and to make the contemporary capitalist society more comprehensible. One such concept is that of ideological state apparatuses, i.e. institutions like the schools, the church and the media with whose help the ideology of the ruling classes is reproduced in society.

For Althusser it is clear that theoretizing is an important aspect of the struggle for a different society or, in other words, that a revolutionary praxis requires a revolutionary theory. With his rather dogmatic Marxism he sought, with his students, to create intellectual tools for the political struggle. Thus it is not surprising that we find here a militant tone that is not nearly as evident, for example, in Marcuse.

Indeed, in some respects one can regard Althusser and Marcuse as two extremes in the leftist discussions of the sixties and seventies. On the one hand were the supporters of Althusser with serious, almost scientific ambitions to unmask the social order through critical, systematic study. And on the other hand there were the disciples of Marcuse who pleaded for an affirmation of delight, for the sensual and, in extension, the aesthetic. In the field of art it was, understandably, the latter tendency that was most noticeable. It was not for nothing that the American critic and writer Susan Sontag spoke of “the new sensibility” with address to contemporary culture and, as one of the key expressions of the time, the French philosopher Paul Virilio designated “l’imagination au pouvoir” – all power to the imagination.<sup>13</sup>

Taking leave of

<sup>13</sup> SUSAN SONTAG, *AGAINST INTERPRETATION AND OTHER ESSAYS* (NEW YORK 1966), p. 293; VIRILIO QUOTED FROM KLAUS HERDING, 1968. *KUNST, KUNSTGESCHICHTE, POLITIK* (FRANKFURT AM MAIN 2008), p. 10.

## modernism

As has already been noted, the sixties were a time not only of political upheavals but of artistic ones too. The notion of the fine arts, including poetry, music, painting, sculpture and architecture, was finally exploded. The aesthetic field expanded and the foundations were laid for an art scene that was as differentiated and as difficult to survey as that we know today. The political radicalization that is usually associated with the events of May 1968 was, in point of fact, preceded by an equally democratic, anti-hierarchical and generally questioning trend in the art sphere. Within this field, the development can be described as a break with the modernist paradigm.

With predecessors like Charles Baudelaire and Arthur Rimbaud (of whom the latter is responsible for a claim that is emblematic of modernism, “Il faut être absolument moderne” – that one has to be absolutely modern),<sup>14</sup> modernism’s period of real creativity had been during the first decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century with expressionism, constructivism, futurism, Dada, surrealism and other artistic trends. They shared the fact that they promoted new forms of aesthetic expression but they also maintained an oppositional attitude towards bourgeois society. After World War II, modernism lost much of its radical, questioning potential. It was soon canonized and academicized by being the focus of doctoral dissertations and a subject to be taught at universities. At the same time, museums for modern art were built in many parts of the world, including Moderna museet in Stockholm which opened in 1958. It was this so-called high modernism – supported and interpreted by theorists like Clemens Greenberg (visual art), Theodor W. Adorno (musical theory) and René Welleck and Austin Warren (literary theory) – that later became regarded as “the other” against which experimental artists, composers and authors defined themselves during the sixties and seventies.

A notion characteristic of high modernism that they particularly turned against was the notion that each art form has its own conditions and limitations; in brief its own nature and uniqueness which one should try to refine. According to this view, painters should concentrate on surfaces, colours and forms – what Greenberg calls the surface nature and two-dimensionality of painting – while writers should concentrate on what the Russian formalist Roman Jakobson calls “literarity” (LITERATŪRNOST). In direct contrast to this view, boundary-crossing and hybrid forms were proposed as ideals. A typical example of this is the American artist Robert Rauschenberg’s so-called “combines”, which combine

<sup>14</sup> ARTHUR RIMBAUD, *UNE SAISON EN ENFER, I OEUVRES COMPLÈTES*, ED. ANTOINE ADAM (PARIS 1972), p. 116.



painting, sculpture and sometimes other art forms as in his *Monogram* – the stuffed goat with a car tyre round its middle that can be seen at Moderna museet in Stockholm. An aspect of this that one should not ignore is the playfully humorous side that is to be found in works of this type, far removed from the solemnity of high modernism and much more closely related to Duchamp and the early Dada.

The playful aspect also features strongly in the pop art of the sixties as represented by artists such as Andy Warhol, Roy Lichtenstein and Jim Dine. Pop art may be said to be the exception that proves the rule that artists now abandoned painting for other media, genres and mixed media. For pop artists continued with a fairly realistic style of painting even though their choice of subject was taken from comic books, B movies, TV series, advertising and other areas that had formerly been regarded as too low and banal for art. This represented a break with an idea that had previously been popular, namely that a clear demarcation line could be drawn between art on the one hand and what was disparagingly called kitsch (Greenberg) or the culture industry (Adorno) on the other. Thus pop art can be considered to have pioneered the way for the revaluation of such activities as fashion and design that was now undertaken. It is no accident that Andy Warhol had a background as a commercial artist and that several of the other leading pop artists also devoted themselves to fashion, design and advertising.

Minimalism and conceptual art contributed in a completely different way to the expansion of the aesthetic field. For many people, minimalism is associated with Donald Judd's industrially manufactured aluminium boxes or specific objects as he called them himself, which contrasted with traditional European art with its concern for illusion and for harmonious, balanced relationships. There were also minimalistically oriented artists who found their art beyond the urban environment in nature. The best-known example of such concerns is Robert Smithson. With his *Spiral Jetty*, a 457 metre long sculpture made of rocks, gravel and sand in a spiral shape in Great Salt Lake, he created in 1970 a prototypical land-art project.

Even if minimalism and conceptual art largely developed in parallel with each other the latter can, in many regards, be seen as a further development of the former. It was the conceptual artists who took the step to completely immaterial, non-visual art. Where the minimalists had made use of industrial methods of production the conceptual artists came to the conclusion that the work of art did not actually have to be made at all. What was decisive was, rather, the idea. When the idea and the linguistic definition replace the visual object in

this manner then art, in its traditional sense, appears to have been outplayed. Indeed Joseph Kosuth, one of the leading conceptual artists, maintains that the work of art is nothing other than a statement about art. "Art is the definition of art".<sup>15</sup> Art does not tell us anything new about reality and has no ulterior aims, no pretensions to go beyond art itself.

This is undeniably one of the points where early conceptual art seems most dated. Even though a great deal of today's art can be said, in one way or another, to be conceptual, several contemporary artists also profess an ambition to say something important about society today, frequently from a leftist perspective. This is art which is not satisfied with merely talking about art. Though, on the other hand, nor was most of the art of the late sixties and early seventies. The political dynamic of art was stressed to a much greater degree than the art's own value. This was a socially critical art that was placed at the disposal of leftist politics, an art directed against capitalism, imperialism and fascism.

## Aesthetic diversity in the sign of politics

The years around 1970 were also a highpoint for such manifestations as performance, happenings, instrumental theatre, Body Art and concrete poetry. Concrete poetry was particularly successful in Sweden thanks to writers and artists like Öyvind Fahlström, Bengt Emil Johnson and Åke Hodell. Hodell in particular combined experimental writing with an obvious leftist commitment as when he thematized military indoctrination in his text-sound-image composition "General Bussig" with its manic repetition of the sentence "I want to obey

<sup>15</sup> JOSEPH KOSUTH, *ART AFTER PHILOSOPHY AND AFTER. COLLECTED WRITINGS* (CAMBRIDGE 1991), p. 24. IT IS HARDLY AN ACCIDENT THAT THESE IDEAS ABOUT TAUTOLOGICAL ART COINCIDE IN TIME WITH THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE SO-CALLED INSTITUTIONAL THEORY OF ART. THIS GIVES A (POSSIBLY DECEPTIVE) SIMPLE ANSWER TO THE QUESTION OF WHAT ART IS AND IT IS A VIEW THAT HAS WON CONSIDERABLE PROMINENCE AMONG BOTH ARTISTS AND ART HISTORIANS IN RECENT DECADES: ART IS WHATEVER IS CLAIMED AND RECOGNIZED AS ART BY THE ART WORLD, I.E. BY ARTISTS BUT ALSO BY ART DEALERS, CURATORS, KEEPERS, ART HISTORIANS, CRITICS, ETC. SEE E.G. GEORGE DICKIE, *ART AND THE AESTHETICS. AN INSTITUTIONAL ANALYSIS* (ITHACA 1974).

orders, orders I want to obey”<sup>16</sup>.

Also a member of the circle that included Hodell, Johnson and Fahlström was Bengt af Klintberg who introduced Fluxus into Sweden. Fluxus can be described as a loose international network of artists, writers and musicians like George Maciunas, Yoko Ono and John Cage who all, in various different ways, challenged the traditional boundaries in art. In an attempt to define what Fluxus actually involved Maciunas maintained: “To establish artist’s non-professional status in society, he must demonstrate artist’s dispensability and inclusiveness, he must demonstrate the self-sufficiency of the audience, he must demonstrate that anything can be art and anyone can do it.”<sup>17</sup> The Fluxus artworks that were produced often followed instructions that had been written down in advance, as in the following example by Klintberg called *Flags I*: In Copenhagen: “A big Danish flag is tacked to a wall. Paint the white cross yellow. Drink a Tuborg (or a Carlsberg). Paint the four red squares blue”<sup>18</sup>.

Not without reason, the German universal artist and political activist Joseph Beuys is reckoned among the Fluxus artists but, unlike the others of the Fluxus circle, he was sceptical towards Duchamp and Dada – which he clearly showed with his subtly humorous claim *DAS SCHWEIGEN VON MARCEL DUCHAMP WIRD ÜBERBEWERTET*, Marcel Duchamp’s silence is overvalued.<sup>19</sup> In a manner that has no equivalent in Duchamp’s work, Beuys’s thinking and his art are informed by a humanist faith as well as an ecological approach and an almost idealistic view of the revolutionary importance of art. This did not prevent him from seeking to expand the concept of art in line with his belief that every human being is an artist – *JEDER IS KÜNSTLER*. It is significant that, in retrospect, he declared that the founding of the German Student Party in 1967 as “My greatest work of art”<sup>20</sup>. And it is also typical that, as Professor of Sculpture in Düsseldorf, he accepted all the students who wanted to attend his courses – which resulted in his being dismissed. Even with his actions he challenged the usual understanding of what art is, for example in *WIE MAN DEM TOTEN HASEN DIE BILDER ERKLÄRT* (How to explain pictures to a dead hare), where with his own face covered with honey and gold leaf he quietly explained what art is to a dead hare that he carried in his arms as he slowly moved through the gallery. According to Beuys himself, the hare represented

<sup>16</sup> ÅKE HODELL, *GENERAL BUSSIG* (STOCKHOLM 1964); SEE ALSO THE VARIOUS VERSIONS OF THE COMPOSITION INCLUDED ON THE COLLECTED-WORKS CD *VERBAL BRAINWASH AND OTHER WORKS* (STOCKHOLM 2000).

<sup>17</sup> BENGT AF KLINTBERG, *SVENSK FLUXUS / SWEDISH FLUXUS* (STOCKHOLM 2006), p. 46.

<sup>18</sup> KLINTBERG, *SVENSK FLUXUS*, p. 30.

<sup>19</sup> BEUYS ORIGINALLY MADE THIS CLAIM IN A TV BROADCAST IN 1964, BUT IT HAS BEEN FREQUENTLY REPEATED IN OTHER FORMATS INCLUDING THE COVER OF A CATALOGUE FOR AN EXHIBITION AT THE MODERNA MUSEET IN STOCKHOLM ENTITLED *JOSEPH BEUYS. TECKNINGAR OCH OBJEKT 1937-1970 UR SAMLING VÄN DER GRINTEN* (STOCKHOLM 1971).

<sup>20</sup> EXCERPT FROM ‘DER GANZE RIEMEN’: 22 JUNE – FOUNDATION OF ‘DEUTSCHE STUDENTENPARTEI’ IN BRÄNNPUNKT DÜSSELDORF. *JOSEPH BEUYS OCH HANS KRETS*, LILJEVALCHS (STOCKHOLM 1987), p. 56.

the earth and matter while the gold and the honey indicate “a transformation of the head, and therefore naturally and logically the brain and our understanding of thought, consciousness”<sup>21</sup>. To a degree it is a matter of looking for a balance between different cosmic forces but also a willingness to open oneself to al-chemical transformations from one person to another. It is not surprising that Beuys is usually described as an artistic shaman but, if this is the case, his shamanism seeks both to expand the concept of art and, ultimately, to recreate the whole of society.

In the borderland between art and politics one also finds situationism. This is a movement that still interests many artists today. The Situationist International was founded as early as 1957 but it was not until ten years later that the movement became increasingly known, thanks largely to the publication of *LA SOCIÉTÉ DU SPECTACLE* by Guy Debord in 1967.<sup>22</sup> The book, which became a source of inspiration to many of the 1968 radicals, presents a Marxist-coloured theory about contemporary capitalist society which is described as a spectacle society, *UNE SOCIÉTÉ DU SPECTACLE* in the sense that appearance has been elevated to become truth, the spectacle to reality. Ultimately, due to the capitalist economy of superfluity and the pseudo-needs that consumption gives rise to, society in its entirety has finally become falsified and people have become more or less passive. But this world-turned-upside-down will not survive for ever but can and should be resisted, not least by artists. At the same time these artists need to understand that even art has become part of this comprehensive spectacle and so it is necessary to go beyond the art institution. This can be achieved by letting life itself be turned into art, an art that is open to all and created by all. Just like Beuys and the Fluxus artists, the situationists thus take as their point of departure the idea that everyone in some respects is an artist and that one should be creating a sort of anti-art in which the boundary between artist and beholder is erased.

The latter notion appears as typical of the period’s aesthetic strivings to the extent that there was now a general trend to reduce the importance of the artist or writer. Instead of the romantic view of the artist or writer as expressing themselves or their feelings in their work, the focus was directed at the spectator, the reader and, partially too, to the aesthetic and social context. In a famous essay published in 1968 the French critic Roland Barthes talked about the death of the author and the birth of the reader.<sup>23</sup> In similar fashion,

<sup>21</sup> BEUYS AS QUOTED IN MARC C. TAYLOR, “FORGERY”, IN *ALL IN THE PRESENT MUST BE TRANSFORMED. MATTHEW BARNEY AND JOSEPH BEUYS* (BERLIN & NEW YORK 2006), p. 112.

<sup>22</sup> GUY DEBORD, *LA SOCIÉTÉ DU SPECTACLE* (PARIS 1967).

<sup>23</sup> ROLAND BARTHES, “LA MORT DE L’AUTEUR”, IN *ŒUVRES COMPLÈTES, TOME II: 1966-1973*, ED. ÉRIC MARTY (PARIS 1994), PP. 491-495.

the American composer and Fluxus artist John Cage challenged the boundary between musician and listener, most specifically with his piano piece 4'33" in which the pianist sitting at his grand piano plays nothing at all for four minutes and thirty-three seconds but, at three points in the performance, with a gesture indicates a new movement in the piece. This directs people's attention to the other sounds in the concert hall such as coughing, scraping feet, whispering and – as the pianist continues not playing – perhaps even an audible comment or two from the audience.

The way in which Cage, Hodell and other similarly minded composers, musicians and authors questioned their activities radically changed art music during the sixties. The same can also be said of popular music. With bands and artists like the Beatles, Rolling Stones, Jimi Hendrix, Janis Joplin, Led Zeppelin and Frank Zappa pop and rock reached previously undreamed of heights as well as becoming a universal phenomenon in the rapidly growing youth movement. For example, at Woodstock (August 1969) and at Gärdet in Stockholm (June 1970) music festivals were organized for tens of thousands of spectators. That this represented a youthful rebellion is well illustrated by Bob Dylan's song "The Times They Are A-Changin'" in which an older generation is asked not to criticize something that they do not understand: "Don't criticize / What you can't understand / Your sons and your daughters / Are beyond your command".

There were also productive overlaps between pop and rock culture on the one hand and the visual arts on the other. For example, the British pop artist Peter Blake designed the legendary LP-sleeve for the Beatles's SGT. PEPPER'S LONELY HEARTS CLUB BAND and Andy Warhol collaborated with the Velvet Underground and was responsible for the cover – decorated with a banana – to their debut album THE VELVET UNDERGROUND AND NICO. In Sweden some of the leading young artists and writers of the day – like Leif Nylén, Torkel Rasmusson and Mats G. Bengtsson – were members of the progressive band *Gunder Hägg*, which later changed its name to BLÅ TÅGET. At a later date, artist Carl Johan De Geer joined up with them. In 1967 he had been convicted and fined for incitement and for desecrating the national symbol after exhibiting lithographs on which he had printed "Desecrate the flag, refuse to carry weapons, betray your country, be anti-national". He had also written the word "KUKEN" [Cock] across the Swedish flag and "USA mördare" [USA murderer] underneath an American flag in which the stars had been replaced by small swastikas. In similar fashion, Lena Svedberg created political art that was critical of society, for example in her triptych drawing entitled THE KENNEDY BROTHERS PLUS ONE. This shows Robert and John F. Kennedy monstrously deformed and hanging each on his own cross. Both De Geer and Svedberg also contributed to the magazine PUSS which was otherwise best known for Lars

Hillersberg's satirical drawings of every imaginable phenomenon in the world that he felt was worth satirizing. This is serious art raised to the status of black humour.

Against this background we can finally assert that if there is a code expression for the political and aesthetic activities of the late sixties and early seventies it is crossing boundaries. Every imaginable boundary was now to be crossed: between high and low, between different artistic mediums and forms of expression, between artist and beholder, the work of art and its context, art and politics. A similar desire to cross boundaries was also characteristic of parts of the craft arts of the period. Deeply influenced by the contemporary discussions of aesthetics and ideology, craftspeople created objects that did not merely question the traditional understanding of what crafts are and can be but, based on an expressly political perspective, want to say something about the world we live in with all its serious injustices.

3.

2.

1.

Welcome to Oslo

The town with the big heart

If you can afford it

1. Oslo is the country in Norway with most poor people.

2. Since 1980, 1728 people have died in Oslo by drug overdose.

3. Oslo Loove new, high buildings.

Pictures by Turriss/ AH  
 Contact: [turriss.turriss@gmail.com](mailto:turriss.turriss@gmail.com)



Turrists

Oslo

Let them eat

Let them eat

TERRORIST MY HEART

Fysj &

Godt  
Ligger  
Sug  
LØRDAG

Greetings from Trondheim

Trondheim  
Oslo

IS THERE A ROOM AVAILABLE?

LOST

NORWAY ENDS HERE

SKOK



Turrism attraction by Turrism and friends

Turrism makes attractions and investigate new attractions in countries, towns and in the nature. Love you!



