

The Legacy of Independent- ent Projects in the 1990s

Symposium

The Legacy of Independent Projects in the 1990s

Saturday, 19 November 2022, 11:00 – 16:30

Museum of Contemporary Art Metelkova, +MSUM

Participants: **Ana Đikoli, Nikola Gelevski, Davor Mišković, Ana Panić, Vladimir Vidmar, Natalija Vujošević, Miha Zadnikar**

Concept by **Igor Španjol**

During the transition in the 1990s, the region of former Yugoslavia saw a growing need to find new spaces for cultural production and establish closer international connections as well as maintain the regional ones. Changes in legislation brought about a transformation of the concept of artistic work. The utopianism of art collectives was replaced by the pragmatism and flexibility of associations and private institutes largely dependent on public funds and international donations. Artists became producers, and their survival and that of cultural workers became dependent on the duration of individual projects, which contributed to the growing number of precarious workers. Today, as the precariousness of work only increases, the significance of these changes needs to be reflected upon, also in terms of whether they precipitated the need for horizontal connections and rethinking the legacy of independent organizations of the 1990s.

Focusing on specific local and regional cases, the symposium aims to shed light on the differences in the conditions under which non-governmental organizations in the new, post-Yugoslav countries work, from (post)war conditions to changes in the way contemporary art is financed. The main point of interest is the paradigm shift that took place in the 1990s as the concept of independent culture emerged, resulting from breaking with the legacy of the 1980s and the gradual abandoning of the concept of "alternative culture."

PROGRAM

11:00 – 11:15 | Igor Španjol, Introduction

11:30- 11:50 | Miha Zadnikar, *What Do We Lose When We Lose Alternative Culture?*

11:50 – 12:10 | Davor Mišković, *The Legacy of the Alternative: The Independent Scene*

12:10 – 12:30 | Vladimir Vidmar, Case Study: *Janja Žvegelj's Squash as the "real allegory" of the 1990s*

12:30 – 12:50 | Ana Panić, *The Creative Act as an Act of Resistance*

13:00 – 14:00 | Break

14:00 – 14:20 | Ana Đikoli, *Art Scene under Siege: Obala Art Center*

14:20 – 14:40 | Natalija Vujošević, *Cetinje Biennials – Lost in the Mirage of Transition*

14:40 – 15:00 | Nikola Gelevski, *We Are Building the Margin, the Margin is Building Us. How to Keep a Culture Journal Going for 30 Years*

15:00 – 16:30 | Discussion

16:30 – 17:30 | Guided tour around the exhibition *Art at Work*

About the speakers:

Ana Đikoli obtained her MA in art history and the French language and literature from the Faculty of Arts of the University of Sarajevo in 2015. Since 2016 she has worked as a curator at the Program Activities Department of the National Gallery of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Nikola Gelevski, founder and director of the publishing house Templum since 1989; editor-in-chief of the magazine for art and culture *Margina*, 1994; editor-in-chief of the comics-magazine *Lift*, 1995–2001; founder and editor-in-chief of the online portal Okno, 2009.

Davor Mišković is a cultural worker from Rijeka. He is the director of the cultural organization Drugo more. Most of his work is related to programming, research, and fundraising in Drugo more. He is also involved in advocacy for the independent cultural scene, and the creation of policy documents and cultural strategies for national and local authorities.

Ana Panić is a senior curator and art historian. She has worked as the curator of the visual art collection at the Museum of Yugoslav History in Belgrade since 2005. Her special interests lie in the culture and art of the socialist Yugoslavia, the political practices of (post) Yugoslav art and contemporary art production, the culture of memory and the construction of the collective memory of Yugoslavia, public monuments and their role in the materialization of collective memory, and art as a means for constructing (supra)national identity.

Igor Španjol has worked as a curator for Moderna galerija in Ljubljana since 1999. He has curated solo exhibitions of Marko Peljhan, Marko Pogačnik, Tadej Pogačar, Vadim Fiškin, and Tobias Putrih among others, and cocurated four exhibitions in the series presenting Slovenian art after 1975 and several permanent collection displays at the Museum of Contemporary Art Metelkova.

Vladimir Vidmar is the curator and artistic director of the Bank of Slovenia's exhibition room Mala galerija. Between 2014 and 2018 he served as the artistic director of the Škuc Gallery in Ljubljana. His curatorial projects include numerous solo exhibitions, among others those of Lala Raščić, Fokus grupa, Mladen Stropnik, Becky Beasley, Nika Špan, Nikita Kadan, Katalin Ladik, Rossella Biscotti, and Kevin van Braak, as well as many international group projects.

Natalija Vujošević is the founder and director of the Institute of Contemporary Art (ngo) in Montenegro, an independent organization dedicated to contemporary art theory, education, research, and archives. Since 2022, she has been worked as a curator for the Center of Contemporary Art of Montenegro, where she is an initiator and one of curators of the project The Art of the Non-Aligned Countries Collection Laboratory.

Miha Zadnikar is a cultural worker, radio broadcasting expert, concert organizer, trade unionist, essayist, columnist, lecturer, social activist, and alternative theorist.

The symposium is part of the larger project *Our Many Europes*, organized by the museum confederation L'Internationale and its partners, and co-funded by the Creative Europe program of the European Union. Besides Moderna galerija (MG+MSUM, Ljubljana, Slovenia), L'Internationale comprises Museo Reina Sofia (Madrid, Spain), MACBA, Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona (Barcelona, Spain), Museum van Hedendaagse Kunst Antwerpen (M HKA, Antwerp, Belgium), Muzeum Sztuki Nowoczesnej w Warszawie (Warsaw, Poland), SALT (Istanbul and Ankara, Turkey), and Van Abbemuseum (VAM, Eindhoven, Netherlands), and its partners are the HDK-Valand Hogskolan for konst och design (HDK-Valand, Gothenburg, Sweden) and the National College of Art and Design (NCAD, Dublin, Ireland).

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