

Dalibor Martinis, Tadej Pogačar
DOUBLE (SPY) GAME

The idea of the exhibition DOUBLE (SPY) GAME is to show the work of two conceptual artists who operate within different times, cultures and points of reference. Their approaches can perhaps be retrospectively linked in a relationship of reciprocal interpretation. Pogačar interprets Martinis; Martinis is an anticipation of Pogačar. Their works have no similar formal basis, yet parallels between them can be established on the level of the medium, of consumer material symbol, of the projection of mental images and of the relationship between the microcosm and the macrocosm. The Croatian artist Dalibor Martinis began his conceptual art practice in the late 1960s and early 1970s in Zagreb. The Slovenian artist Tadej Pogačar began his conceptual art practice in the late 1980s and early 1990s in Ljubljana. Martinis begins creating within the historical conceptual arts of the end of modernism. Pogačar begins creating within the context of cultural-artistic activism after the end of postmodernism. Belonging to different generations and to different art worlds, the artists develop different approaches to the relationship between the object and the medium or rather, between the mind, behavior and the object. The artists are connected by the immanent criticism of art and the tactical objectification of the conceptual dispositif in the art work. Their works are not presentations of the “block of sensory affects” contained in the designed piece – the visual work, rather they are a dispositif (a mixture of ideas, discourses, institutional contexts, micropolitical interventions, the relativization of the relations between the borders of art and culture, the visible and the imaginary, media and postmedia). Dispositifs are the stages upon which take place critical performance that calls into question art itself (Martinis) and performance that calls into question the nature of the contemporary global world itself (Pogačar). Dalibor Martinis deals with media self-referentialism (Open Reel, video performance, 1976) and with conceptual projectivity (Cosmic Counterfeits, series of maps, 1976–1978). The spectator is confronted with the contradictions of the immanence of art when it shows that it is possible to arrive at the border of art itself: a video that uses the artist’s body as a part of the media system and a series of maps with which the liminal zone of the visible is situated in relation to representation, thus a map of the macrocosmic. Martinis is aware that media arts are no longer satisfactory for an artist with an artistic decision to enter into the extended field of uncertain interventional behavior and the critically-reflective conceptualization of the visible and the imaginary. Tadej Pogačar deals with postmedia referentialism in the private space and in the public gallery space. The first work (Laboratorium I) is created based on the concept of the publicly invisible: something containing the alloys of the hidden science of alchemy, the subversions of the identifiable. The second work (Laboratorium II) is built on the basis of the confrontation of two public institutions: the laboratory and the museum in the effect of symbolic profits and losses. Pogačar’s project Rome to Ancona (b-w prints on paper, 2010) is a pseudo-documentary presentation of a journey between two cities, indexed by the movement between interior and exterior spaces – the distances objectified by the photographs taken from a train. School’s Out (1997 – 2017) was originally conceived in 1997 as a participatory site-specific project in which students of the Šentvid Gymnasium in Ljubljana actively participated. Collages and archival images that depict the processes of school instruction, discipline and control (borrowed from Slovene School Museum, from the 1940s, 1960s, and 1970s) were set in juxtaposition with objects, fragments and school adds. On the basis of the aforementioned, how can we then connect Martinis and Pogačar?!

Martinis anticipates the world of arts, in which there are no more media conditions – he warns about the border that becomes evident with the artist’s entrance into the media operation of the machine or rather in the visible and invisible of the macrocosmic order with microcosmic interventions. Martinis confronts us with the moment when the edge is objectified, perhaps it’s also even the end of media creation in arts. To depart from media and to enter into the field of social forces.

Pogačar lives and creates in the anticipatory world of the postmedia functioning of the artist. Everything can become an artistic index or an interventional act in arts, culture and social dispositifs. Everything is located in the field of consumerism, exchange, transience. The attitude of arts, culture and society is non-transparent, paradoxical and conflictual. The artist is closer to a cultural/social activist than to a creator of autonomous artworks for himself and according to himself.

It’s possible to say that the exhibition has another dimension: Pogačar’s works, situated in relation to Martinis’s works begin to interpret Martinis’s works. What does that mean? Pogačar’s Laboratorium II points to the institutional crisis of the laboratory and museum, in which unfold the material and symbolic postmedia dissemination, analogous to Martinis’s dissemination of media images in his Open Reel. Pogačar’s Rome to Ancona brings the relationship of the metaphysical micro and macro, hinted at in Martinis’s project Cosmic Counterfeits, into a behaviorally and culturally defined journey. Of course, the existent works were not purposely created in the relationship of interpretant and interpretation – it is the gesture by the curator of this exhibition that situates them in the relationship of interpretant and interpretation.

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GALLERY OF CONTEMPORARY ART

Dalibor Martinis

Dalibor Martinis was born in Zagreb 1947. Lives in Zagreb and graduated from Academy of Fine Arts in Zagreb. He exhibits since 1969, and works as video artist (until 1992 also in collaboration with Sanja Iveković). He held numerous personal shows, performances and screenings, and participated in many international exhibitions and biennials, Sao Paolo, Venice, Kwang-ju, Thessaloniki, Cairo; Dokumenta, Kassel, and film/video festivals (Berlin, Tokyo, Montreal, Locarno etc.). He had grants from Canada Council (1978) Jaica (Japan 1984), and ArtsLink (USA 1994 and 2010). He was guest professor at Academy of Drama Arts/Zagreb 1987/91, and Ontario College of Art/Toronto 1991/2; full prof. at Academy of Applied Arts/Rijeka. He was awarded with several international awards (such as Tokyo Video festival 1984, Locarno 1984, Alpe Adria Film festival Triest 1996., T-HT prize 2012). His works are in the collections of The Museum of Contemporary Art/Zagreb, The Museum of Modern Art/New York, Stedelijk Museum/Amsterdam, ZKM Karlsruhe, New York Public Library, Kontakt/Erste Bank, Vienna etc.

Tadej Pogačar

Tadej Pogačar is a visual artist, curator and educator, born in 1960 in Ljubljana, Slovenia. He studied art history, ethnology and fine art at the Faculty of Arts, University of Ljubljana. He is the founder and director of the P. A. R. A. S. I. T. E. Museum of Contemporary Art and managing director of the P74 Center and Gallery, a leading center for contemporary art in Ljubljana, Slovenia. Pogačar has exhibited widely, most recently at the Museum of Contemporary Art Zagreb (2015), Moderna Galerija (retrospective, 2014), Gagosian in New York (2013), Gallery for Contemporary Art in Leipzig (2012), the ZKM – Centre for Art and Media in Karlsruhe (2011–2012), and the Vojvodina Museum of Contemporary Art in Novi Sad (2011), and the Museum of Contemporary Art Metelkova in Ljubljana (2011), as well as at biennials in São Paulo, Venice, Istanbul, Prague, and Tirana, and at Manifesta 1 in Rotterdam. He has also had exhibitions at the MUMOK in Vienna (2009), the San Francisco Art Institute (2007), the NGBK in Berlin (2007), the Stedelijk Museum (2004), the Central House of Artists in Moscow, and the Museo de Arte Carillo Gil in Mexico City. He has been recipient of the Franklin Furnace Grant in 2001, Shrinking Cities Grant in 2004 and Georg Kepes Fellowship at M.I.T. Boston in 2012.

Miško Šuvaković