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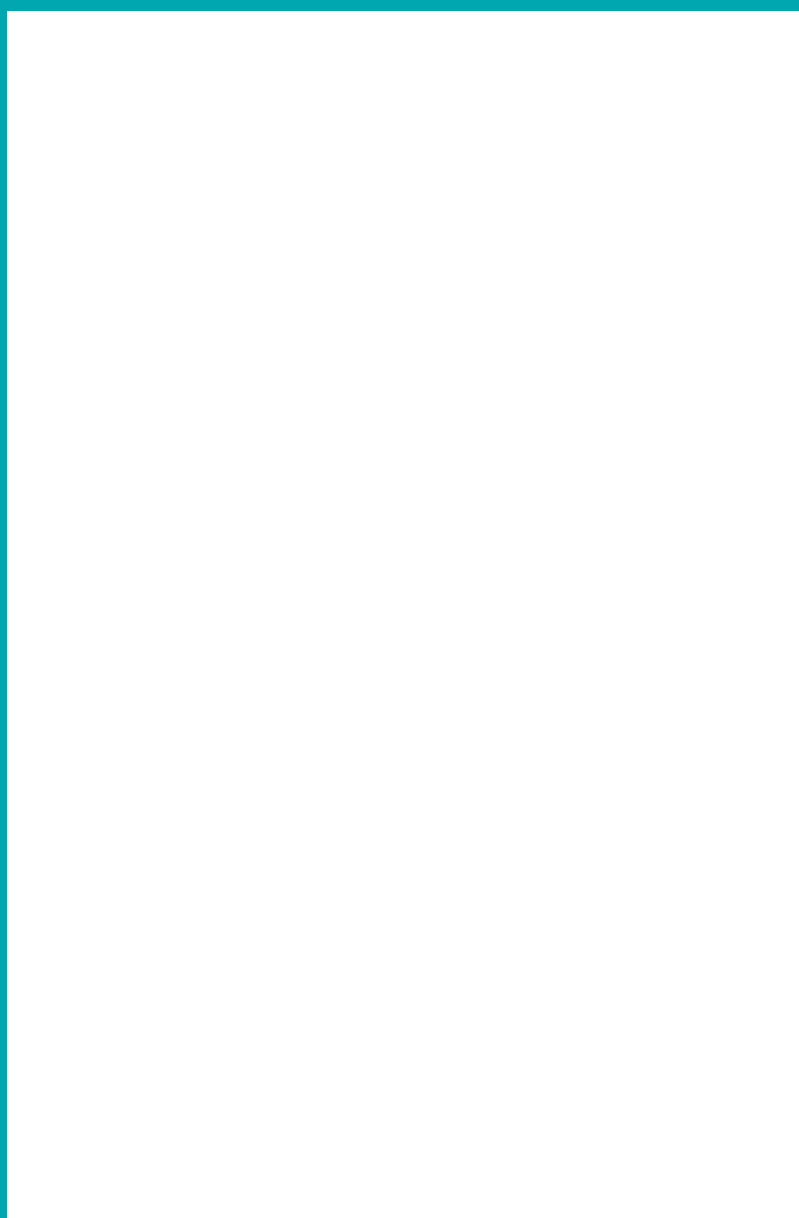
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ATT UTVIDGA FÄLTET  
POLITIK OCH ESTETIK  
I  
RÄNSÖVERSKRIDANDETS  
TIDEVARV /ANDERS BURMAN/  
1. THIS TEXT HAS PREVIOUSLY BEEN PUBLISHED IN THE CATALOGUE FOR THE EXHIBITION "TUMULT" EDITORS AGNETA LINTON, CHRISTINA ZETTERLUND OCH MALIN GRUMSTEDT, GUSTAVSBERGS KONSTHALL WWW.GUSTAVSBERGSKONSTHALL.SE 2009.  
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2. TRANSLATION: WILLIAM JEWSON

Det har sagts att "Vad är vackert?" ersattes av "Vad är konst?" som den viktigaste estetiska frågan under 1900-talet.<sup>1</sup> Det är en avgörande förskjutning som kan föras tillbaka till Marcel Duchamps undergrävande verksamhet på 1910-talet, när han med sina ready-mades förde över vardagsföremål – som en flasktorkare eller en pissoar – från en brukskontext till en konstkontext och kallade det konst. Men det var kanske först på sextio-talet som man på allvar började inse konsekvenserna av denna handling: att hantverksfärdigheter och det materiella utförandet är av underordnad betydelse i konstskapandet och att egentligen vad som helst kan vara konst. Det är sammanhanget snarare än några universellt giltiga värden som avgör vad som är och vad som inte är konst.

Alltsedan 1700-talet, det århundrade under vilket estetiken uppstod som en självständig disciplin och systemet av de sköna konsterna slutligen kodifierades, hade konsten definierat sig själv gentemot hantverk. Den här uppdelningen uppfattades länge närmast som självklar, men när konstnärer började utforska frågan "Vad är konst?" ledde det inte bara till en ny syn på konsten utan också till ett problematiserande av relationen mellan konst, konsthantverk och hantverk. Om allt kan vara konst, varför då göra någon principiell åtskillnad mellan konst och hantverk? Varför visas ett visst slags konstverk på konstmuseer, men inte konsthantverksobjekt? Ja, vem bestämmer egentligen vad som räknas som konst och vad som inte gör det? Sådana frågor diskuterades livligt under det sena sextio-talet och det tidiga sjuttio-talet och gav i förlängningen upphov till vad som skulle kunna kallas det utvidgade estetiska fältet, för att parafrasera den amerikanska konstvetaren Rosalind Krauss ofta citerade artikel "Sculpture in the Expanded Field" från 1979.<sup>2</sup>

Emellertid var det inte bara den estetiska sfären som expanderade under den aktuella perioden. Det gjorde också det politiska fältet. Allt fler frågor som tidigare hade betraktats som opolitiska började nu tolkas i politiska termer. På samma sätt som frågan "Vad är konst?" stod i fokus i den estetiska diskussionen blev således "Vad är politik?" en central fråga inom det politiska fältet. Ett talande exempel utgörs av det feministiska slagordet "Det personliga är politiskt" som skanderades i åtskilliga demonstrationer och som väl uttrycker uppfattningen om politikens utvidgade gränser. Politik kan inte reduceras till det partipolitiska käbblet eller statliga institutioners verksamhet utan omfattar mycket mer, allt från kvinnors rätt till sina egna kroppar, bristen på

<sup>1</sup> JEAN-FRANÇOIS LYOTARD, "SVAR PÅ FRÅGAN: VAD ÄR DET POSTMODERNA?", I MIKAEL LÖFGREN & ANDERS MOLANDER (RED.), *POSTMODERNA TIDER?* (STOCKHOLM 1986), s. 85 SOM I SIN TUR HÄNVISAR TILL DEN ESTETISKE TEORETIKERN THIERRY DE DUVE.

<sup>2</sup> ROSALIND KRAUSS, "SKULPTUR I DET UTVIDGADE FÄLTET", I SVEN-OLOV WALLENSTEIN (RED.), *MINIMALISM OCH POSTMINIMALISM, SKRIFTSERIEN KAIROS 10* (STOCKHOLM 2005), s. 159-172. SE ÄVEN SVEN-OLOV WALLENSTEIN, "DET UTVIDGADE FÄLTET – FRÅN HÖGMODERNISM TILL KONCEPTUALISM", I *KONSTEN OCH KONSTBEGREPPET, SKRIFTSERIEN KAIROS 1* (STOCKHOLM 1996), s. 117-152.

dagisplaster och hela den patriarkala samhällsordningen till frågor rörande u-landshjälp och Sveriges plats i världen. På samma gång som vardagliga val och handlingar uppfattades som politiska betonades demokratins grundvärderingar rörande frihet, jämlikhet, broderskap och systemskap.

Frågan om hur politiken, samhället och demokratin borde förstås diskuterades också inom den mer akademiskt präglade politiska teorin. Precis som den estetiska utvecklingen utgör i själva verket den vänsterorienterade politisk-teoretiska diskussionen under sextio- och det tidiga sjuttio-talet – med namn som Herbert Marcuse och Louis Althusser – en viktig bakgrundskontext till det konsthantverk som skapades vid samma tid. Vad föreliggande text syftar till är att i stora drag ge en orienterande bild av detta politiska men också estetiska sammanhang.<sup>3</sup>

## Drömmen om någonting

### annat

Under sextio- och sjuttio-talen tenderade den terrorbalans som rådde mellan de båda supermakterna USA och Sovjetunionen att polarisera människors politiska åsikter enligt en grovt förenklande logik: USA, alternativt den sovjetiska statskommunismen – för eller emot? Mer nyanserade positioner och ställningstaganden som försökte överskrida den begränsande dualismen hade svårt att vinna något större gehör. Samtidigt är det tydligt att sextio-talet innebar en geografisk utvidgning av den politiska medvetenheten. Den avkoloniseringsprocess som på allvar hade påbörjats i Afrika under femtio-talet intensifierades nu och understöddes aktivt av västintellektuella.

Ännu fler engagerade sig mot Vietnamkriget, som genom teveapparaterna tyck-

<sup>3</sup> DET FINNS NUMERA EN RIK LITTERATUR OM TIDENS POLITISKA OCH ESTETISKA DISKUSSIONER, ÄVEN OM DET ÄR MINDRE VANLIGT ATT KOPPLA SAMMAN DE BÅDA. AV SVENSKA ÖVERSIKTSVERK KAN MAN FRAMHÅLLA LEIF NYLÉN, *DEN ÖPPNA KONSTEN. HAPPENINGS, INSTRUMENTAL TEATER, KONKRET POESI OCH ANDRA GRÄNSÖVERSKRIDNINGAR I DET SVENSKA 60-TALET* (STOCKHOLM 1998), BEATE SYDHOFF, *SVERIGES KONST 1900-TALET, DEL 2. 1945-1975* (STOCKHOLM 2000) OCH KJELL ÖSTBERG, *1968 NÄR ALLTING VAR I RÖRELSE. SEXTIOTALSRADIKALISERINGEN OCH DE SOCIALA RÖRELSENA* (STOCKHOLM 2002). SE ÄVEN ARTHUR MARWICK, *THE SIXTIES. CULTURAL REVOLUTION IN BRITAIN, FRANCE, ITALY, AND THE UNITED STATES, c.1958-c.1974* (OXFORD & NEW YORK 1998).



tes komma rakt in i människors vardagsrum – eller teverum som det fortfarande kallades. I Göran Sonnevis dikt "Om kriget i Vietnam" från 1965, som på ett fantastiskt sätt knyter samman det vardagliga livet i ett vintrigt Skåne med de brutala hemskheterna på andra sidan jordklotet ("USA's vidriga krig"), finns följande i detta sammanhang karakteristiska rader:

I går kväll  
på TV  
såg vi en filminspelning från  
Viet Congs sida, fick höra  
helikoptermaskinernas  
dova fladdrande,  
från marken, från de beskjutnas  
sida. I en annan film  
för ett par veckor sedan  
intervjuades de amerikanska  
helikopterförarna av CBS. En av dem  
beskrev sin utlösning  
när han äntligen fick skott på  
en "VC": han slungades  
tre meter fram  
av raketerna.

Kärnan i protesterna mot Vietnamkriget utgjordes av den så kallade FNL-rörelsen (förkortning för FRONT NATIONAL POUR LA LIBÉRATION DU SUD VIÊT NAM, det vill säga Södra Vietnams Nationella Befrielsefront) som efterhand blev en bred social rörelse. Det väckte stor uppståndelse när den dåvarande svenska utbildningsministern Olof Palme i februari 1968 deltog i en demonstration mot kriget, för att inte tala om när han några år senare, med anledning av bombningarna av Hanoi julen 1972, framhöll att nu hade våldet – liksom tidigare i bland annat Guernica och Treblinka – ännu en gång triumferat, med det skuldbeläggande tillägget: "Men eftervärldens dom har fallit hård över dem som burit ansvaret."<sup>4</sup> Kina var ett annat asiatiskt land som uppmärksammades mycket i väst vid den här tiden. 1966 hade Mao Zedong inlett "den proletära kulturrevolutionen" som kan beskrivas som en kampanj syftande till att sprida den kinesiska formen av kommunism över hela det jättelika landet, vilket fick katastrofala följder för miljontals kineser, i synnerhet välbeställda och välutbildade. Det hindrade inte att många vänsterorienterade européer tog ställning för kulturrevolutio-

<sup>4</sup> GÖRAN SONNEVI, "OM KRIGET I VIETNAM", *BONNIERS LITTERÄRA MAGASIN* NR 3 1965, s. 152 f.

<sup>5</sup> OLOF PALME, "HANOI JULEN 1972", I *ATT VILJA GÅ VIDARE* (STOCKHOLM 1974), s. 271. SE ÄVEN KIM SALOMON, *REBELLER I TAKT MED TIDEN. FNL-RÖRELSEN OCH 60-TALETS POLITISKA RITUALER* (STOCKHOLM 1996).

nen och till och med betraktade sig själva som maoister.<sup>6</sup> Något som bidrog till denna idealisering var utan tvekan den relativa okunskapen om de faktiska miserabla förhållandena i Kina. Landet blev till en projektyta för de egna fantasierna om en alternativ samhällsordning.

Som detta visar var det sena sextioalet och det tidiga sjuttioalet inte bara en storhetstid för den västeuropeiska vänstern – då vänsterpartier hade stora framgångar och i hög grad bestämde den politiska dagordningen – utan det var också en tid då det fortfarande var möjligt att drömma om ett radikalt annorlunda samhälle. Många, inte minst ungdomar och studenter, nöjde sig inte med att drömma utan försökte på olika sätt aktivt bidra till förverkligandet av det som uppfattades som ett hägrande idealsamhälle, förstått i socialistiska eller kommunistiska termer.

Viljan att ändra på sakernas tillstånd manifesterades tydligt våren 1968 då studenter gjorde uppror vid en rad universitet runt om i världen, från Columbia i New York och Sorbonne i Paris till universitetet i Stockholm, låt vara att det mest uppseendeväckande som skedde vid det senare var att några unga vänsterradikaler ockuperade sitt eget kårhus. I Paris gick det våldsammare till när studentkvarteren Quartier Latin ockuperades och barrikerades samtidigt som hundratusentals industriarbetare gjorde gemensam sak med studenterna genom att gå ut i vilda strejker. Även bland intellektuella väckte detta en enorm entusiasm. Exempelvis är det talande att sommarnumret 1968 av den inflytelserika avantgardisttidskriften TEL QUEL,<sup>7</sup> i vilken bland andra Philippe Sollers och Julia Kristeva medarbetade, inleddes med ett entydigt kollektivt ställningstagande för revolten (utan att man för den skull gjorde avkall på den egna upptagenheten av abstrakta, teoretiska problem). Men bara några månader senare var det hela över; det blev ingen revolution och ordningen återställdes. Besvikelsen var stor, men övertygelsen att en annan värld är möjlig levde ändå vidare. Den politiska vänstervåg som präglade det sena sextioalet fortsatte långt in på sjuttioalet.

## Den västerländska

<sup>6</sup> OM DET STORA KINAINRESSET I SVERIGE, SE ANNE HEDÉN, *RÖD STJÄRNA ÖVER SVERIGE. FOLKREPUBLIKEN KINA SOM RESURS I DEN SVENSKA VÄSTERRADIKALISERINGEN UNDER 1960- OCH 1970-TALEN* (LUND 2008).

<sup>7</sup> "LA RÉVOLUTION ICI MAINTENANT", *TEL QUEL*, NR 34, ÉTÉ 1968, s. 3 f.

## marxismen

Det är angeläget att poängtera att det vid den här tiden även fanns ett levande teoretiskt intresse för marxismen. Marx och Engels egna skrifter gavs ut i stora upplagor, och även böcker av Lenin, Trotskij, Stalin, Mao och andra marxistiska teoretiker nådde stora läsargrupper. Till det kommer uppsvinget för vad som brukar kallas västmarxismen, det vill säga den tradition av europeiska och amerikanska vänsterteoretiker som försökte ta fasta på viktiga insikter och perspektiv hos framför allt den unge Marx. Målsättningen var att utforma en kritisk teori om det samtida kapitalistiska samhället och samtidigt visa på alternativa samhällsformer som bättre skulle kunna tillgodose människors behov och utvecklingsmöjligheter.<sup>8</sup>

Från Marx så kallade "Ekonomisk-filosofiska manuskript", skrivna i Paris 1844, hämtade man begreppet alienation som spelade en nyckelroll i sextiotalets politiska diskussioner.<sup>9</sup> Utifrån sin fasta övertygelse att människan endast kan förverkliga sig själv genom sitt arbete hade Marx kommit fram till att detta knappast längre är möjligt. I det rådande kapitalistiska produktionssystemet med dess maskiner och tilltagande arbetsdelning förvandlas i stället arbetet till en vara, varigenom arbetaren blir främmande inför det hon tillverkar och i förlängningen också sig själv. Hon har ingen kontroll över produktionen utan blir ett offer för krafter som hon inte tycks kunna påverka. Sammantaget leder det till att hon blir alienerad, det vill säga främmande inför sig själv, känner maktlöshet och brist på identitet. Den lösning som Marx föreslog för att komma tillrätta med problemet var att arbetarna själva skulle ta kontroll över produktionsmedlen och att privategendomen skulle upphävas, vilket blev till ett argument för revolt och revolution.

Hegemoni är ett annat viktigt begrepp i den västmarxistiska traditionen. Begreppet härstammar från den italienske filosofen Antonio Gramsci som utvecklade det på 1920-talet som ett direkt svar på frågan hur det kunde komma sig att de italienska arbetarna valde att stödja Mussolini och fascismen i stället för de socialister och kommunister som sade sig försvara deras intressen.<sup>10</sup> Enligt Gramsci beror det på att de härskande klasserna i hög grad bestämmer världsbilden även för de övriga klasserna. Genom att hegemonin på detta sätt handlar om rådandet över tänkesätt blev frågan om medvetandehöjning central inom sextiotalsvänstern. Det var en uppgift som många intellektuella och även vissa konstnärer och skönlitterära författare självmant tog på sig: att upplysa arbetarna om inte bara den amerikanska överhögheten och det kapitalistiska

<sup>8</sup> EN BRA ÖVERSIKT AV VÄSTMARXISMEN GES I PERRY ANDERSON, *Om den västerländska marxismen* (Lund 1984).

<sup>9</sup> KARL MARX, "De ekonomisk-filosofiska manuskripten", i *Texter i urval*, red. SVEN-ERIC LIEDMAN & BJÖRN LINELL (Stockholm 2003), s. 55-107. SE ÄVEN JOACHIM ISRAEL, *Alienation. Från Marx till modern sociologi. En makrosociologisk studie* (Stockholm 1968).

<sup>10</sup> ANTONIO GRAMSCI, *Brev från fängelset* (Stockholm 1980).

systemets fördärlighet utan också att arbetarna själva var förtryckta - även om de inte insåg det själva.

Sextiotalsvänstern tog till dig dessa idéer om alienationen och hegemonin, och många delade också uppfattningen att det är nödvändigt med en revolution för att i grunden kunna ändra på de rådande samhällsförhållandena. Ett betydelsefullt namn i det här sammanhanget är Herbert Marcuse, en av tidens mest lästa teoretiker. Han hade tidigare hört till den tyska så kallade Frankfurtskolan, och i likhet med dess övriga medlemmar tvingades han under andra världskriget att gå i exil till USA, men i motsats till andra återvände han inte till Tyskland efter kriget. I stället blev han kvar i USA där han sedan blev en central teoretiker för sextiotalets radikala studentrörelse. En av Marcuses huvudtankar är att det samtida kapitalistiska och teknologiska industrisamhället gynnar ett endimensionellt tänkande som enbart fokuserar på hur saker och ting kan bli mer effektiva, vilket går emot människans naturliga behov och kraftigt reducerar hennes utvecklingsmöjligheter. Därför gäller det att frigöra sig från detta tänkande till förmån för andra tankeformer och levnadssätt. För att lyckas med det krävs det framför allt kritisk analys, understryker Marcuse, men han pekar också på fantasins betydelse och konstens frigörande potential, varigenom han gav en teoretisk legitimitet åt tidens sökande efter alternativa sätt att uttrycka sig och leva på.<sup>11</sup>

Vid sidan av den humanistiskt orienterade västmarxism som Marcuse företrädde (liksom den betydligt mer ortodoxa marxism-leninism som fortfarande lockade många människor) intog den strukturalistiska marxismen en framträdande position inom den vänsterorienterade politiska teorin åren kring 1970. Denna form av marxism förknippas framför allt med den franske filosofen och kommunisten Louis Althusser, som är mest känd för sin strukturalistiska omläsning av Marx i vilken han gick i öppen polemik med den humanistiska läsning som Marcuse och andra förde fram.<sup>12</sup> Precis som andra strukturalister betonar Althusser strukturernas primat över individerna: liksom "människan" är subjektet och det subjektiva, det enskilda och partikulära, av helt underordnat intresse. Följaktligen tonar han också ner betydelsen av den unge Marx tankar om den enskilda människans alienation och möjligheter till frigörelse. I stället för den "ideologiska" problematik i Marx ungdomsverk som Althusser avfärdar som förvetenskaplig lyfter han fram <sup>KAPITALET</sup> och andra sena texter där Marx sägs ha lanserat en ny vetenskap, nämligen den historiska materialismen eller vetenskapen om de sociala formationernas historia, men också en ny filosofi: den

<sup>11</sup> HERBERT MARCUSE, *Den endimensionella människan. Studier i det avancerade industrisamhällets ideologi* (Stockholm 1968).

<sup>12</sup> SE T.E.X. LOUIS ALTHUSSER, *För Marx* (Staffanstorps 1968) OCH ALTHUSSER & ÉTIENNE BALLIBAR, *Att läsa kapitalet*, 2 VOL. (STAFFANSTORP 1970).

dialektiska materialismen. I sitt intensiva arbete med Marx skrifter utvecklade Althusser och hans studenter dessutom en rad egna begrepp för att komplettera analysen och bättre begripliggöra det samtida kapitalistiska samhället. Ett sådant begrepp är ideologiska statsapparater, det vill säga institutioner som skolan, kyrkan och massmedia med vilkas hjälp de härskande klassernas ideologi reproduceras i samhället.

För Althusser står det klart att teoretiserandet utgör ett väsentligt inslag i kampen för ett annat samhälle, eller med andra ord att en revolutionär praxis förutsätter en revolutionär teori. Med sin förhållandevis dogmatiska marxism ville han tillsammans med sina studenter utforma intellektuella redskap i den politiska kampen. Det är därför inte förvånande att det hos dem finns ett militant anslag som inte alls är lika framträdande hos exempelvis Marcuse. Ja, i visst avseende kan man betrakta Althusser och Marcuse som två ytterlighetspunkter i sextio- och sjuttiotalsvänstern i stort. På den ena sidan stod de Althusserbesläktade seriösa, närmast vetenskapliga ambitionerna att demaskera den samhällsordningen genom kritiska, systematiska studier. På den andra fanns det Marcusebefryndade pläderandet för ett bejakande av lusten, det sensuella och i förlängningen det estetiska. Inom konsten var det förstärkt nog den senare tendensen som var mest påtaglig. Inte för intet talade den amerikanska kritikern och författaren Susan Sontag om "den nya sensibiliteten" med avseende på den samtida kulturen, och till ett tidens nyckeluttryck utnämnde den franske filosofen Paul Virilio <sup>L'IMAGINATION AU POUVOIR</sup>, det vill säga fantasin till makten.<sup>13</sup>

Uppbrottet

från

modernismen

Som redan framkommit var sextioalet inte bara politiskt utan också konstnärligt en omtumlande tid. En gång för alla sprängdes då systemet av de sköna konsterna, innefattande poesi, musik, måleri, skulptur och arkitektur. Det es-

<sup>13</sup> SUSAN SONTAG, *KONST OCH ANTIKONST* (STOCKHOLM 1969), s. 249; VIRILIO CITERAD EFTER KLAUS HERDING, 1968. *KUNST, KUNSTGESCHICHTE, POLITIK* (FRANKFURT AM MAIN 2008), s. 10.

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REALITY CHECK

estetiska fältet expanderade och grunden lades till den lika differentierade som svåröverskådliga konstscen som vi har i dag. Den politiska radikaliserings brukar förknippas med maj -68 föregicks i själva verket av en liknande demokratisk, antihierarkisk och allmänt ifrågasättande tendens inom konstsfären. Inom det fältet kan denna utveckling beskrivas som ett uppbrott från det tidigare dominerande modernistiska paradigmet.

Med förelöpare som Charles Baudelaire och Arthur Rimbaud (av vilka den senare yttrade de för modernismen emblematiske orden <sup>IL FAUT ÊTRE ABSOLUMENT MODERNE</sup>, att man måste vara absolut modern),<sup>14</sup> hade modernismen haft sin kreativa storhetstid redan under 1900-talets första decennier med expressionismen, konstruktivismen, futurismen, dadaismen, surrealismen och andra konstnärliga strömningar. De hade det gemensamt att de förde fram nya estetiska uttrycksformer men också att de intog en oppositionell hållning gentemot det borgerliga samhället. Efter andra världskriget förlorade modernismen mycket av sin radikala, ifrågasättande potential. Den kom snart att kanoniserats och akademiserats genom att bli föremål för avhandlingar och undervisning inom universitetsvärlden. Samtidigt byggdes museer för modernistisk konst runt om i världen, däribland det 1958 öppnade Moderna museet i Stockholm. Det var denna så kallade högmodernism – understödd och uttolkad av teoretiker som Clemens Greenberg (bildkonst), Theodor W. Adorno (musikteori) och nykritikerna René Welleck och Austin Warren (litteraturteori) – som sedan kom att få spela rollen som "den andre" som experimenterande konstnärer, tonsättare och författare under sextio- och sjuttiotalen definierade sig själva gentemot.

En för högmodernismen karakteristisk föreställning som de särskilt vände sig mot var att varje konstform har sina särskilda förutsättningar och begränsningar, kort sagt sin egen natur och unicitet, som det gäller att försöka renodla. Enligt det synsättet skulle målarna rikta in sig på ytor, färger och former, det Greenberg kallar måleriets ytmässighet och tvådimensionalitet, medan författarna skulle ta fasta på det som den ryske formalisten Roman Jakobson benämner litteraritet (<sup>LITERÄRNOST</sup>). I direkt kontrast till denna uppfattning lyftes nu gränsöverskridningar och hybridformer fram som ett ideal. Ett typiskt exempel utgörs av den amerikanske konstnären Robert Rauschenbergs så kallade *combines* vilka kombinerar målning, skulptur och ibland även andra konstformer, som i verket *Monogram* – den uppstoppade geten med ett bildäck kring magen som finns på Moderna museet. Något man inte bör bortse från här är den lekfulla, humoristiska sidan som finns i verk som dessa, fjärran från den gravallvarliga högmodernismen och betydligt mer besläktad med Duchamp och den tidiga dadaismen.

<sup>14</sup> ARTHUR RIMBAUD, *UNE SAISON EN ENFER, I ŒUVRES COMPLÈTES*, RED. ANTOINE ADAM (PARIS 1972), s. 116.

ART & ACTIVISM READER

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Det lekfulla draget är också påtagligt i sextiotalets popkonst, med företrädare som Andy Warhol, Roy Lichtenstein och Jim Dine. Popkonsten kan sägas vara undantaget som bekräftar regeln att konstnärer nu övergav måleriet för andra medier, genrer och blandgenrer. Popkonstnärerna fortsatte nämligen med ett tämligen realistiskt måleri, om än med en motivkrets hämtad från serietidningar, B-filmer, teveserier, reklam och annat som tidigare hade ansetts vara för lågt och banalt för konsten. Det innebar ett brott med den tidigare så populära tanken att det skulle gå att dra en tydlig demarkationslinje mellan å ena sidan Konst och å andra sidan det som nedsättande benämndes kitsch (Greenberg) eller kulturindustri (Adorno). Därigenom kan popkonsten sägas ha gått i bräschen för den uppvärdering av företeelser som mode och design som nu skedde. Det är inte en tillfällighet att Warhol hade en bakgrund som reklamtecknare och att även flera av de andra ledande popkonstnärerna också ägnade sig åt mode, design och reklam.

På helt andra sätt bidrog även minimalismen och konceptkonsten till utvidgningen av det estetiska fältet. För många förknippas minimalismen säkert med Donald Judds industriellt tillverkade aluminiumboxar, eller specifika objekt som han själv kallade dem, vilka han kontrasterade mot den traditionella europeiska konsten med dess upptagenhet av det illusoriska och av harmoniska, balansskapande relationer. Det fanns också minimalistiskt orienterade konstnärer som i sin konst sökte sig bort från storstäderna till naturen. Det mest kända exemplet står Robert Smithson för. Med sin Spiral Jetty, en 457 meter lång sten-, grus- och sandskulptur formad som en spiral i Great Salt Lake, skapade han 1970 ett prototypiskt land art-projekt.

Även om minimalismen och konceptkonsten i hög grad utvecklades parallellt med varandra kan den senare på många sätt uppfattas som en vidareutveckling av den förra. Det var konceptkonstnärerna som tog steget över till det helt immateriella och ickevisuella. Om minimalisterna hade använt sig av industriella produktionsformer i framställandet av sina verk så kom konceptkonstnärerna fram till att objektet inte behöver utföras alls. Det avgörande tänktes i stället vara idén. När idén och den språkliga definitionen på detta vis får ersätta det visuella objektet framstår konsten i dess traditionella bemärkelse som överspelad. Joseph Kosuth, en av de tongivande konceptkonstnärerna, hävdar rent av att ett konstverk inte är något annat än ett påstående om konst: "Konst är

definitionen av konst."<sup>15</sup> Konsten utsäger inte någonting nytt om verkligheten och har inga yttre syften, inga anspråk som går utöver konsten själv.

Onekligen är detta en av de punkter där den tidiga konceptkonsten ter sig mest daterad. Även om mycket av dagens konst i ett eller annat avseende kan sägas vara konceptuell har flertalet samtida konstnärer också ambitionen att säga något väsentligt om vår tids samhälle, ofta utifrån ett maktkritiskt perspektiv. Det är en konst som inte nöjer sig med att endast uttala sig om konsten. Fast det gjorde å andra sidan inte heller det mesta av det sena sextiotalets och det tidiga sjuttiotalets konst. I betydligt högre grad än konstens egenvärde betonades tvärtom konstens politiska kraft. Det var en samhällskritisk konst som var ställd i den vänsterorienterade politikens tjänst, en konst riktad mot kapitalism, imperialism och fascism.

## Estetiskt gränsöverskridande i politikens tecken

Åren kring 1970 var också en storhetstid för sådant som performance, happenings, instrumental teater, Body Art och konkret poesi. Det sistnämnda fick ett särskilt stort genomslag i Sverige genom författare och konstnärer som Öyvind Fahlström, Bengt Emil Johnson och Åke Hodell. Hos i synnerhet Hodell var det experimentella skrivandet också förenat med ett tydligt vänsterpolitiskt en-

<sup>15</sup> JOSEPH KOSUTH, "KONSTEN EFTER FILOSOFIN", I SVEN-OLOV WALLENSTEIN (RED.), *KONCEPTKONST*, SKRIFTSERIEN KAIROS 11 (STOCKHOLM 2006), s. 98. DET ÄR KNAPPAST EN SLUMP ATT DESSA TANKAR OM DEN TAUTOLOGISKA KONSTEN SAMMANFALLER I TIDEN MED UTVECKLANDET AV DEN SÅ KALLADE INSTITUTIONELLA KONSTTEORIN. DENNA GER ETT (MÖJLIGEN FÖRRÄDISKT) ENKELT SVAR PÅ FRÅGAN OM VAD KONST ÄR, OCH DET ÄR EN UPPFATTNING SOM BLAND SÄVÄL KONSTNÄRER SOM TEORETIKER FÅTT ETT STORT GENOMSLAG UNDER DE SENASTE DECENNIERNA: KONST ÄR DET SOM UTNÄMNS TILL OCH ERKÄNNS SOM KONST AV KONSTVÄRLDEN, DVS. AV KONSTNÄRER MEN OCKSÅ GALLERISTER, KURATORER, INTENDER, KONSTVETARE, KRITIKER OSV. SE T.EX. GEORGE DICKIE, *ART AND THE AESTHETICS. AN INSTITUTIONAL ANALYSIS* (ITHACA 1974).

gagemang, som när han tematiserade den militära indoktrineringen i text-ljud-bildkompositionen "General Bussig" med dess maniska omtagningar av satsen "Jag vill lyda order, order vill jag lyda".<sup>16</sup>

I samma konstnärliga kretsar där Hodell, Johnson och Fahlström rörde sig fanns också Bengt af Klintberg som var den som i Sverige introducerade Fluxus. Fluxus kan beskrivas som ett löst sammansatt internationellt nätverk av konstnärer, författare och musiker som George Maciunas, Yoko Ono och John Cage vilka alla på olika sätt utmanade konstens traditionella gränser. Som Maciunas slår fast i ett försök att ringa in vad Fluxus är: "För att etablera sin icke-professionella status i samhället måste Fluxuskonstnären demonstrera att han är ersättbar och delaktig, att publiken klarar sig själv, att vad som helst kan vara konst och vem som helst göra den."<sup>17</sup> De Fluxusverk som uppfördes följde inte sällan i förväg nedskrivna anvisningar, som i följande exemplariska stycke av Klintberg, kallat Flaggor I: I Köpenhamn: "En stor dansk flagga finns uppspikad på en vägg. Måla korset gult. Drick en Tuborg / alt. en Carlsberg/. Måla de fyra röda fälten blå."<sup>18</sup>

Inte utan skäl brukar också den tyske allkonstnären och politiske aktivisten Joseph Beuys räknas till Fluxus, men till skillnad från andra Fluxuskonstnärer var han skeptiskt inställd till Duchamp och dadaismen – vilket han tydliggjorde med sitt underfundiga påstående *DAS SCHWEIGEN VON MARCEL DUCHAMP WIRD ÜBERBEWERTET*, Marcel Duchamps tystnad är övervärderad.<sup>19</sup> På ett sätt som saknar motsvarighet hos Duchamp genomsyras hela Beuys tänkande och konstnärskap av en humanistisk tro på människan liksom av en ekologisk grundhållning och en närmast idealistisk syn på konstens omvälvande betydelse. Det hindrar inte att även han utifrån sin förvisning om att varje människa är en konstnär – *JEDER IST KÜNSTLER* – strävade efter att vidga konstbegreppet. Det är signifikativt att han i efterhand utnämnde grundandet av Tyska Studentpartiet 1967 till "Mitt största konstverk".<sup>20</sup> Och det är också typiskt att han som professor i skulptur vid Konstakademien i Düsseldorf tog in alla som ville gå på hans kurser – vilket resulterade i att han avskedades. Även med sina aktioner utmanade han den sedvanliga uppfattningen om vad konst är, till exempel i *WIE MAN DEN TOTEN HASEN DIE BILDER ERKLÄRT* (Hur man förklarar bilder för den döda haren), där han med sitt eget

<sup>16</sup> ÅKE HODELL, *GENERAL BUSSIG* (Stockholm 1964); SE ÄVEN DE OLIKA VERSIONERNA AV KOMPOSITIONEN SOM FINNS PÅ CD-SAMLINGSUTGÅVAN *VERBAL BRAINWASH AND OTHER WORKS* (Stockholm 2000).

<sup>17</sup> BENGT AF KLINTBERG, *SVENSK FLUXUS / SWEDISH FLUXUS* (Stockholm 2006), s. 46.

<sup>18</sup> KLINTBERG, *SVENSK FLUXUS*, s. 30.

<sup>19</sup> URSPRUNGLIGEN YTTRADE BEUYS ORDEN I EN TEVESÄNDNING 1964, MEN DE HAR DÄREFTER OFTA ÅTERGIVITS ÄVEN I ANDRA MEDIER, BL.A. PÅ OMSLAGET TILL MODERNA MUSEETS UTSTÄLLINGSKATALOG *JOSEPH BEUYS. TECHNİKAR OCH OBJEKT 1937-1970 UR SAMLING VÄN DER GRINTEN* (Stockholm 1971).

<sup>20</sup> "UTDRAG UR 'DER GANZE RIEMEN': 22 JUNI – BILDANDET AV 'DEUTSCHE STUDENTENPARTEI' (TYSKA STUDENTPARTIET)", I *BRÄNNPUNKT DÜSSELDORF. JOSEPH BEUYS OCH HANS KRETS*, LILJEVALCHS (Stockholm 1987), s. 56.

ansikte täckt av honung och blodguldguldmålt förklarade vad konst är för en död hare som han bar i famnen medan han sakta rörde sig genom gallerirummet. Enligt Beuys själv representerar haren jorden och materien under det att guld och honungen "indikerar en transformation av huvudet, och därmed naturligt och logiskt hjärnan och vår förståelse av tänkandet, medvetandet".<sup>21</sup> I viss mening handlar det om ett sökande efter en balans mellan olika kosmiska krafter men också en vilja att öppna upp för alkemiska transformationer av det ena till det andra. Det är inte förvånande att Beuys brukar beskrivas som en konstens schaman, men det är i sådana fall en schamanism med anspråk på att inte bara tänja ut konstbegreppet utan i sista hand omskapa hela samhället.

I gränslandet mellan konst och politik går det också att finna situationismen. Det är en rörelse som än idag intresserar många konstnärer. Situationistiska Internationalen hade grundats redan 1957, men det var först tio år senare som rörelsen blev mer allmänt känd, mycket tack vare skriften *SKÅDESPELSSAMHÄLLET* som fransmannen Guy Debord publicerade 1967.<sup>22</sup> Boken, som blev en inspirationskälla för många 68-radikaler, presenterar en marxistiskt präglad teori om det samtida kapitalistiska samhället som beskrivs som just ett skådespelssamhälle, *UNE SOCIÉTÉ DU SPECTACLE*, i den meningen att skenet har upphöjts till sanning, skådespelet till verklighet. Ytterst på grund av den kapitalistiska överflödsekonomi och de pseudobehov som konsumtionen ger upphov till har hela samhällslivet till slut blivit förfalskat och människor mer eller mindre passiviserade. Denna uppochnedvända värld är dock inte evig utan kan och bör bekämpas, inte minst av konstnärer. Samtidigt måste dessa då inse att även konsten har blivit en del av det allomfattande skådespelet varför det är nödvändigt att överskrida konstinstitutionen. Det kan bland annat åstadkommas om själva livet görs till konst, en konst öppen för alla, skapad av alla. Precis som Beuys och Fluxuskonstnärerna utgår situationisterna på så vis från tanken att alla människor i något avseende är konstnärer och att det gäller att skapa en sorts antikunst där gränsen mellan konstnären och åskådarna suddas ut.

Det senare ter sig som synnerligen typiskt för tidens estetiska strävanden så tillvida att det nu fanns en allmän tendens att tona ned konstnärens och författarens betydelse. I stället för den romantiskt färgade konstnärsuppfattningen, enligt vilken konstnären eller författaren uttrycker sig själv och sina känslor i sitt verk, riktades fokus mot åskådaren, läsaren och delvis också den estetiska och sociala kontexten. I en berömd uppsats från 1968 talade den franske

<sup>21</sup> BEUYS CITERAD EFTER MARC C. TAYLOR, "FORGERY", I *ALL IN THE PRESENT MUST BE TRANSFORMED*. MATTHEW BARNEY AND JOSEPH BEUYS (BERLIN & NEW YORK 2006), s. 112.

<sup>22</sup> GUY DEBORD, *SKÅDESPELSSAMHÄLLET* (Göteborg 2002).

kritikern Roland Barthes om författarens död och läsarens födelse.<sup>23</sup> På ett liknande sätt utmanade Cage, den amerikanske tonsättaren och Fluxuskonstnären, gräsdragningen mellan musiker och åhörare, mest tydligt med sitt pianostycke "4'33", där pianisten vid sin konsertflygel inte spelar något alls under fyra minuter och trettiofyra sekunder, utan endast vid tre tillfällen markerar nya satser i luften, allt för att rikta fokus på alla de andra ljud som finns i konsertlokalen, som hostningar, skrap med fötterna, viskningar och – allteftersom pianisten fortsätter att inte spela – kanske rent av en och annan ljudlig kommentar från publiken.

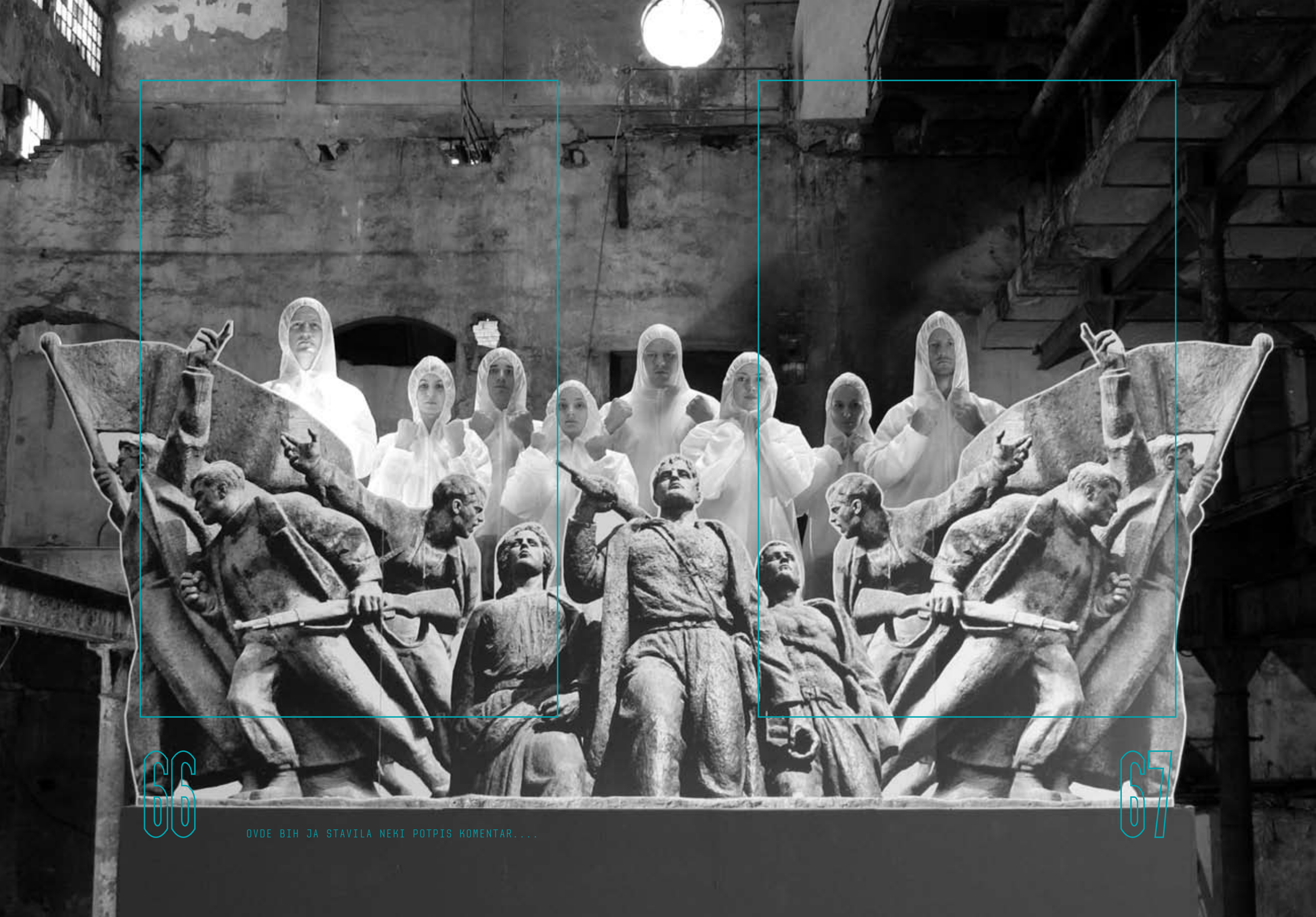
Genom Cage, Hodell och andra likasinnade kompositörers, musikers och konstnärers ifrågasättande verksamhet förändrades konstmusiken radikalt under sextioalet. Detsamma kan i allra högsta grad också sägas om populärmusiken. Med band och artister som Beatles, Rolling Stones, Jimi Hendrix, Janis Joplin, Led Zeppelin och Frank Zappa nådde popen och rocken inte bara tidigare oåtkämpliga konstnärliga höjder utan blev också ett masskulturellt fenomen inom den snabbt växande ungdomsrörelsen. I till exempel Woodstock (augusti 1969) och på Gärdet i Stockholm (juni 1970) ordnades musikfestivaler som lockade tiotusentals åskådare. Att det delvis handlade om ett ungdomsuppror illustreras väl av Bob Dylans "The Times They Are A-Changin'", där den äldre generationen uppmanas att inte kritisera sådant som de inte begriper sig på: "don't criticize / What you can't understand / Your sons and your daughters / Are beyond your command".

Det förekom också produktiva överlappningar mellan å ena sidan pop- och rockkulturen och å andra sidan konstsfären. Exempelvis gjorde den engelske popkonstnären Peter Blake det legendariska skivomslaget till Beatles' SGT. PEPPER'S LONELY HEARTS CLUB BAND, och Warhol samarbetade med Velvet Underground och låg bakom det bananprydda omslaget till debutskivan THE VELVET UNDERGROUND AND NICO. I Sverige ingick flera av tidens mest uppmärksammade unga konstnärer och författare – som Leif Nylén, Torkel Rasmusson och Mats G. Bengtsson – i proggbandet Gunder Hägg som senare bytte namn till Blå Tåget. Efterhand anslöt sig också konstnären Carl Johan de Geer. Han hade 1967 ställts inför rätta och dömts till dagsböter för uppvigling och skändning av statssymbol efter att ha ställt ut litografier på vilka det stod inte bara "Skända flaggan, vägra vapen, svik fosterlandet, var onationell" utan också "KUKEN" över den svenska flaggan och "USA mördare" under den amerikanska, där stjärnorna i ena hörnet dessutom var utbytta mot små hakkors. På samma tidstypiska sätt skapade Lena Svedberg politisk, samhällskritisk konst, till exempel i den tecknade triptyken

<sup>23</sup> ROLAND BARTHES, "LA MORT DE L'AUTEUR", I *ŒUVRES COMPLÈTES*, TOME II: 1966-1973, RED. ÉRIC MARTY (PARIS 1994), S. 491-495.

The Kennedy Brothers Plus One. Här visas Robert och John F. Kennedy sjukligt deformerade och upphängda på var sitt kors. Både de Geer och Svedberg medarbetade för övrigt i tidskriften PUSS, som annars är mest känd för Lars Hillersbergs satiriska teckningar över alla tänkbara fenomen som han ansåg var värda att häcklas. Det är allvarlig politisk konst upphöjd till svart humor.

Mot denna bakgrund kan det avslutningsvis konstateras att om det finns ett kodord för det sena sextioalets och det tidiga sjuttioalets politiska och estetiska verksamheter så är det gränsöverskridning. Alla tänkbara gränser skulle nu överskridas: mellan det höga och det låga, mellan olika konstnärliga medier och uttrycksformer, mellan konstnären och betraktaren, konstverket och dess kontext, konsten och politiken. En liknande gränsöverskridande vilja präglade också delar av tidens konsthantverk. Djupt påverkade av de samtida estetiska och ideologiska diskussionerna skapade konsthantverkare objekt som inte bara ifrågasätter den traditionella förståelsen av vad konsthantverk är och kan vara, utan som också utifrån ett uttalat politiskt perspektiv vill säga något om den på många sätt djupt orättvisa värld i vilken vi lever.



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OVDE BIH JA STAVILA NEKI POTPIS KOMENTAR....

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LOOK FOR NEW

PARTISANS!  
/INTERVIEW WITH THE AUTHORS OF THE VIDEO PARTISAN  
SONGSPIEL/

The following interview have been realised as a part of the exhibition POLITICAL PRACTICES OF (POST-)YUGOSLAV ART: RETROSPECTIVE 01. Initiated by four independent organisations - WHW curatorial collective (Zagreb), Centre for New Media, kuda.org (Novi Sad), Prelom Kolektiv (Belgrade) and CCA/pro.ba (Sarajevo) - the exhibition was conceived as a cluster of independent researches that deal with the cultural heritage of socialist Yugoslavia through specific examples and concrete analyses.

The main focus of this project was the research and reconstruction of the three historical references or forms of critical thought within the art that developed in socialist Yugoslavia, or in the vanguard of the political concept of socialist Yugoslavia - these are Partisan art, Socialist modernism and the New artistic practices. These three notions can be seen as important historical references for today's conceptualization of political activity within the field of contemporary art. For example, the term Partisan art, which is partly discussed through

the PARTISAN SONGSPIEL video by the Chto Delat collective represents a historical example of the unity of art and socio-political commitment in making a common gesture. It occupies a position quite contrary to the conceptions of art autonomy and their practical manifestations (such as practicing art within the enclosed, autonomous sphere of art) and is closely connected to an avant-garde comprehension of art as revolutionary vanguard. It is about (re)examining the relationship of art and politics conceived through simultaneity of art and resistance, of thought and action, or about the capacity to think and act outside of the dominant "rationality".

MORE ABOUT PROJECT AT: <http://pp-yu-art.net/en>

**PRELON:** YOUR NEW VIDEO *PARTISAN SONGSPIEL. BELGRADESTORY* IS AN ANALYSIS OF A CONCRETE SITUATION. - SONGSPIEL STARTS WITH THE REPRESENTATION OF THEMUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT OF BELGRADE'S OPPRESSION OF ROMA PEOPLE WHO INHABITING THE DISTRICT OF THE BELVILLE SETTLEMENT (WHERE THERE ARE LUXURY APARTMENTS) ON THE OCCASION OF THE UNIVERSIADE IN THE SUMMER OF 2009. AT THE SAME TIME, IT ADDRESSES THE MORE UNIVERSAL POLITICAL ISSUE WHICH HARSHLY POLARIZES THE ALREADY EXISTING POSITIONS INTO THE OPPRESSORS AND THE OPPRESSED: IN THIS CASE, THE CITY GOVERNMENT, WAR PROFITEERS AND BUSINESS TYCOONS VS. THE DISADVANTAGED - WORKERS, NGO ACTIVISTS, WAR INVALIDS AND MINORITY GROUPS. YOU ALSO ESTABLISHED SOMETHING THAT WE CAN CALL "THE HORIZON OF HISTORICAL CONSCIOUSNESS" WHICH YOU REPRESENTED BY WAY OF A CHOIR OF DEAD PARTISANS WHO COMMENT ON THE POLITICAL DIALOGUE BETWEEN THE OPPRESSORS AND THE OPPRESSED. THE MAIN POLITICAL MESSAGE IS BASED ON THE IDEA OF CLASS STRUGGLE, WHICH IS PRONOUNCED BY THE PARTISAN CHOIR AND ADDRESSED TO THE OPPRESSED. IN SHORT, THEY TELL THEM THAT THEY MUST UNITE IN A COLLECTIVE STRUGGLE AS OPPOSED TO THE PRESENT STRATEGY OF IDENTITARIAN POLITICS. HOW DID YOU DECIDE TO PORTRAY THIS SPECIFIC POLITICAL MOMENT AND REPRESENT IT THROUGH THESE SPECIFIC SOCIAL CHARACTERS?

**DMITRY VILENSKY:** For us, it was very challenging to work with the realities of Belgrade social and political life. We were lucky to have enough time to research the situation and we had an already excellent network of friends and local experts. We met Vladan and Rena and started our dialogue - we decided that we are able to do something concerning this situation. Chto Delat already developed a certain way of work in our first songspiel PERESTROIKA. THE VICTORY OVER THE COUP and we wanted to develop this further by including the element of



dance. We dreamt of making a real musical so we started to think in this direction. Coincidentally, we took the case of the Roma settlement as a departure point and it proved to be a very important case as it was coupled with such a global event, the Universiade. But, the decisive point was that Vladan and Rena took an active part in the protest campaign defending the rights of Roma settlers. So, we took this event as a starting point in the construction of our script which is based on the principle of typicality. We constructed fictional characters, which from our point of view are representative of the general antagonistic struggle in any society. At the same time, we suggested analysing the complex problems which constitute the traps and limits of these individual and identitary struggles. We very much respect these struggles and consider them to be very important, but we also think that there is an urgent need to reconsider them as new forms of class struggle. In our scenario, the group constructed of differently oppressed people is confronted with the exaggeratedly "old fashioned" rhetoric of the dead partisans. Through this confrontation, we were trying to demonstrate how hard, almost impossible, it is to articulate and come up with a new universal language which can fuse together different forms of "minoritarian" politics. So, the piece again (the same as <sup>PERESTROIKA</sup>) concerns the difficulties of developing a common language and solidarity. At the same time, I hope that it does not imply political melancholy as the ultimate state of things but tries to think further ahead and to open up new political horizons — the last address of the choir is: "Close your ranks, comrades! Look for new partisans!" — It is a direct agitation and proposal for the continuation of the militant struggle for emancipation.

**RENA RAEDLE & VLADAN JERENIĆ:** <sup>PARTISAN SONGSPIEL</sup> deals with the moment in which the cannibalization of a society takes place. During the last two decades, our society existed as an isolated camp where everyday life was monopolized by corrupted politicians and ruthless tycoons. After the catastrophe of the wars in the ex-Yugoslav countries which unfolded in the manner of a mutual extermination, there followed the economic polarization and discrimination of a large part of the population which ended up in their being homeless and deprived of any state protection. It is the Roma who as the majority were gravely affected by this exodus. The scenario of <sup>PARTISAN SONGSPIEL</sup> aims to present the most extreme positions in post-war and post-transitional Serbian society and to present them in their typicality. Two extremes, the oppressors and the oppressed, are defining the current composition of society as a whole and indirectly describe the bleakest everyday lives of the majority of people. <sup>PARTISAN SONGSPIEL</sup> takes place in an old factory that looks like a post-Fordist slum. Mike Davis, in his book <sup>PLANET OF SLUMS</sup>, argues that national and local political machines accept informal settlements as long as they can maintain political

control and extract direct financial benefit. These almost feudal relations of dependence on local police or important players in certain political parties and non-governmental organizations are deeply rooted and disloyalty may cause the destruction of the slum itself. The four oppressed characters "inhabit" this metaphorical slum of an abandoned factory: Worker, Roma Woman, Lesbian and Veteran. Their personal stories are stereotypes constructed from public testimonies or interviews produced by the media, referring to recent events in Serbia. The worker, who cut off his own finger, as the leader of numerous hunger strikes is a victim of wild privatization and tycoonization, a process which forces the companies into bankruptcy. The important question for us is how to unite the discriminated class today in the fight against capitalism? Which one of our characters is actually a possible revolutionary subject? The partisans are the voice from the past who bring the legacy of solidarity in the struggle against neo-liberal particularization and the atomization of the social sphere. An important moment is when the partisan choir calls the oppressed for unity, primarily addressing the worker as the guardian of the historical torch-light. However, unity within the slum is uncertain and the class struggle remains unarticulated and fragmented.

**PRELON:** WOULD YOU TELL US SOMETHING ABOUT HOW THE MODE OF ART PRODUCTION YOU SELECTED FOR THE PARTISAN SONGSPIEL COMPARES TO, FOR EXAMPLE, ARTACTIVIST FILMS WHICH ARE DEDICATED TO THE SAME SITUATION THAT YOU TAKE AS THE POINT OF DEPARTURE OF THIS VIDEO? IN OTHER WORDS, HOW DO YOU OBSERVE THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE "LOW-FI VIDEO REPORTAGE" AND THE METHOD OF "HIGH ART"?

**RENA RAEDLE & VLADAN JERENIĆ:** Taking artistic practice primarily as a system of actions and also, as being active in the field of contemporary art, we believe that the experience of political reality as well as the active and public stance of the artist can produce "real knowledge" and a transformative experience. This approach also reveals social mechanisms and norms in which we operate and offers a clear insight into contemporary political realities. The conditions of production are inscribed into the product and always are reflected in our artistic work. Our recent video <sup>BELVILLE 1</sup>, which you refer to, emerged as a concentrated result of our active participation and media activism during the protest against the violent eviction of Roma families and the tearing down of their homes in New Belgrade. The video reveals relations and power mechanisms between all the actors in the conflict: Roma, mayor, investors, journalists, international mediators, politicians, police, activist, etc. Our

[THE VIDEO CAN BE SEEN @ WWW.ARCHIVE.ORG/DETAILS/BELLEVILLE](http://www.archive.org/details/BELLEVILLE)

artistic/activist practice and direct contact with the actors involved enabled us to analyze and display this situation in its full complexity. The film was first screened in the settlement of the protesters and is a part of our ongoing artistic research project about the situation of Roma in Europe. Meanwhile, one of the huge mahalas of Belgrade, one of the places where our project UNDER THE BRIDGE took place in 2004, has been completely torn down and over a thousand people have been temporarily resettled into containers on the periphery of the city or deported to Southern Serbia. Right now, we are preparing video stories that will trace the destinies of these families which will be shot by the inhabitants themselves.

**DMITRY VILENSKY:** This is a crucial issue. The task of "spreading the information" is important and valid but then we should ask another question: where are activist-artists spreading this information and are their goals different from the goals of "engaged" journalists or are they are not? I can criticize this situation from inside because I have been making some important documentation of various local struggles in Russia for different activists groups and enabling these to be accessible on-line. I find that very important but at the same time there is something very unsatisfying in it. The most unsatisfying factor is when these things appear not just online (where they must be) but also in art places. On the one hand, I would definitely prefer to see this stuff in exhibition places than any higher forms of the propaganda of commodity fetishism and sophisticated entertainment. But it does not mean that we do not have a problem here — also there is an ethical problem — it is always looks quite obscene when the "art crowd" who do not give a fuck about these struggles are watching them at their "beautiful gatherings". Therefore, I think that this isn't the time for mixing information functions and art. Art has an amazing power to inform too but it should be realized in another way — just to briefly say that it should question art and its history, it should question the medium (because why we should trust that what is presented is true?), it must show and problematize the position of the speaker (Who is speaking in the film? What is the political identity of the privileged person with the camera?) and many other questions. I think that without tackling these questions, there isn't the possibility to speak from within the art world about political issues, especially in a direct documentary form. When we start to ask these questions, then we clearly step aside from documentary and reveal the construction of the whole film as it discloses itself as something else. That's why for us the "reactionary" medium of songspiel and musical — where everything is openly constructed and estranged and where we take full political responsibility for the speeches and political statements — this somehow becomes a way of dealing with those limitations of documentarism in trying to break away and reach a truly realist

position in art. We have discussed all this problems, through the reactualization of Godard's famous question HOW TO MAKE FILM POLITICALLY and we dedicated to it one issue of the Chto Delat newspapers with the same name.

**PRELON:** THE NEW FILM IS BASED, IN A SIMILAR MANNER AS IN YOUR VIDEO *PERESTROYKA. VICTORY OVER THE COUP*, ON THE AESTHETIC TOOLS AND METHODS DEVELOPED BY BERTOLD BRECHT. FIRST, WHY BRECHT? SECOND, WHAT IS YOUR VIEW ON THE CONTEMPORARY APPLICATION AND/OR ACTUALIZATION OF THE IDEAS AND EFFECTS OF THE HISTORICAL AVANT-GARDES?

**DMITRY VILENSKY:** From the beginning, we were never hiding that Brecht and Godard are the most important sources of influence and reference for the activity of our group (and we take into account the obvious relations between these two names). Shortly after establishing our Chto Delat collective, we started to discuss the issue "Why Brecht?" and we have published this discussion at the end of 2005. The editorial and exhibition policy of Chto Delat is often criticized because of inconsistency, of lacking a clear "party line." What is important for us today is to arrive at a method that enables us to mix quite different things—reactionary form and radical content, anarchic spontaneity and organizational discipline, hedonism and asceticism, etc. It is a matter of finding the right proportions. That is, we are once again forced to solve the old problems of composition whilst not forgetting that the most faithful composition is always built on the simultaneous sublation and supercharging of contradictions. As Brecht taught us, these contradictions should be resolved not in the work of art, but in real life. Right now it became a new point of reference by actualizing Brecht in contemporary art with the curatorial statement of WHW on 11th Istanbul Biennale which I would co-sign with very much pleasure. The most important thing on which we are in agreement on Brecht is sharing his short statement "That's great art: nothing obvious in it!". However, at the same time, we do not want to fetishise his influence — for us it is not a matter of how far we remain "true", orthodox Brechtians. It is again, as often is the case in our work, about the actualisation and development of a certain method and we definitely use Brecht's principle of estrangement. Also, we share another important thing with him — we think that real political art should be spectacular and touch someone's heart but without stupid entertainment. It should be funny and bursting with humour. We would be happy if Brecht could have a chance to watch and enjoy it — we sometimes need some "big Other" whom you need to challenge. A few days before shooting, I happened to be in Berlin and passed by

2 > ALL THE NEWSPAPERS, INCLUDING THE ONE ABOUT BRECHT AND GODARD, ARE AVAILABLE ON-LINE @ [WWW.CHTODELAT.ORG](http://WWW.CHTODELAT.ORG)

Brecht's tomb and of course used this chance to talk to him and to explain what we are going to do. He did not answer, but that's OK :) We are really doing things seriously, sometimes too seriously with regard to avant-garde practices — we think that the notion of avant-garde has more useful meaning than a neutral term of "political" art, in spite of the fact that it is hard to use it again. So, for us the debate on the avant-garde is very much inspired by our activist position and advocating the necessity of "external agency" — that is people who are able to make very important professional work with both challenging and uncompromising quality. We know that it is a privileged position, but we think that there is a chance to recode it and use your privilege for the benefit of many unprivileged people. This is the role of avant-garde intellectuals-artists — not to give up their privileges (first because it is impossible, second it makes no sense), but to use them in a radically different way.

**RENA RAEDLE & VLADAN JEREHIĆ:** The most interesting of Brecht's conceptions for us today is that takes the audience as an active part that completes the theatre play through its actions in the real world. Brecht used to rewrite his plays and to adapt them to current situations. Therefore, he understood theatre as an open and interactive media. Today Brecht would perhaps include into his work telecommunication media such as the internet or media hacks to make political agitation possible. His experience with film was traumatic: after the script of the apolitical but ultra-successful play *THE THREEPENNY OPERA* (an adaptation of the *BEGGAR'S OPERA* by John Gay from 1728) was sold to the film industry, his attempts to radicalize the piece and to strengthen an anti-capitalist tendency proved futile. *PARTISAN SONGSPIEL* has the classical structure of a Greek tragedy with protagonists and a chorus that comments and evaluates through their recitations. As in Brecht's dialectical theatre, the resolving catharsis is missing and this leaves the viewer with an uncomfortable feeling. A tragedy without catharsis — it's actually a nightmare, a horror story without an obvious exit. After all, we have to ask ourselves, if it is possible to produce a progressive shift in the audience with this kind of tragic surrealism. If nothing else, it is a perfect description of the existing condition of Serbia's society.

**PRELON:** THE VIDEO *PARTISAN SONGSPIEL* IS BASED ON THE COLLECTIVE WORK OF, FIRST OF ALL THE CHTO DELAT GROUP AND BIRO BEOGRAD, BUT ALSO OF MANY OTHER CONTRIBUTORS. WHAT DOES COLLECTIVE AUTHORSHIP MEAN TO YOU? HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE IT IN TERMS OF PRODUCTION, COLLABORATION AND CONTENT?

**DMITRY VILENSKY:** For me, collective work means something that is pro-

duced by a group of people with a clear understanding of interdependency — that no one from the group could do it alone or with the help of paid professional labour. So, the whole work is based on an intensive process of discussing and negotiating. On the other hand, we fully recognize that such a classical film medium which we used for the *PARTISAN SONGSPIEL* is very oppressive and hierarchical, so we had to mix collective decision making with the trust to individual professional skills. So, I would say again that in political terms we are trying to build a new form of collective work by combining collective identity and giving a space for all the singularities involved. That's why for us it was important to mark the work as a Chto Delat film and specify all the contributors, who worked here in the form of temporary art-soviets. Also I insist that we must differentiate between collective naming and branding, of course with the full recognition of the dangers that any collective faces when operating in the professional conditions of cultural industry. The true value of the collective I would suggest is the political positioning and building its own broadly recognizable political context. Here we are coming to the crucial distinction between corporate identity or individuality and collective. Collective is about striving for non-alienated labour, equality, solidarity, self-help, sisterhood and so on.

**RENA RAEDLE & VLADAN JEREHIĆ:** The methodology which was they developed in previous film projects was offered to us as a cooperative tool by Chto Delat. One specific methodology was predefined, how a Chto Delat film should look like. We made our work within the framework of specific categories and roles characteristic for such movie production. It would be correct to mention some roles and positions in this working process, but we don't want to forget the many voices from Belgrade or Russia who helped a lot, by offering many interesting ideas and comments before and during the making of the video: the Director of *PARTISAN SONGSPIEL* is Olga Egorova Tsaplya, assistant directors, scriptwriters and stage designers are Vladan Jeremi, Rena Raedle, Dmitry Vilensky with Olga Egorova Tsaplya; the music composer is Mihail Kutlik, costume design by Natalya Pershina Gluklya, choreography by Nina Gasteva and Tsaplya, editing and post-production by Olga Egorova Tsaplya and Dmitry Vilensky. The production was realized in Belgrade by Biro Beograd — Biro for Culture and Communication Belgrade during July 2009.

**PRELON:** HOW DID YOU DECIDE TO WORK WITH THE SPECIFICITIES OF THE (POST-) YUGOSLAV POLITICAL SPACE?

**DMITRY VILENSKY:** The current situation in Belgrade for us is very recognizable because there are many parallels with our everyday life and relations. Also for us, it is quite natural to grasp the heroic origins of Yugoslavian partisanship — our school years were filled with the all sort of propaganda and we knew this rhetoric quite well, but at the same time we were all dreaming about heroic deeds in the fight against the White guards or against fascist forces. So, of course for us (Tsaplya and me) partisans are the embodiment of the true heroic position and frankly, we very much lack this archaic type of self-sacrificing struggle today. We still believe in the ideals of self-management, socialist culture and so on. We are sure that it is important to deal with the major communist narrative, but not in the playful deconstructive manner of Soc-art. We would rather take them seriously for what they were and still are for all the people who envision the future differently from the capitalist one. We are not Stalinist, neither Titoist, but it does not prevent us from believing that in spite of the failure of socialist countries, they demonstrated amazingly challenging experiences which inspire us today. That's why for us Yugoslavia is very important place. It is also important to mention that all our work is very much related to the situation of transition and instability, which is the case here as it is in Russia. I should also admit that we did not want the partisan role in our songspiel to be so dominant — we actually hoped that our "identity groups" should play a central role regarding identification with the audience. But it happened that the partisans became a much stronger voice. Some people reacted to it, reading the appearance of the partisans as an "empty political offer", coming from the horizon of long gone times. I would say that this is a misinterpretation because PARTISAN SONGSPIEL doesn't agitate the desire to repeat old politics but looks for a new desire and politics that must acknowledge the messages of past struggles and bring them into accord with the new class composition. Nonetheless, without clear articulation of the fidelity to the old struggle, we can hardly move forward. And we hope that this is quite evident in our work.

**RENA RAEDLE & VLADAN JEREMIĆ:** Both the former Yugoslavia and former Soviet Union share a communist/socialist legacy and the experience of the falling apart of the socialist/communist state into national states. This legacy is transmitted through the inclusion of the Partisan chorus in the form of a "singing monument" which discusses the situation and supports the oppressed. Partisans act as a collective reminder and alterego, showing the deep historical perspective in which we can find the key for understanding the current unsatisfactory situation. What is important is that the rhetoric of the Partisan monument belongs to the years before 1948. The partisans represent fighters who fought and fell in the Yugoslav People's Liberation War (NOB). The scenery

for the Partisan monument is a collage of two existing monuments, one from Serbia and another one from Croatia, which were made by the sculptors Sreten Stojanović and Franjo Kršinić and were erected as monuments to fallen partisans in 1951 and 1954.

Interview is conducted by Jelena Vesi, October, 2009



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FINN

NYE

PARTISANER!  
/INTERVJU MED FORFATTERNE BAK VIDEOEN PARTISAN  
SONGSPIEL/

Det følgende intervjuet ble gjort i forbindelse med utstillingen Political Practices of (Post-)Yugoslav Art: RETROSPECTIVE 01. Denne utstillingen ble initiert av fire uavhengige organisasjoner – kuratorkollektivet WHW (Zagreb), Senter for nye medier, kuda.org (Novi Sad), Prelom Kolektiv (Beograd) og CCA/pro.ba (Sarajevo) – og var et forsøk på å samle sammen flere uavhengige undersøkelser av den kulturelle arven fra det sosialistiske Jugoslavia ved hjelp av spesifikke eksempler og konkrete analyser.

Hovedfokuset for dette prosjektet var å undersøke og forsøke å rekonstruere tre historiske referanser eller former for kritisk tenkning i den kunsten som oppsto i det sosialistiske Jugoslavia, med andre ord, fortroppene innenfor det politiske konseptet som utgjorde det sosialistiske Jugoslavia. De tre retningene er: partisanerkunst, sosialistisk modernisme og nye kunstneriske praksiser, og disse tre begrepene danner viktige historiske referanser for den konseptualisering av politisk aktivitet som skjer i samtidskunsten i dag. For

eksempel representerer partisanerkunsten, et begrep som i noen grad drøftes i Chto Delats video Partisan Songspiel, et historisk eksempel på en enhet mellom kunst og sosiopolitisk engasjement i og med at det skapes en felles handling. Partisanerkunsten inntar en posisjon i strid med oppfatninger av kunsten som autonom og deres praktiske manifestasjoner (så som det å praktisere kunst innenfor den lukkede, autonome kunstsfæren), og er nært forbundet med en av-antgardistisk forståelse av kunsten som en revolusjonær fortropp. Det handler om å (re-)vurdere forholdet mellom kunst og politikk slik det forstås gjennom kunstens og motstandens, tankens og handlingens samtidighet, eller om evnen til å tenke og handle utenfor den dominerende "rasjonaliteten".

MER OM PROSJEKTET HER: <http://pp-yu-art.net/en>

**PRELON:** DEN NYESTE VIDEOEN DERE, *PARTISAN SONGSPIEL. BELGRADE STORY* (PARTISANER-SYNGESPILL. EN BEOGRAD-FORTELLING) GIR EN ANALYSE AV EN KONKRET SITUASJON. DEN STARTER MED Å VISE DEN UNDERTRYKKELSEN RONFOLKET BLE UTSATT FOR AV BEOGRADS BYREGJERING, SOM I FORBINDELSE MED AT BYEN VAR ARRANGØR FOR UNIVERSIADEN SOMMEREN 2009, RASERTE RONFOLKETS BOSETNING I STRØKET BELLEVILLE (ELLER BELVILLE), HVOR DET OGSÅ LIGGER LUKSUSLEILIGHETER. PÅ SAMME TID TAR VIDEOEN OPP ET MER UNIVERSELT TEMA SOM VIRKER EKSTREMT POLARISERENDE OG DELER FOLK INN I TO GRUPPER: UNDERTRYKKERNE OG DE UNDERTRYKTE. I DETTE TILFELLET, BYREGJERING, KRIGSPROFITØRER OG FINANSNOGULER PÅ DEN ENE SIDEN, OG DE SVAKERESTILTE – ARBEIDERE, NGO-AKTIVISTER, KRIGSSKADDE OG MINORITETSGRUPPER PÅ DEN ANDRE. DERE INNFORER OGSÅ NOE VI KAN KALLE EN "HISTORISK BEVISSTHETSHORISONT" I FORM AV ET KOR AV DØDE PARTISANER SOM KOMMENTERER DEN POLITISKE DIALOGEN MELLOM UNDERTRYKKERNE OG DE UNDERTRYKTE. DET VIKTIGSTE POLITISKE BUDSKAPET HANDLER OM KLASSEKAMP, DET GIS TIL ORDE AV PARTISANERKORET SOM HENVENDER SEG TIL DE UNDERTRYKTE. KORT SAGT FORTELLER DE AT DET ER VIKTIG Å STÅ SAMMEN OG KJEMPE KOLLEKTIVT, ET BUDSKAP STIKK I STRID MED DAGENS IDENTITETSPOLITISKE STRATEGIER. HVA VAR DET SOM FIKK DERE TIL Å VELGE AKKURAT DETTE POLITISKE ØVEBLIKKET OG REPRESENTERE DET VED HJELP AV AKKURAT DISSE SKIKKELSENE?

**DMITRIJ VILENSKIJ:** For oss i det russiske kunstnerkollektivet Chto Delat var det en utfordring å skulle ta for seg et konkret aspekt ved Beograds samfunnsstruktur og politiske liv. Vi var så heldige at vi hadde tid til research og til å gjøre oss kjent med situasjonen og vi hadde allerede et utmerket nettverk av venner og lokale eksperter. Vi møtte Vladan og Rena som er fra Beograd og startet en dialog – og kom fram til at dette var en situasjon vi faktisk kunne være i stand til å gjøre noe med. I Chto Delats første sangspill, *Perestroika*,

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REALITY CHECK

ART & ACTIVISM READER

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Victory Over the Coup (Perestroika. Seier over kuppet), hadde vi allerede utviklet en spesiell arbeidsmetode, og nå hadde vi lyst til å ta den et skritt videre, ved også å integrere dans som et element. Drømmen var å lage en ordentlig musikal, og det var i den retningen vi begynte å tenke. Det var egentlig en tilfældighet at vi kom til å bruke romfolket og deres bosetting som case, men det viste seg å bli særdeles viktig, siden saken var knyttet til et så internasjonalt arrangement som Universiaden. Men det som til syvende og sist avgjorde saken, var at både Vladan og Rena deltok aktivt i aksjonen for å forsvare romfolkets rettigheter. Og det var dette vi tok som utgangspunkt for manuskriptet. Stykket er basert på et prinsipp om typikalitet: Vi har konstruert fiktive karakterer som fra vårt ståsted fremstår som representative for den generelle antagoniske kampen som forekommer i ethvert samfunn. Samtidig har vi ønsket å analysere de komplekse problemene som konstituerer de individuelle og identitetsorienterte kampenes fallgruver og begrensninger. Det er kamper vi har respekt for og som vi mener er av stor betydning, men samtidig mener vi også at det er tvingende nødvendig å revurdere betydningen av dem og forsøke å forstå dem som en ny form for klassekamp. I stykket konfronteres gruppen av mennesker som på en eller annen måte er undertrykt, med de døde partisanenes overdrevent "gammeldagse" retorikk. Gjennom denne konfrontasjonen forsøker vi å demonstrere hvor vanskelig – ja, nesten umulig – det er å formulere et nytt universelt språk som kan forene ulike former for "minoritets"-politikk. Akkurat som Perestroika. Victory Over the Coup, handler derfor også dette arbeidet om utfordringene knyttet til det å skape solidaritet og et felles språk. Samtidig håper jeg at dette ikke antyder at den politiske melankolien er tingenes endelige tilstand, men at det heller sporer en til å tenke lenger fram i tid, og åpne opp nye politiske horisonter – korets siste appell er: "Stå sammen, kamerater! Finn nye partisaner!" – Dette er en direkte agitasjon og en oppfordring om å fortsette den militante frigjøringskampen.

**RENA RÄDLE & VLADAN JEREMIĆ:** Partisan Songspiel tar for seg det øyeblikket da samfunnet kannibaliseres. De siste tjue årene har samfunnet vårt vært en isolert leir hvor hverdagen har vært monopolisert av korrupte politikere og skånselløse moguler. Etter de katastrofale krigene i de tidligere jugoslaviske delstatene – kriger som utspilte seg som gjensidig utryddelse – fulgte en økonomisk polarisering hvor en stor andel av befolkningen ble diskriminert og endte opp som hjemløse, fratatt all beskyttelse av staten. Romfolket er den gruppen som har vært utsatt for de mest alvorlige overgrepene. Det vi forsøker å få til i Partisan Songspiel, er å ta de mest ekstreme posisjonene i det serbiske samfunnet etter krigen og etter overgangsfasen – transisjonen – og vise dem fram som typer. Samfunnets sammensetning i dag er definert av to ytterpunkter, undertrykkerne og de undertrykte, og denne polariseringen

gir også en indirekte beskrivelse av den dystre hverdagen for flertallet av befolkningen. Partisan Songspiel finner sted i en gammel fabrikk som ser ut som en post-fordistisk slum. I boka Planet om Slums, hevder forfatteren Mike Davis at både det nasjonale og lokale politiske maskineriet er villige til å godta uofisielle avtaler under bordet, så fremt de selv kan beholde sin politiske kontroll og samtidig dra direkte økonomiske fordeler. Det nesten føydale avhengighetsforholdet til det lokale politiet eller viktige aktører i politiske partier eller interesserorganisasjoner, har dype røtter, og lojalitetsbrudd kan føre til at selve slummen blir revet. De fire undertrykte i stykket som "bebor" den metaforiske slummen i en nedlagt fabrikk, er Arbeideren, Romkvinnen, Den lesbiske og Krigsveteranen. Deres personlige historier er stereotypier som vi har konstruert på grunnlag av offentlig tilgjengelige vitnesbyrd og intervjuer i media som omhandler hendelser i Serbia. Arbeideren, som kutter av fingeren på seg selv og leder mangfoldige sultestreiker, er offer for en privatisering og "mogulisering" som har løpt løpsk, en prosess som igjen tvinger bedrifter konkurs. Det viktige spørsmålet er hvordan få dagens diskriminerte klasser til å stå sammen i kampen mot kapitalismen. Hvilke av rollefigurene er et potensielt revolusjonært subjekt? Partisanene er stemmen fra fortiden som bringer med seg den solidariske arven til kamp mot nyliberalismens fragmentering og pulverisering av det sosiale rom. Et viktig øyeblikk er idet partisanerkoret maner til samhold blant de undertrykte – først og fremst henvender de seg da til arbeideren, han er den som vokter den historiske flammen. Men samholdet i slummen er usikkert, og klassekampen forblir uartikulert og fragmentarisk.

**PRELON:** KAN DERE FORTELLE NOE OM HVOR DEN FORMEN FOR KUNSTPRODUKSJON DERE HAR VALGT FOR PARTISAN SONGSPIEL BEFINNER SEG I FORHOLD TIL FOR EKSEMPEL MER AKTIVISTISKE ORIENTERTE FILMER SOM TAR OPP DET SAMME SPØRSMÅLET? MED ANDRE ORD, HVORDAN SER DERE PÅ FORSKJELLENE MELLOM DERES "LAVTEKNOLOGISKE VIDEOREPORTASJE" OG DEN HØYKULTURELLE KUNSTENS METODER?

**RENA RÄDLE & VLADAN JEREMIĆ:** For det første oppfatter vi kunstnerisk praksis først og fremst som et sett av handlinger, og for det andre, i egenskap av kunstnere som jobber innenfor samtidskunstfeltet, mener vi at kunstnerens opplevelse av den politiske virkeligheten og deres aktive og offentlige stil-lingstaking kan produsere "ekte kunnskap" og gi opphav til en transformativ opplevelse, en opplevelse som forandrer betrakteren. En slik tilnærming synliggjør også de sosiale mekanismene og normene vi opererer under, og gir innsikt i samtidens politiske realiteter. Produksjonsforholdene vil alltid ligge innlemmet i produktet og de reflekteres alltid i det kunstneriske arbeidet vårt.

Den nyeste videoen vår, *Belville*,<sup>1</sup> som du henviser på, oppsto som et resultat av protestene mot myndighetenes håndtering av Belleville-bosetningen, hvor romfamilier ble kastet ut med vold og hjemmene deres i Novi Beograd deretter revet. Videoen er et fortettet resultat av vår deltakelse i protestene og vår medieaktivisme. Den tar for seg alle aktørene i konflikten og avdekker relasjoner og maktmekanismer dem imellom: romfolket selv, borgermesteren, investorer, journalister, internasjonale meglere, politikere, politi, aktivister osv. Det er som om vi var kunstnere og aktivister og hadde direkte kontakt med de involverte partene, gjorde at vi var i stand til å analysere og presentere situasjonen i all dens kompleksitet. Videoen ble først vist i protestantenes bosetting. Den inngår i et pågående kunstnerisk forskningsprosjekt på romfolkets situasjon i Europa. I mellomtiden er en enorm mahala – en bydel – i Beograd, et av stedene hvor prosjektet vårt *Under the Bridge* fant sted i 2004, blitt jevnet med jorda og mer enn tusen mennesker er midlertidig omplassert til containere i utkanten av byen, om de ikke har blitt deportert til det sørlige Serbia. Akkurat nå holder vi på med noen videofortellinger som skal følge skjebnen til disse familiene, og det er de selv som gjør opptakene.

**DMITRIJ VILENSKIJ:** Dette er et helt sentralt poeng. Det å "spre informasjon" er viktig og verdifullt i seg selv, men så bør vi stille neste spørsmål: Hvor er det kunstneraktivistene sprer informasjonen sin og har kunstnerne andre mål enn de "engasjerte" journalistene? Jeg mener at jeg kan kritisere denne situasjonen fra innsiden fordi jeg selv har gjort en del informasjons-spredning – samlet viktig dokumentasjon av diverse lokale aktivistgruppers kamp i Russland, for deretter å gjøre materialet tilgjengelig på internett. Jeg mener det er viktig å få det ut, men samtidig er det noe veldig lite tilfredsstillende over det. Likevel, det aller mest utilfredsstillende er når slikt materiale ikke bare presenteres på nettet (hvor det må være), men også finner veien til kunststeder. Jeg foretrekker absolutt å se denne slags ting framfor høyere former for forbrukerfetisjistisk propaganda og sofistisert underholdning. Men det betyr ikke at vi ikke står overfor et problem – også etisk – det virker alltid temmelig obskønt når "kunstmiljøet", som gir blanke faen i disse kampene, står og betrakter dem på sine "fine sammenkomster". Jeg mener derfor at dette ikke er tidspunktet for å blande i hop kunst og det å spre informasjon. Kunsten har også en forbløffende evne til å informere, men det bør gjøres på en annen måte – la meg bare kort si at kunsten burde stille spørsmål ved kunsten selv og dens historie, den bør stille spørsmål ved mediet (for hvorfor skal vi stole på at det vi blir presentert for er sant?), og den må den vise og stille spørsmål ved talerens posisjon (hvem er det som snakker i filmen? Hva er den politiske tilhørigheten til den privilegerte personen bak kameraet?) – og en rekke andre spørsmål. Jeg mener at hvis man ikke tar for seg disse spørsmålene, er det ikke mulig å

omtale politiske saker fra innsiden av kunstverden, spesielt ikke i en direkte dokumentarisk form. Når vi begynner å stille slike spørsmål, tar vi et skritt bort fra det rent dokumentariske og viser fram filmens konstruksjon, samtidig som filmen avdekker seg selv som noe annet. Det er derfor vi har valgt de "reaksjonære" formatene syngespill og musikal – hvor alt helt åpenlyst er konstruert og fremmedgjort og hvor vi tar det fulle politiske ansvar for alle taler og politiske utrytninger – dette blir av en eller annen grunn en måte å hankses med dokumentarismens begrensninger på, ved å forsøke å bryte ut og komme fram til en faktisk realistisk posisjon i kunsten. Vi har tatt opp alle disse problemene gjennom å gi ny aktualitet til Godards berømte utsagn om at spørsmålet ikke er hvordan lage politisk film, men hvordan lage film politisk, og vi har viet et nummer *Chto Delat* til dette temaet.

**PRELON:** PÅ LIGNENDE VIS SOM DEN TIDLIGERE VIDEOEN DERES, *PERESTROIKA. VICTORY OVER THE COUP*, ER PARTISAN SONGSPIEL BASERT PÅ ESTETISKE REDSKAPER OG METODER UTVIKLET AV BERTOLT BRECHT. FOR DET FØRSTE: HVORFOR BRECHT? OG FOR DET ANDRE: HVA ER DERES SYN PÅ DEN HVORDAN DEN HISTORISKE AVANTGARDENS IDEER OG EFFEKTER BRUKES OG AKTUALISERES I DAG?

**DMITRIJ VILENSKIJ:** Helt fra begynnelsen har vi aldri lagt skjul på at Brecht og Godard har vært de viktigste kildene til inspirasjon og innflytelse for gruppens aktiviteter (og vi tar høyde for de åpenbare forbindelsen mellom de to). Kort tid etter at vi etablerte kollektivet *Chto Delat*, startet vi en diskusjon om temaet, "Hvorfor Brecht?", som vi ga ut på slutten av 2005.<sup>2</sup> *Chto Delat* blir ofte kritisert for å ha en inkonsekvent redaksjonell og utstillingsmessig profil, for å mangle en klar "partilinje". Men det som er viktig for oss i dag er å komme fram til en metode som gjør det mulig for oss å blande ting som er forskjellige – reaksjonær form og radikalt innhold, for eksempel, eller anarkistisk spontanitet og organisatorisk disiplin, hedonisme og askese. Det handler om å komme fram til de riktige proporsjonene. Vi er med andre ord nok en gang henvist til å løse de gamle komposisjonsproblemene uten å glemme at de mest naturtro komposisjonene alltid er bygget på motsetninger som på en og samme tid oppheves og lades inntil det eksplosive. Brecht har lært oss at det ikke er i kunstverket at disse motsetningene bør oppheves eller opp i en høyere enhet, men i det virkelige liv. Akkurat nå er dette å aktualisere Brecht i samtidskunsten i ferd med å bli et nytt referansepunkt, i og med WHWs kuratorstatement for den 11. Istanbul-biennalen, som jeg forresten gjerne skriver under på. Det viktigste vi er enige om når det gjelder Brecht ligger i dette korte sitatet om det episke teater: "Det er stor kunst! Her er ingenting selvinnlysende!". Men samtidig øn-



sker vi ikke å fetisjere innflytelsen hans – for oss handler det ikke om å vise hvor "ekte" eller ortodokse brechtianere vi er. Det handler snarere om å utvikle en viss metode og gjøre den aktuell, og vi benytter oss så avgjort av Brechts fremmedgjøringsprinsipp. Vi deler dessuten en annen av hans oppfatninger: Vi mener at ekte politisk kunst skal være spektakulær og røre ved folk, være morsom og fylt av humor, men uten å være tåpelig underholdning. Det ville ha vært fint om Brecht selv hadde hatt anledning til å oppleve forestillingene våre – av og til kan det være fint å bli utfordret av en stor "Annen". Jeg var tilfeldigvis i Berlin et par dager før vi begynte opptakene, og da jeg gikk forbi graven til Brecht og benyttet jeg selvsagt anledningen til å snakke med ham og fortelle hva vi hadde tenkt å gjøre. Han svarte ikke, men det får gå :). Vi tar faktisk jobben vår seriøst, av og til, når det gjelder avantgardens praksiser, for seriøst – vi mener at avantgarde-begrepet er mer fruktbart enn den nøytrale betegnelsen "politisk kunst", selv om det er vanskelig å bruke dette begrepet dag. Så vår holdning i debatten om avantgarden er inspirert av vår posisjon som aktivister og vi argumenterer for nødvendigheten av "external agency", det å involvere eksterne profesjonelle aktører i prosjektene – med andre ord, folk som kan utføre viktige jobber av uklanderlig og kompromissløs kvalitet. Vi vet at dette er en privilegert posisjon, men vi tror det finnes en mulighet for å omkode denne posisjonen og bruke privilegiene slik at de kommer mange ikke-privilegerte til gode. Det er dette som er de intellektuelle avantgardekunstneres rolle – ikke å gi opp sine privilegier (for det første fordi det er umulig, for det andre, fordi det er meningsløst), men å bruke dem på en måte som er radikalt annerledes.

**RENA RÄDLE & VLADAN JEREMIĆ:** Det mest interessante ved Brechts ideer for oss i dag, er at de tar publikum inn som aktiv part i forestillingen, det er publikum som fullfører teaterstykket gjennom sine handlinger i den virkelige verden. Brecht pleide å bearbeide og omskrive teaterstykkene sine for å tilpasse dem til aktuelle saker eller situasjoner. Han hadde derfor en klar forståelse av teateret som et åpent og interaktivt medium. I dag ville han kanskje ha inkludert elektroniske medier som internett, eller hacking, for den saks skyld, for å få til en politisk agitasjon. Men Brechts erfaringer fra å jobbe med film var traumatiske. Da manus til den apolitiske braksuksessen Tolvskillingsoperaen (en adaptasjon av John Gays Tiggeroperaen fra 1728) ble solgt til filmindustrien, mislyktes han i alle sine forsøk på å gjøre stykket mer politisk radikalt og styrke den antikapitalistiske tendensen som lå der. Partisan Songspiel har en klassisk struktur hentet fra den greske tragedien, med protagonister samt et kor som i sine resitasjoner kommenterer og vurderer det som skjer. Som i Brechts dialektiske teaterstykker, mangler stykket en forløsende katarsis, og dette kan føre til at publikum sitter igjen med en følelse av ubehag. En tragedie uten forløsning – det er jo faktisk et mareritt, en skrekkehistorie uten noen klar

utgang. Til syvende og sist må vi jo spørre oss om det faktisk er mulig å få til noen progressiv holdningsendring hos publikum med denne formen for tragisk surrealisme. Men om ikke annet, gir videoen en perfekt beskrivelse av tilstanden i dagens serbiske samfunn.

**PRELØM:** PARTISAN SONGSPIEL ER BASERT PÅ KOLLEKTIVT ARBEID, FØRST OG FRENST FRA DE TO GRUPPENE CHTO DELAT OG BIRD BEOGRAD, MEN FRA OGSÅ MANGE ANDRE BIDRAGSYTERE. HVA BETYR KOLLEKTIVT KUNSTNERSKAP FOR DERE? HVORDAN VIL DERE BESKRIVE DET NÅR DET GJELDER PRODUKSJON, SAMARBEID OG INNHOLD?

**DMITRIJ VILENSKIJ:** For meg innebærer et kollektivt arbeid at noe produseres av en gruppe som har en klar forståelse av at de er avhengige av hverandre – at ingen av dem ville kunne gjøre det samme alene, heller ikke om man benyttet profesjonelle, betalte bidragsytere. Slik at hele arbeidet er basert på en intens prosess av diskusjon og forhandling. På den annen side er vi fullt klar over at det klassiske filmmediet vi har benyttet for Partisan Songspiel er svært hierarkisk og undertrykkende, og vi var nødt til å basere oss på en blanding av kollektiv beslutningstaking på den ene siden, og å stole på individuelle, profesjonelle ferdigheter på den andre. Så jeg ville vel svare at vi i politisk forstand forsøker å bygge en ny form for kollektivitet ved å kombinere kollektiv identitet med det å gi rom for alle de spesifikke individene som er involvert. Derfor var det viktig for oss å få fram at dette var en Chto Delat-film og navngi alle de medvirkende som jobbet der som midlertidige "kunstsovjeter". Og jeg insisterte på at det må skilles mellom kollektiv navngiving og merkevarebygging, selv om jeg selvsagt er fullt klar over de farene som enhver gruppe står overfor når den opererer på kulturindustriens profesjonelle betingelser. Jeg vil hevde at den egentlige verdien i det kollektive ligger i den politiske posisjoneringen og i det å skape sin egen lett gjenkjennelige politiske kontekst. Her kommer vi til det avgjørende skillet mellom firmaprofil eller individualitet og det kollektive. Det kollektive handler om å etterstrebe likeverd, solidaritet, selvhjelp, søsterskap og en arbeidskraft som ikke er fremmedgjort.

**RENA RÄDLE & VLADAN JEREMIĆ:** Chto Delat hadde utviklet en metodologi for sine tidligere filmprosjekter, og tilbød oss å bruke den som et kooperativt redskap. Det innebar at vi sto overfor en spesifikk, allerede bestemt metodologi som definerte hvordan en Chto Delat-film skulle se ut, og vi jobbet innenfor rammene av visse kategorier og roller som er karakteristiske for denne formen for filmproduksjon. Vi har ikke glemt alle de hjelpsomme stemmene fra Beograd og Russland som kom med mange gode ideer både før og i løpet av

produksjonsprosessen, men det er samtidig på sin plass å trekke fram noen coller og funksjoner i arbeidsprosessen: Partisan Songspiel er regissert av Olga Egorova (Tsaplya), manus og scenografi er ved Vladan Jeremić, Rena Rädle, Dmitrij Vilenskij i samarbeid med Tsaplya, de tre første var også regiassistenter; musikken er ved Mikhail Krutik, kostymene ved Natalia Pershina (Gluklya), koreografien ved Nina Gasteva og Tsaplya, og klipp og postproduksjon ved Tsaplya og Dmitrij Vilenskij. Filmen ble produsert i Beograd av Biro Beograd za kulturu i komunikaciju (Biro for kultur og kommunikasjon) i juli 2009.

**PRELON: HVA VAR DET SOM FIKK DERE TIL Å TA FOR DERE ET SPESIFIKT POST-JUGOSLAVISK POLITISK FELT?**

**DMITRIJ VILENSKIJ:** Dagens situasjon i Beograd er svært gjenkjennelig fordi den har så mange paralleller til vår egen hverdag og forholdene i Russland. Og for oss (det vil si, for Tsaplya og meg) var det helt naturlig å gripe til de heroiske røttene til de jugoslaviske partisanene. Da vi gikk på skolen, ble tiden fylt med all slags propaganda og vi kjenner denne retorikken så godt, vi drømte alle om heroiske dæder i møtet med hvitegardistene eller mot fascistiske krefter. Så for oss er selvfølgelig partisanene selve legemliggjørelsen av en sann heroisme, og skal jeg være ærlig, så savner vi denne arkaiske formen for selvoppofrende kamp i dag. Vi tror fortsatt på idealer om selvstyring, sosialistisk kultur og så videre. Vi er sikre på at det er viktig å ta for seg de store kommunistiske fortellingene, men ikke på Soc-kunstens spøkefulle, dekonstruktivistiske vis. Vi ville heller ta disse fortellingene på alvor for hva de var og fortsatt er for alle de menneskene som ser for seg en annen framtid enn den kapitalistiske. Vi er ikke stalinister, og heller ikke titoister, men det forhindrer oss ikke fra å tro at de sosialistiske landene, på tross av sin fiasko, kan vise til noen forbløffende utfordrende erfaringer som fortsatt kan inspirere oss i dag. Derfor er Jugoslavia et viktig sted for oss. Det er også viktig å nevne at alle arbeidene våre forholder seg til en situasjon preget av overgang og ustabilitet, det er tilfellet her akkurat som det er det i Russland. Jeg bør også tilstå at vi opprinnelig ikke hadde planlagt at partisanene skulle spille en så sentral rolle i sangspillet – vi hadde egentlig tenkt at "identitetsgruppene" skulle innta en viktigere rolle og bli dem publikum identifiserte seg med. Men så ble det sånn at partisanene fikk en mye sterkere stemme. Noen reagerte på det, og tolket deres tilstedeværelse som en "tomt politisk tilbud" fra en forlenget fortidig horisont. Jeg mener det er en feiltolkning, fordi Partisan Songspiel ikke vekker noe begjær etter å gjenta gammel politikk, men leter etter et nytt begjær og en politikk som må ta innover seg budskapene fra tidligere strider og tilpasse

dem til dagens nye klassestrukturer. Men vi kommer ikke videre uten at vi tydelig erklærer vår troskap til den gamle kampen. Vi håper at det er åpenbart i arbeidet vårt.

**RENA RÄDLE & VLADAN JEREMIĆ:** Det tidligere Jugoslavia og den tidligere Sovjetunionen har en felles kommunistisk/sosialistisk arv og har hatt den samme opplevelsen av en sosialistisk/kommunistisk stat som går i oppløsning og blir til nasjonalstater. I Partisan Songspiel formidles denne arven gjennom partisanerkoret som fungerer som et "syngende monument" som drøfter det som skjer og som gir sin støtte til de undertrykte. Partisanene fungerer som en kollektiv påminnelse og som vårt alter-ego, og de viser det dype historiske perspektivet hvor vi kan finne nøkkelen til å forstå dagens utilfredsstillende situasjon. Det som er viktig, er at partisanermonumentets retorikk tilhører årene før 1948. Partisanene representerer de som kjempet og falt i den jugoslaviske motstandskampen. Scenografien for partisanermonumentet er en collage av to eksisterende monumenter, ett fra Serbia og ett annet fra Kroatia, laget av skulptørene Sreten Stojanović og Franjo Kršinić og reist som monumenter over falne partisaner i henholdsvis 1951 og 1954.

Intervjuet ble gjort av Jelena Vesi (Prelom kolektiv) i oktober 2009

1 Videoen kan ses på: [www.archive.org/details/BELLEVILLE](http://www.archive.org/details/BELLEVILLE).

2 Alle Chto Delats aviser, også den om Brecht og Godard, ligger ute på [www.chtodelat.org](http://www.chtodelat.org).



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OVDE BIH  
JA STAVILA  
NEKI POTPIS  
KOMENTAR.....

REALITY CHECK

## HI THERE,

I'll get right to it. On this fine day, I am Lisa Torell, and you are my customers, my prospective buyers. Soon I will, in the capacity of artist, innovator, self-employed entrepreneur and sales executive, begin my pitch. You see, even artists must, from time to time, consider the market and target audience in order to ascertain interest, employment and a secure future. Madeleine Park's venture **REALITY CHECK - NÅR KUNSTEN UTREDER VIRKELIGHETEN** was an opportunity to good to be missed.

First and foremost, let me explain myself. At this stage of my participation, I am primarily concerned with the buyers, that is, those of you who have received a special invitation to this event; you who enable the rest of us; producers, citizens and consumers to enjoy art in public places such as hospitals, libraries, parks and public galleries, etc.

You are chosen as you constitute a special group in the city. Your regular duties include decision-making concerning the unexpected in the city of Trondheim; public art, embellishment and sculpture. It is you who buy innovation and new ideas; the unknown, the other, the new and not yet valued, that which turns the regular townscape into the urbane, seeing the advantages of the other and the unknown, that is, a place where difference and similarity not only exist but also develop side by side.

This is a task which ought to be considered more of an enquiry and an experiment, and at its extreme, a challenge. This is something which the city of Trondheim evidently takes seriously, this city which is one sixth "development and new thoughts", these wonderful words just as shaped by politics, town planning and universities as re-shaped by lecturers and students. They are a good foundation upon which to build a city. The words themselves form concepts. And there they are; used, mentioned, marketed, pitched on homepages and at conferences.

TRONDELAG FOCUS ON INNOVATION AND CREATIVITY, ON ART AND CULTURE AS A BASIS FOR DEVELOPMENT AND VALUE ADDED GROWTH AND WILL FURTHER THE PUBLIC SUPPORT NETWORKS, CURRENT INNOVATION AND WORKING PRACTICES SO THAT THEY BECOME RELEVANT, UNDERSTOOD AND USER FRIENDLY FOR AND BY THE CULTURE INDUSTRY AS WELL AS DEVELOP INITIATIVES AND WORKING PRACTICES WHICH PROMOTE TOLERANCE AND REGENERATION.

Words and meanings; rhetoric. Presentation, form, profiling and delivery. This is just as important in your work as in mine, just as it is in society in general.

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But what does it really mean to link words to meaning, to emphasise sentences as headlines, to sell a city through representation and word combinations? Or rather, what is really required to succeed with a venture like this?

Research, economy, strategic awareness and courage. To have the courage to turn words to action. It might seem obvious, but I've seen it before; it is as common here as in other parts of Europe, the phenomenon when the words do such a great job of selling that the content itself has to take a backseat. That is the way it is, but with your help, perhaps we can change this state of affairs together.

I'll give you a hand . Well, not exactly give, I have my price, just like everything else. Culture does not come free of charge; it has to, just like research, have financial backing. I have developed a concept and a place-specific product especially for this occasion. It is clearly in line with my previous work, you needn't worry about betting on the wrong horse; I have several successful and endorsed projects on my CV. Now, my product is far-reaching and consists of three separate parts: this performance, remaining materials as well as a site-specific piece of work at Nedre Ila, very tactile and physical. All developed to discuss place in situ, the future and civic planning.

This is what is being sold. This, which really is a thought. Because this is the way it is with artists, we don't really sell products as such, we sell thoughts. We have the ability to transform thought into form. Perhaps it sounds a bit far out but it is a fact. The basis for this assertion is that thought itself is detached form and that the future is not found in any product, but in thought. It is easy to confuse this and believe that the future lies in the product but I repeat, the future lies in thought, whether it is transformed into a physical product or appears as an idea. Regardless of your viewpoint, the title is **"THE UNEXPECTED"**.

The purpose of "The Unexpected" is to develop the perception of public spaces, or thoughts on art in public spaces and the form of development and innovation. To get hung up on a specific form for development and innovation is to risk imposing a shape on both development and innovation, generally and individually.

I optimistically presume that this will become a win-win situation for all parties involved, as opposed to a win-use situation which otherwise appears to be the most common form of transaction in the art world. (All arrows point in this direction, in spite of the council's last minute decision to make a contribu-

tion to TSSK. It can hardly be considered as being in the same league as the venture included in \*STRATEGIPLAN FOR KULTURNAERINGER, TRØNDELAG 2009-2016 . But it's a step in the right direction.)

Well, you have probably guessed it already, and you are correct; you will now be subjected to a little test. Fear not, I am not the kind of artist who enjoys making people feel uncomfortable. I have developed three proposals: Sale of Contract 1, Sale of Contract 2 and a leasing contract. You can have a quick look at them now. I don't believe there are any unclarities, but if against all odds there are, we can go through it together later. Contract 1 specifies that you buy the whole piece, i.e. the performance, the materials and the site-specific piece out at Nedre Ila. Contract 2 means that you only purchase the piece at Nedre Ila and the leasing contract enables you to hire the piece at Nedre Ila for the duration of the exhibition period at cost price.

Before we sign anything, I will naturally accompany you to Nedre Ila to view the product in question. I'll pay for the taxi but we'll share. Just one thing remains to be said. The consequences of your potential courage, your taste or your actions will become evident for the citizens of Trondheim.

Depending on your decisions, this piece will be available for all eternity, for the duration of the exhibition period or remain totally censored. Cause and Consequence. You may have some time for consideration, but the piece will not be made available to the public until you have committed.

Does it seem threatening? The threat is not this simple piece, no, the real threat lies in a society which shies away from investment in the unknown, the other and the yet to be valued.

Thank you for listening, now let's make our way out to the waiting taxi. A special thanks to my assistants who whole-heartedly embraced the unexpected; they are not only a part of the future of art, but have names of their own; they are Matilda Höög and Per Inge Iversen.

# HEJ,

Jag tänkte börja rakt på, dagen till ära är jag Lisa Torell och ni är mina kunder, mina eventuella köpare. Snart kommer jag som konstnär, innovatör, egenföretagare, entreprenör och försäljare börja prata om min produkt. Även konstnärer måste då och då, förstår ni, titta på målgrupp och marknad för att kunna säkra sitt intresse, arbete och framtid och Madeleine Parks satsning REALITY CHECK- NÄR KUNSTEN UTREDER VIRKELIGHETEN innebar helt enkelt ett tillfälle som inte kunde förbises.

Först och främst måste jag förklara mig, i den här delen av min medverkan vänder jag mig framför allt till inköparna, det vill säga till er som är specialinbjudna för detta event: Ni som gör det möjligt för oss andra, producenter, invånare och konsumenter att ta del av konst i stadens offentliga rum, såsom sjukhus, bibliotek, parker, konsthallar mm.

Ni är utvalda för att ni utgör en speciell grupp i staden. Till era normala arbetsuppgifter tillhör nämligen att bestämma över det oväntade i staden Trondheim. Offentlig konst, utsmyckning och skulptur. Ni är inköpare av utveckling och ny tanke; av det okända, det andra, det nya och ännu ej värderade. Det som får stadsmässighet att bli urbanitet. Det att se fördelarna i det okända, alltså en plats där olikhet och likhet inte bara finns utan också utvecklas sida vid sida.

Det är en arbetsuppgift om borde betraktas mer som en undersökning och ett experiment. I dess yttersta bemärkelse, en utmaning. Något som en stad som Trondheim har tagit fasta på. Denna stad som till en sjättedel består just av detta, "utveckling och ny tanke" dessa underbara ord lika utformade inom politik, stadsplanering och universitet som omformade av lärare och student. Det är en bra grund att bygga upp en stad kring. Bara orden är ett koncept i sig självt. Och de finns också där, nämnda, omnämnda, marknadsförda, insålda på hemsida och konferens.

"TRONDELAG HAR FOKUS PÅ INNOVASJON OG KREATIVITET, OG PÅ KUNST OG KULTUR, SOM GRUNNLAG FOR UTVIKLING OG VERDISKAPNING"/"OG SKA/ "VIDERUTVIKLE DET OFFENTLIGE STØTTEAPPARATET, AKTUELLE INNOVASJONSMILJØ OG VIRKEMIDLER SLIK AT DE BLIR RELEVANTE, FORSTÅTT OG FUNKSJONELLA FOR KULTURNAERINGENE."/OG/ "UTVIKLE TILTAK OG ARBETSFORMER SOM FREMMER TOLERANSE OG NYSKAPING"

Ord och meningar, retorik. Upplägg, form, synliggörande och framförande. Detta är, lika viktigt i ert arbete som i mitt, liksom i samhället generellt. Men

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REALITY CHECK



ART & ACTIVISM READER

OVDE BIH  
JA STAVILA  
NEKI POPIS  
KOMENTAR...

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vad betyder det egentligen att länka ord till innehåll, att lyfta fram meningar som rubriker, att sälja stad genom representation och ordkombination? Eller snarare vad krävs egentligen för att kunna genomföra en sådan här satsning?

Research, ekonomi, långsiktighet och mod. Våga leda det sagda till handling och aktion. Självklarheter kan tyckas, men jag sett det förr, det är lika förekommande här som i resterande delen av Europa, det där att orden säljer så bra att innehållet självt har fått ställa sig åt sidan. Det är faktiskt så, men med er hjälp så kanske vi tillsammans kan ändra lite på det här.

Jag tänkte ge er ett handtag. Ge och ge förresten, jag kostar liksom annat. Kultur är inte gratis, det måste liksom fri forskning samhälligt finansieras på olika sätt. Jag har utformat ett koncept och en platsspecifik produkt speciellt för detta tillfälle. Den går förstås i linje med mina tidigare arbeten, ni behöver inte vara oroliga för en eventuell felsatsning, jag har flera välrenommerade och diskuterande instanser på min cv. Nåväl, produkten är omfattande och består av tre separata delar: Detta performance, resterande material samt ett platsspecifikt verk på Nedre Ila, mycket fysiskt i sin form. Allt utvecklat för att diskutera plats på plats, framtid och allmän stadsplanering.

Det är detta som ska säljas. Det som egentligen är en tanke. För det är så med konstnärer, att vi inte egentligen säljer produkter, vi säljer tankar. Vi äger möjligheten att sätta form på tanken. Det kanske låter lite flummigt, men det är sann fakta. Grunden till denna sanning är att tanke är frånkopplad form och att framtiden inte ligger i produkten, framtiden ligger i tanken. Man kan lätt förväxla och tro att framtiden ligger i produkten, men jag repeterar: framtiden ligger i tanken, vare sig den är omformad som produkt eller uppenbarar sig som ren tanke. Oavsett ert förhållningssätt är titeln "Det oväntade".

Målet med "Det oväntade" är dels att utveckla synen på offentlig plats, synen på konst i offentlig miljö och *formen* för utveckling och ny tanke. Att haka fast vid en form för utveckling och ny tanke riskerar nämligen att forma både utveckling och ny tanke både övergripande och på individnivå.

Sedan utgår jag optimistiskt att det här ska bli en WinWin-situation för alla inblandade, istället för en WinUse-situation vilken annars är den vanligaste formen inom konstvärlden. (Visserligen pekar all pilar i den riktningen just nu trots att kommunen in i det sista gick in med ett litet bidrag till TSSK. Dock kan det inte betraktas tillhöra den stora satsning som t.ex. ingår i \*STRATEGIPLAN FÖR KULTURNAERINGEN, TRØNDELAG 2009-2016. Men det är ett steg i rätt riktning.)

Ja, ni har säkert förstått och det är rätt, ni kommer härmed få genomgå ett litet test. Men oroa er inte, jag ska inte utsätta er för något obehagligt, jag är inte den sortens konstnär som vill försätta människor i svårmod. Jag har tagit fram tre förslag: köpeavtal 1, köpeavtal 2 och ett leasingavtal. Ni kan titta på dem snabbt. Det ska inte vara några frågetecken men om det mot alla odds skulle vara det kan vi gå igenom det tillsammans sedan. Köpeavtal 1 innebär att ni köper hela verket, dvs. Performance, material och det platsspecifika verket ute på Nedre Ila. Köpeavtal 2 innebär att ni bara köper verket ute på NL och leasingavtalet innebär att ni hyr verket ute på NL under utställningsperioden till självkostnadspris.

Innan några kontrakt skrivs, så ska jag naturligtvis följa med er till NL och titta på produkten ifråga. Taxi betalar jag, men vi delar. En sak återstår att berätta. Konsekvensen av ert eventuella mod, er smak eller ert handlande kommer att bli tydligt för invånarna i Trondheim.

Beroende på ert val kommer verket att vara tillgängligt under all framtid, under utställningsperioden eller förbli totalt censurerat. Handling och konsekvens. Betänketid kan fås, men verket kommer inte för publik bli synligt innan er satsning gjorts.

Verkar det hotfullt? Hotet är inte detta lilla verk, nej, det verkliga hotet innebär ett samhälle som räds satsningar för det okända, det andra och det ännu ej värderade.

Tack för att ni har lyssnat, nu tar vi oss ut till taxin.

Ett speciellt tack till mina assistenter som helhjärtat gick rakt in i det oväntade, de är inte bara del av konstens framtid utan har också namn, de heter Matilda Höög och Per Inge Iversen.

LIFE HAS NO

ALTERNATIVE:

CONNECTING ART AND

ACTIVISM /ANA VILENICA/

The connection between art and activism<sup>1</sup> is being achieved in a contemporary context in a field of ambivalent borders between art, culture, politics and economy. The history of art and activism converging together is a history of the changing relations between art and politics. This history is shaped by transformations of artistic action from art in its autonomy, and rebellion against it, to the contemporary process of a general culturalization of art.<sup>2</sup> The dynamics

<sup>1</sup> Misko Suvakovic, *HEF - KRITICKE FORME SAVREMENOSTI I ZUDNJA ZA DEMOKRATIZIJOM*, Novi Sad, 2007, p. 21

<sup>2</sup> CONTEMPORARY ART HAS BEEN MARKED BY A PROCESS OF GENERAL CULTURALIZATION THAT BROUGHT ABOUT THE DELETION OF BORDERS BETWEEN ART AND CULTURE OR ANY OTHER SOCIAL PRODUCT. ART DEALS WITH RESHAPING AND REPOSITIONING THE TRACES OF CULTURE, BUILDING IN THIS WAY NEW MEANING AND NEW RELATIONS.

and relations of this process can be determined by establishing the difference between the modernistic tradition of engaged art that belongs to the Sartrean tradition of individualism,<sup>3</sup> and the art activism developed in the mid XX century as an interactive activity in a culture and society, the goal of which is increasingly more political engagement than aesthetic performance.<sup>4</sup>

The question of defining art activism is not a question of form but a question of function. This practice cannot be determined stylistically or within the framework of a certain artistic-media field. Activist art includes the use of different practices like lectures, publishing, media broadcasting, film production or organization, social action, social theory and art tradition.<sup>5</sup> Art activism can exist as part of the mainstream but also in contexts that situate it outside of the accepted borders of this field or community.

The function of art activism as a cultural practice is intentional political activity in the field of ideologies, institutions and their discourses. This hybrid artistic practice emerges from dissatisfaction with certain social, economic or cultural situations and manifests itself as a demand for the allocation of social capital, equal rights in relation to real or supposed social groups within the broader scope of the contemporary anti-capitalism, anti-consumerism or alter-globalization movement. Subjects that take part in the production of art activism act from inside of art or use strategies generated in art in order to articulate their "oppositional" relationship towards the hierarchical social-political, cultural and economic system. Art activism combines the artistic and the political, creating in this way a hybrid field of undifferentiated borders between art and society, aesthetics and politics.

Activist art has a tendency towards developing direct communication with the audience through participation instead of communicating through an aesthetic object. In order to achieve interaction with the audience, different tactics are used: from the Internet to providing conditions for debate and discussion to participative street actions. But as well some of activist actions function as symbolical interventions in public space. They aim at producing specific situations in public space; as a provocation, as a protest, as a subversion or as an information or propaganda. And yet these strategies themselves do not make activist art subversive. The time of belief in the dematerialisation of art has

<sup>3</sup> JEAN-PAUL SARTRE, *WHAT IS LITERATURE? AND OTHER ESSEYS*, HARVARD UNIVERSITY PRESS, CAMBRIDGE-MASSACHUSETTS, 2006

<sup>4</sup> ART ACTIVISM AS A SPECIFIC PRACTICE HAS BEEN RECOGNIZED IN THE HISTORY OF ART FROM THE SIXTIES. MORE ABOUT THIS IN: LUCY R. LIPPARD, *TROJAN HORSE: ACTIVIST ART AND POWER*, IN: BRIAN WALLIS (ED.), *ART AFTER MODERNISM: RETHINKING REPRESENTATION*, THE MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY ART, NEW YORK, 1986, PP. 341-358

<sup>5</sup> JENNIFER GONZALES AND ADRIENNE POSNER, *FACTURE FOR CHANGE: US ACTIVIST ART SINCE 1950*, IN: AMELIA JONES (ED.), *A COMPANION TO CONTEMPORARY ART SINCE 1945*, BLACKWELL, OXFORD UK, 2007, P. 342

passed with the sixties and Situationist posters becoming as well a commodity. In a contemporary post-fordistic context, in which cultural work has become a paradigmatic form of production,<sup>6</sup> art activism appears as a form of immaterial symbolic-analytical and affective labour that through interaction produces new meanings, social networks, communities and biopower.<sup>7</sup> These forms are now paradigmatic forms of cultural reproduction.

Similarly, close to relational and communication models, but in a specific context of alter-globalist movement and subversions as ones produced by Yes Men, social analyst Brian Holmes defined the practices of art activism as “affectivism”.<sup>8</sup> Affectivism is a practice that determines and establishes new ways of communication and forms of relationships, thus providing new chances for co-existence. The product of this affective art is affective space, different from the private self, but also from the social order that manufactures this self. This is a space of confrontation with real problems like war, poverty, class and racial oppression, fascism and neoliberalism. Affectivism appears in certain social contexts, and it is being defined, developed and supported by specific cultural codes: discourses, practices, styles and technologies.

On the other hand, specific practices of art activism are perceived by Slovenian theoretician Aldo Milohnic as gestual performatives, or specific symbolic interventions in within the material effects of macro and micro cultures in a specific historical moment.<sup>9</sup> “Artivism”,<sup>10</sup> as he names this practices, is a hybrid term defining the conjunction between art and activism as a form of social choreography in public space, equally implying practices that are more difficult and problematic to determine as artistic: these are cultural activisms, and practices that are explicitly connected to the art world.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>6</sup> Primacy in post-fordistic production has been taken over by the tertiary or service sector, so the intellectual, in other words cultural, and therefore also artistic work has occupied the central position. In this context art cannot any longer be viewed as an autonomous field outside of dominant production relationships.

<sup>7</sup> Michael Hardt i Antonio Negri, *Imperij*, Arkzin, Zagreb, 2003, p. 245

<sup>8</sup> Brian Holmes, *The Affectivist Manifesto*, available online: <http://brianholmes.wordpress.com/2008/11/16/the-affectivis-manifesto/> (April 5<sup>th</sup> 2010; 06:09 PM)

<sup>9</sup> In the age of post-fordism work becomes close to execution practices. According to theoretician Paolo Virno it has become close to the performance of a virtuoso artist. According to this, we could say that contemporary work has become performative or executive in its nature. Execution, according to theoretician Jon McKenzie, has become not only a part of the new nature of work, but also a new onto-historical formation of power and knowledge. (more about this in: Jon McKenzie, *Izvedili snosi posledice - od discipline do izvedbe*, Zagreb, 2006, and: Paolo Virno, *Gramatika mnoštvo*, Naklada Jasenski i Turk, Zagreb, 2006)

<sup>10</sup> Milohnic takes this term from practice.

<sup>11</sup> Ido Milohni, *Artivism*, available online: [http://republicart.net/disc/realpublicspaces/milohnic01\\_en.htm](http://republicart.net/disc/realpublicspaces/milohnic01_en.htm). (April 7<sup>th</sup> 2010; 01:20 AM)

The interesting thing to note as well is Milohnic's model of activist as an amateur. He states that activists are not professional politicians. They approach the political as amateurs.<sup>12</sup> His use of the term is not pejorative, but affirmative. He starting point is Brecht's hypothesis that a dilettante has a certain creative potential, and deduces a thesis that the artist activist is not an artist, but that he is not without creative potential; THE ACTIVIST IS AN ARTIST TO THE NECESSARY DEGREE, NOT MORE AND NOT LESS, AND THE ARTISTIC IS AN ACCOMPANYING EFFECT TO A POLITICAL ACTION. The role of these amateur politicians is to ask questions that are not being asked in other places, that are being ignored or taken for granted: “(...)the “amateur” politician (political activist) still wants to ask naïve questions, those that can never be heard in the parliament, the home of professional politicians.”<sup>13</sup>

The connection between art and activism varies from case to case. We have art activism that comes from the field of professional activism that uses artistic means in agitating the public for certain problems, art activism that comes from the field of art and is executed by professional artists, and the art activism being realized by the ones that act outside these fields through temporary or permanent unions with the goal of producing a dissonance in the field of social relations. According to Aldo Milohnic, the connection between activist art and the art world is purely pragmatic in its nature. The artistic in art activism is not a consequence of a certain specificity of the intervention itself, but the connection with art has been established out of practical reasons. Art activism whose goal is direct political action uses the relative autonomy of the artistic space in order to secure for itself protection against legal restrictions. However, this thesis does not apply in all cases of action. A large number of activists that act as activists dismiss the connection with the relative autonomy of the art world, deeming that this position is inefficient and that it reduces political efficacy. The difference that can be noted between these positions is based also on their conditions of production. In this sense, it is possible to talk about an art activism that comes primarily from the field of social activism, that implies mobilizing artistic strategies and tactics as a means of political and social struggle within the production conditions of the industry of activism or outside the framework of this field, and an art activism that comes from the field of art but has a tendency to dissolve into social activism and is a part of the production relations in the art world.

<sup>12</sup> The situationists also celebrated amateurism. They believed that deprofessionalization is a powerful weapon in the struggle against capitalist production.

<sup>13</sup> Ido Milohni, *Artivism*, available online: [http://republicart.net/disc/realpublicspaces/milohnic01\\_en.htm](http://republicart.net/disc/realpublicspaces/milohnic01_en.htm). (April 7<sup>th</sup> 2010; 01:20 AM)



# Art and Activism in the Serbian “Transitional” Society: Belgrade

2009-10

The practices of art activism in Serbian society become more present and visible during the nineties after the breakup of Yugoslavia. The nineties were marked by a wave of general politicalization and political and activist mobilization of artistic practices, institutions and media. All forces were directed at criticism of the social paradigm that was manufactured by the regime of Slobodan Milosevic.<sup>14</sup> In the period after October 5<sup>th</sup> 2000,<sup>15</sup> activist art practice focuses on the specific problems of Serbian society in the age of “transition”. This paradoxical society is based on the reestablishing of national and local folklore narratives through the model of a “national” state and the establishing of a neoliberal state through the introduction of capitalist oriented production. In other words, after October 5<sup>th</sup> and the so-called democratic changes, the system of values has not changed. It has remained in the national ideological matrix, authoritarian, xenophobic and autistic, which can be seen clearly in the upheavals caused by the separation of Montenegro and declaration of Kosovo independence. This period is as well marked by introduction of Orthodox Christian religious teaching into schools, taking a radical turn towards the clericalization of the society. This meant retraditionalization and the reintroduction of patriarchal values. On the other hand, the so-called process of economic “transition” through the processes of privatization of former

<sup>14</sup> After the changes, begins progressive depoliticalization, liberalization and normalization of the art world and the media, by which the artistic practice does not become less political, but radically less present in the institutions of art and media space.

<sup>15</sup> On October 5<sup>th</sup>, Slobodan Milosevic was forced to accept the elections defeat.



social ownership, has led to a radical deindustrialization of Serbian society, the decline of living standards and the appearance of new discriminations owing to political corruption, the criminalization of these processes and the emergence of monopolists/tycoons.

Here are several examples of actions, belonging both to art and wider cultural activists sphere, realized during the years 2009 and 2010 in Belgrade. All of them operating <sup>IN</sup> and <sup>WITH</sup> the context of Serbian transitional society and have a desire to provoke or produce changes, either on the level of official government decision-making, or changing public opinion towards society or culture by means of art. They deal with the issues related to specific repressed or marginalised groups, politics of memory in post war Serbia, specific local community issues and issues concerning management of global capitalism. Some of these actions are closely related to specific left political movements that offer codes for their interpretation.

One of the most persistent and most well known activist groups in Serbia is definitely feminist, anti-militarist, peace activists group Women in Black. Beginning from early nineties Women in Black dealt with the social amnesia related to the wars in Yugoslavia through different forms of political, media, cultural and artistic actions. <sup>NOT TO FORGET THE SREBRENICA GENOCIDE</sup> <sup>16</sup> is the title of a performance given on July 10<sup>th</sup> 2009 in Republic Square on the occasion of commemorating 14 years since the genocide in Srebrenica. <sup>17</sup> With this action witch is conceptualised in a well known manner of mute standings, Women in Black appealed that July 11<sup>th</sup> be adopted and marked as a day of memory of the genocide in Srebrenica. This group has developed during many years a close relationship with the artists both from domains of visual and performing arts. This strategic relation with art is as well present in this specific action witch was conceptualised as an art installation named <sup>DOCUMENTS OF MEMORY 8-3-7-2</sup>. The installation consisted of large vinyl surface spread on the floor; which was decorated with pattern of white roses - one for each victim. This visual work served as a focal point of the performance, at the end of which protagonists replaced this symbolical flower field with real roses. <sup>18</sup> Another Feminist group Women at Work <sup>19</sup> also developed a close relation with art by using theatrical means as an

<sup>16</sup> <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bJKoXyHaPNU&feature=related>

<sup>17</sup> On July 1995 in the place Srebrenica in Bosnia and Herzegovina, 8372 Bosnians were killed by the divisions of army of the Republic of Srpska under the command of General Ratko Mladic.

<sup>18</sup> The execution of this performance was followed by a counter action of the members of clerical-national groups Obraz and Srpski narodni pokret 1389 who loudly assaulted the participants in the performance. The members of these groups wore pictures of the Hague defendants Radovan Karadzic and Ratko Mladic, as well as the picture of Vladimir Putin. The two groups were separated by a police cordon.

<sup>19</sup> <http://zenergija.org/content/about-us>

instrument in the campaigns directed to criticism of the patriarchal values of Serbian society. Their performances engage professional actresses and directors, as well as the activists themselves. In 2009 as a part of the campaign <sup>16 DAYS OF ACTIVISM AGAINST GENDER VIOLENCE</sup> they performed street agitational theatre performance <sup>IF WE RISE DEAD...</sup> concerned with violence over women, which was staged in a number of cities in Serbia.

During the last two years, as well, there were a number of singular events targeting specific acute issues in society. One of them was street action <sup>HOW MUCH IS KNOWLEDGE?</sup> <sup>20</sup>, performed by a group of students from the University of Belgrade and the University of Arts, that focused the effects of cognitive capitalism, materialized in the Bologna declaration. The performance was staged in Knez Mihailova street on June 19<sup>th</sup> 2009, on the day that marks ten years from the adoption of this document. The students sat around a canvas with the inscription <sup>HOW MUCH IS KNOWLEDGE?</sup>, and spent their time reading, preparing for exams and talking with passers-by who they asked to participate in the work through an auction. The passers-by were invited to estimate the value of knowledge and to write down the sums on paper imprinted with a bar code. The emergence of racial and class discrimination by the state, and the placing of the interests of local tycoons over human rights culminated in Belgrade during the spring and summer of 2009. The city authorities reached a decision to tear down forty houses in the Roma settlement beside the new housing complex Belevill, in order to build new objects and a section of road, in the framework of preparations for the sports competition Universiade. This action was carried out under police supervision while the inhabitants of the settlement were still in their houses. Artists Vladan Jeremic and Rena Raedle reacted against this brutal action, as a sign of solidarity with racially and class discriminated citizens of Belgrade. These artists took part in and video-documented protest actions. From this material they developed a film that exposed these events to the public and through which the artists agitated for a solution to this problem. On May 27<sup>th</sup> 2009, together with the organizations Biro Belgrade, Women in Black, Democratic Association of Roma, Roma Association "Oaza" and Kontekst Gallery, they organized an artistic activist meeting of solidarity <sup>RIGHT TO A HOME!</sup> in a settlement in the Novi Beograd block 67, with the goal of organizing a platform of solidarity in the defense of the human rights of the endangered citizens. <sup>21</sup> This problem entered a new dimension when on the eve of the Universiade, the same Roma settlement was enclosed in wire and hidden behind banners bearing the logo of the event, preventing the inhabitants from organizing basic

<sup>20</sup> <http://www.youtube.com/profile?user=studentizastudente#p/u/8/wo2agXgtmts>

<sup>21</sup> <http://birobeograd.info/2009.html>

life and work activities. The Belgrade Other Scene,<sup>22</sup> together with other individuals, students and cultural workers reacted against the creation of modern concentration camps and the ghettoization of the most impoverished citizens of Belgrade. During the Universiade, the action JOINT NEIGHBORHOOD IN A STRUGGLE AGAINST RACISM was realized, in the framework of which get-togethers were organized with the inhabitants of the settlement as a sign of solidarity, as well as a press conference,<sup>23</sup> where the inhabitants of the settlement and activists and friends of the Other Scene agitated for urgent removal of the fence, public apologies, compensation for damages to the inhabitants of the settlement and an urgent solution to their housing problem. A part of this coordinated action was, as well, tactical media intervention that targeted the Belgrade Universiade web site. The Other Scene produced new mirror version through which art activist spread information of the brutal treatment of Belgrade citizens.<sup>24</sup> The cancellation of the Pride Parade, which was to take place in Belgrade on September 20<sup>th</sup> 2009, as a result of constant provocations from clerical-nationalist and pro-fascist groups and the inability of police to guarantee the safety of the participants, inspired two activist actions performed by the group Antifascists in Action. In the first action, the names of a number of Belgrade streets were symbolically changed – by pasting posters. The Square of Nikola Pasic was renamed the Square of General Strike, Terazije into Boulevard of Antifascism, Kolarceva street into Refugee street, the Square of the Republic into the Square of Female Liberation, Vasina into Queer street, Students' square into Roma square, Academic plateau into Plateau of Solidarity. This action, among other things, announced protests scheduled for November 9<sup>th</sup> – the Day of the Struggle Against Fascism, racism, anti-Semitism and xenophobia.<sup>25</sup> The second action was realized on November 1<sup>st</sup> as a flash-mob that gathered at the Plateau in front of the Faculty of Philosophy, from where the Pride Parade was supposed to start, and continued running through Knez Mihailova street with activists wearing LGBT flags and shouting the slogan *Solidarity against fascism*.<sup>26</sup> These activist actions were realized as an expression of solidarity with the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender community in Serbia, a community constantly exposed to discrimination. The year 2009/10 was likewise marked by the legal process against a group of anarcho-syndicalists, who became known as the Belgrade Six. The Belgrade Six were accused of international terrorism

22 This was the first joint coordinated action of the Other Scene, a platform that associates independent Belgrade artists, cultural workers and activists and their formal and informal organizations. <http://www.drugascena.org>

23 The press conference was marked by unprofessional behavior of the RTS journalist Dragan Mistic who forced his discriminatory attitudes on people and obstructed the conference with his aggressive appearance.

24 <http://www.universiade-belgrade2009.com>

25 <http://antifauakciji.org/?p=138>

26 <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8ldMq4N-afc>

for throwing two “Molotov cocktails” on the sidewalk and building of the Greek embassy in Belgrade in late August 2009, as a sign of solidarity with Greek anarchist Todoris Iliopoulos, arrested during a protest in Greece in 2008, who had gone on hunger strike in prison in Athens.<sup>27</sup> As a part of the campaign against discrimination towards the left and tolerance towards the right, against unjust treatment by the judicature and the obstruction of justice in this process, the Group for monitoring the process against the six anarchists organized a protest on January 3<sup>rd</sup> 2010 in front of the Ministry of Justice and the Central prison in which the anarcho-syndicalists were being held. The participants of this action carried a banner OUR FRIENDS ARE NOT TERRORISTS. STOP VIOLENCE. STOP REPRESSION, and in front of the Central prison a performance was staged during which those gathered held up the letters of the slogan OBSTRUCTING INJUSTICE. This action was also joined by the artist Milica Tomic who dedicated her own “soft-terrorist” performance (photo-action) “One day instead of night, a salvo from a machine-gun will glare when there’s no other way for the light to come...”,<sup>28</sup> to the Belgrade Six,<sup>29</sup> and posing the question of what is terrorism today and whether violence that is not terrorism can be constructive and exists? During this period as well one very local problem orientated community art activist project – Flux, continued to develop. In this phase, it deals with the problems of the local community in the Belgrade suburban settlement Kaludjerica. This settlement emerged as a result of the absence of housing space in the city proper and also as a consequence of economic circumstances that necessitated mainly seasonal workers and migrants finding alternative ways of procuring living space for themselves. Project Flux is directed towards mapping the situation in the community with a special focus on solving the problem of building a sewage network that has emerged as a consequence of unsettled ownership relations. This artistic-activist project works in an open space created by the inertia of the state administration and the absence of social organizations that would deal with this problem. The goal of this artistic-activist action is to politicize the contradictions in the field of town planning and the social reality that is inherent in this Belgrade settlement. A consequence of the activities of the group gathered around this project,<sup>30</sup> is, above all, the creation of space for talking about this

27 By this action one window was damaged and a part of one wall was smeared, while the total material damage was estimated at 18 Euro.

28 The title is a quotation of the poet Oskar Davico. During two-month period she visited the locations in the city where successful antifascist actions by the People’s Liberation Movement were executed during the Second World War, with an automatic rifle in her hands.

29 The artist used media space in the daily newspapers “24 sata” to dedicate her performance to the campaign for liberation of the anarchists, although her work does not refer directly to this problem.

30 One of the group’s activities is also making of a detailed card, in collaboration with the inhabitants, which maps the sewage network and indirectly marks the phases in the history of emergence and development of the settlement, and which is placed in the hall of community office of Kaludjerica. Participants in the making of the card were Nebojsa Kitanovic and Milan Zaric (collecting and input of data), Dragan Jovanovic (artist moderator), Nebojsa Milikic (initiator and project coordinator).



problem publicly, but also raising a number of other questions from the field of past and present housing policies of the state and city, distribution of social wealth, territorial restrictions of urban planning, as well as culturological and economic positioning connected to all these questions.<sup>31</sup>

Towards

Political

## Solidarity

All of the actions and interventions described can be defined as art activism, affectivism or activism. They are situated in the specific and complex cultural, political, social and economic space of the Serbian society in the age of “transition”. They shape specific spaces of potentiality by producing differences in public space through forms of symbolic and affective creativity. Also, they differ from each other. A better understanding of these practices requires a more detailed analysis of all the factors, which include production conditions, relationship towards the art world, positions from which the participants speak, as well as the strategies and tactics that these practices utilize and their effect in media and society at large. But in spite of all the differences, they share an important similarity: they are all based on forms of *collective solidarity*.<sup>32</sup> It is important to emphasize that we are talking about collective solidarity, since it differs from the concept of individualized and passivized solidarity that is dominant in contemporary society. This dominant form of solidarity is based on individual benefit and the conformism of individuals, and is realized through passive empathy that implies different forms of welfare that simulate conscience. This collective solidarity is in fact *political solidarity*.<sup>33</sup> It is directed at bringing about a certain social change through the actions of unified individuals, sometimes of different orientations, different motives and ideologies, in a collective answer to specific situations of injustice, oppression or tyranny. And it is this potential strength which leads us towards the fulfillment of the desired alternative in the field of society and social relations. But

31 [HTTP://WWW.KALUDJERICA.COM/?P=190](http://www.kaludjerica.com/?p=190)

32 SEFIK SEKI TATLIC, *NE PRIVATIZACIJI SOLIDARNOSTI*, AVAILABLE ONLINE: [HTTP://KULTURPUNKT.HR/1/KULTUROSKOP/321/](http://kulturopunkt.hr/1/kulturoskop/321/), (APRIL 6<sup>TH</sup> 2010; 07:06 PM)

33 SALLI J. SCHOLZ, *POLITICAL SOLIDARITY*, THE PENNSYLVANIA STATE UNIVERSITY PRESS, 2008

the situation in practice is not so shiny as in theory. The problem of Serbian left movements is that the groups are not always ready to collaborate and react on specific problems, which they all find important, on mutual basis, because of mutual exclusiveness and intolerance on ideological base. The example of these mutual relations is a collective meeting held as a response to the enclosure of a Roma settlement which joined representatives of different movements as: anarcho-syndicalists, student organisations, feminist organisations, queer organisations and several cultural and art organisations and initiatives. These ideological differences during the course of the meeting became more and more visible and towards the end it turned in to a quarrel and jelling. Some of the radical anarcho-activists were especially exclusive towards arts and cultural practices which they perceived as a perspective unable to deal with real politics. As the result two factions were formed which organised separate events profiled by their own specific micro ideologies. What we need is a more transversal,<sup>34</sup> solidarity in the left, solidarity that goes in all directions, solidarity based on strategic collaborations which will help leftist movements to create a platform for mutual support in the struggle on specific causes: situations of injustice, oppression or tyranny.

This solidarity model can also be employed as a relation model between art and the cultural field and the activist field. Radical artistic practices that emerge in the field of art are in danger of losing their critical potential in the production of art that commodifies artistic work and transforms it into market goods. On the other hand, activist practices are often integrated, absorbed and normalized by the system as a spectacle. This tolerance serves as a confirmation of democracy and liberality.<sup>35</sup> At the same time, but not against the former mentioned ideology, the system occasionally, if needed, shows its power by legally prosecuting them. In this sense it could be said that the art world and neoliberal democracies share a similar cynical logic. In order to overcome this situation or to work with it critically a jointly coordinated action is necessary. Artistic practice isolated in the art world, its galleries and museums, has much less chance than when joined with radical social movements. In order to boost its political potential, the strength of its resistance in the social field and potential of its capacity to generate changes, it is necessary to achieve solidarity between radical art and radical social movements' locally as well as globally. On the other hand, the artistic autonomy that is being actualized in the legal system can serve strategically as a defence mechanism from possible punitive legal consequences, because in a system that uses the power of tolerance according to need this strategy still proves its efficiency. What we need

<sup>34</sup> MORE ON CONCEPT OF TRANSVERSAL SEE: GERALD RAUNIG, *TRANSVERSAL MULTITUDES*, AVAILABLE ONLINE: [HTTP://EIPCP.NET/TRANSVERSAL/0303/RAUNIG/EN](http://eipcp.net/transversal/0303/raunig/en); (APRIL 6<sup>TH</sup> 2010; 09:06 PM)

<sup>35</sup> TOLERANCE IS A PRIVILEGE OF THOSE WHO HAVE POWER.

is a joint advance into the field of radical activism and art so we can, through collective efforts, continually create new critical shifts, through the vigilant monitoring of the system's actions and the constant making of "impossible" demands in the production of different spaces of sociality and social relations that are not based on hierarchies and preclusion. This text is an appeal for a general mobilization of solidarity and an invitation to action in the field of political struggle on the left, because life has become a central object of power and because life<sup>36</sup> has no alternative! And only joint struggle can bring and effectuate changes!

<sup>36</sup> LIFE HAS BECOME THE CENTRAL OBJECT OF POWER IN THE FIELD OF CAPITALISM AND ITS EXPANSIVE POLICY. IN THIS FIELD HUMAN LIFE HAS BEEN PLACED IN THE HORIZON OF PERMANENT STATE OF EMERGENCY IN THE STRUGGLE FOR PROFIT. (SEE: MISKO SUVAKOVIC, *KFS - KRITICKE FORME SAVREMENOSTI I ZUDNJA ZA DEMOKRATIJOM*, ORPHEUS, NOVI SAD, 2007, PP. 55-60)

IN THESE TIMES – MORE AND MORE OF THE ART WORLD IS BEING RULED BY THE NEOLIBERAL HEGEMONY. IN THESE TIMES – LESS AND LESS OF THE ART WORLD STANDS UP TO THE LAWS OF CAPITALISM.



A LOT OF US FULFILL CAPITALIST OBLIGATIONS WITHOUT THINKING FURTHER OF ITS CONSEQUENCES, SETTLING FOR A TEMPORAL FIX TO A STRUCTURAL PROBLEM. WE FALL UNDER PRESSURE, ADAPTING TO PROTECT OUR CARRIERS INSTEAD OF COOPERATING WITH EACH OTHER. WE SEE OUR COLLEAGUES BE TAKEN DOWN. WE ASKED OURSELVES: WHAT TO DO?

Proposal for a workshop **DO THE RIGHT**

## THING

Do you identify as a politically informed artist? Do you want to do the right thing but not be on the Right side? Are you torn between the demands of your gallery and your principles? Do you spend endless hours formulating your art practice to fit the standards of a grant committee? Is avoiding paying tax to make an extra buck starting to come natural to you? If taking a test, are you afraid you would fall under the title entrepreneur? Honestly, are you starting to feel more and more like a capitalist? Are your compromises leaving you sleepless? Long walks trying to shake the guilt? Relax, you are not alone and there are solutions. This is the workshop for you.

## JUST SAY NO!

Through a strict pedagogical frame and with firm guidance from MFK we will collectively learn to say NO! to the neoliberal hegemony NO! to unpaid labor NO! to bad exhibition deals NO! to superficial curatorial ideas NO! to tragic gallery contracts NO! to making the world a more interesting place without being paid NO! to invisible power structures NO! more masturbating white male egos NO! more geniuses on our block.

## NO.

With MFK you are in safe hands, we have plenty of experience of turning down poor institutional suggestions, kicking neoliberal butt since 2006 and still refusing to kneel to invisible power. Our practice has been formed out of the political strategy that we will never act from the questions “What do others expect from us? What do they want?” but must always be “What do we want?” and then “How can we do it?”. Through political manipulations and whatever it takes, we will follow the rule of never pleasing the power but always ourselves. We believe in finding collective solutions for private problems. If money is the only language then we have no voice. We have to find other strategies to push through and make ourselves heard. We need to refuse negotiation, refuse to obey the rules and let our actions speak.

TO BOOK A WORKSHOP, CONTACT MFK AT: [info.mfk@gmail.com](mailto:info.mfk@gmail.com)

Malmö Free University

for Women (MFK) is an ongoing participatory art project and a feminist organization for knowledge production. We aim to raise and discuss contemporary political issues by bringing together experience and knowledge from various fields. Through experimental, radical pedagogical methods we hope to bridge theory and prac-

tice and challenge dominating norms and power structures. Our work has taken the form of reading groups, workshops, lectures and screenings. MFK was started in 2006 in Malmö but is now mobile. It is run by artists Lisa Nyberg, Johanna Gustavsson and more or less temporary collaborators from various backgrounds.

[www.mfkuniversitet.blogspot.com](http://www.mfkuniversitet.blogspot.com)

I DISSE TIDER STYRES STADIG MER AV KUNSTVERDEN AV ET NEOLIBERALT HEGEMONI. I DISSE TIDER STÅR STADIG MINDRE AV KUNSTVERDEN OPP MOT KAPITALISMENS LOVER.



MANGE ER VI SOM LEVER OPP TIL/FØLGER KAPITALISMENS KRAV UTEN Å TENKE OVER KONSEKVENSENS, SOM SLÅR OSS TIL RO MED EN MIDLERTIDIG KUR FOR ET STRUKTURELT PROBLEM. VI GIR ETTER FOR PRESSET, OG TILPASSER OSS FOR Å BESKYTTE DET SOM BÆRER OSS HELLER ENN Å SAMARBEIDE MED HVERANDRE. VI SER KOLLEGENE VÅRE FALLE. VI SPØR OSS: HVA SKAL VI GJØRE?

Forslag til en workshop **GJØR** **DET**

## RETTE

Oppfatter du deg selv som en politisk engasjert kunstner? Ønsker du å gjøre det rette? Føler du at du dras mellom galleriets krav og dine egne prinsipper? Bruker du ufattelig mye tid på å formulere kunstnerskapet ditt for å få det til å passe inn i stipendkomiteens kriterier? Føles det etter hvert helt naturlig å snyte på skatten for å tjene noen ekstra slanter? Hvis du skulle ta en test, er du redd du ville falle i kategorien "gründer"? Har du sant å si begynt å føle deg stadig mer som en kapitalist? Gjør alle kompromissene deg søvnløs? Går du på lange turer for å riste av deg skyldfølelsen? Slapp av, du er ikke alene og det finnes løsninger. Dette er en workshop for deg.

# BARE SI NEI!

I en streng pedagogisk ramme og med fast veiledning fra MFK skal vi lære å si kollektivt NEI! til det neoliberale hegemoniet, NEI! til ubetalt arbeid NEI! til dårlige utstillingsavtaler NEI! til lettvinde kuratorideer NEI! til miserable gallerikontrakter NEI! til å bidra til å gjøre verden til et mer spennende sted -- uten å bli betalt NEI! til usynlige maktstrukturer NEI! til enda flere onanerende hvite mannlige egoer NEI! til enda flere genier i blokka.

## Nei.

Med MFK er du i trygge henger, vi har siden 2006 skaffet oss massevis av erfaring i å avvise elendige forslag fra institusjonene og i å ta rotta på de neoliberale, og fortsatt nekter vi å knele for den usynlige makta. Praksisen vår har vokst ut av en politisk strategi som sier at vi aldri skal handle ut fra spørsmålet "Hva venter andre seg av oss? Hva vil de ha?", spørsmålet må alltid være "Hva er det vi vil?" fulgt av "Hvordan kan vi få det til?". Gjennom politiske manipulasjoner og det som ellers måtte trenges, følger vi regelen om aldri å tekkes makta, men alltid oss selv. Vi tror på å finne kollektive løsninger på private problemer. Hvis penger er det eneste språket, har vi ingen stemme. Vi er nødt til å finne andre strategier for å slå gjennom og blir hørt. Vi er nødt til å nekte å forhandle, nekte å adlyde reglene og la handlingene våre tale.

FOR Å BESTILLE EN WORKSHOP, KONTAKT MFK: [info.mfk@gmail.com](mailto:info.mfk@gmail.com)

Malmö

Fria

Kvinnouniversitet (MFK) er

et varig kunstprosjekt basert på deltakelse, og en feministisk organisasjon for kunnskapsproduksjon. Vi har som målsetting å trekke fram og debattere aktuelle politiske saker ved å bringe sammen erfaring og kunnskap fra ulike

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REALITY CHECK

områder. Gjennom eksperimentelle og radikale pedagogiske metoder håper vi å bygge bro mellom teori og praksis og utfordre dominerende normer og maktstrukturer. Arbeidet vårt har tatt form av lesegrupper, verksteder, forelesninger og filmvisninger.

MFK ble startet i 2006 i Malmö, men er nå mobilt. MFK drives av kunstnerne Lisa Nyberg og Johanna Gustavsson samt flere mer eller mindre midlertidige samarbeidspartnere fra mange forskjellige fagfelt.

[www.mfkuniversitet.blogspot.com](http://www.mfkuniversitet.blogspot.com)

ART & ACTIVISM READER

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