



° re: ex-post

Critical Knowledge and the Post-Yugoslavian Condition, 20 January – 21 February 2010

Opening: 19 January 2010, 7 pm

Project curator: Luisa Ziaja

Participating artists:

Chto delat? mit Vladan Jeremic und Rena Rädle
Nina Höchtl
Marija Mojca Pungercar

Exhibition design: Toledo i Dertschei

Presentation/discussion: 19 January 2010, 7 pm

Chto Delat International / Issue 001: Transitional Justice with Vladan Jeremic

The exhibition project **re: ex-post. Critical Knowledge and the Post-Yugoslavian Condition** explores artistic strategies of re-reading and re-writing recent history in view of the present post-Yugoslavian condition. Despite its complex and specific nature, the Yugoslavian experience of Socialism and its collapse is frequently incorporated into a dominant pattern of historical interpretation that is said to hold true for “Eastern Europe” in general: the inevitable path from communism (allegedly doomed to failure) via a cathartic process of “transition” into the final form of normality – a leitmotif that could be called “salvation history”, justified by a universal norm of general historical evolution. For (Ex-)Yugoslavia, Boris Buden has shown how this instrumentalization of the year 1989 “factually operates in its hegemonic version as a historical master narrative of sorts: as a well-known story about the ultimate victory of capitalism and liberal democracy”.¹

But this claim of an all-embracing explanation constantly cracks when juxtaposed to the political realities of these societies. With its independent course of socialism and its bloody dissolution as a multi-ethnic state, Yugoslavia in particular differs from other post-communist countries. Such contradictions are increasingly addressed through critical art practices questioning these politics of history and the politics of amnesia as “side”-effects of the “transition” period and its dynamics of normalization. The exhibition presents three artistic projects that link current political and economical conditions with potentialities of the past in order to look for modes of their actualization.

¹ Boris Buden, The post-Yugoslavian Condition of Institutional Critique: An Introduction. On Critique as Countercultural Translation, in: eipcp (ed.), transversal 02/08, <http://transform.eipcp.net/transversal/0208>.

Chto delat? with Vladan Jeremic and Rena Rädle

Partisan Songspiel. Belgrade Story, 2009



Production still
Partisan Songspiel. Belgrade Story

**Chto delat? mit Vladan Jeremic
und Rena Rädle**

Structured like an ancient tragedy, the video work “Partisan Songspiel. Belgrade Story” (2009) depicts contemporary Serbian society by means of different “archetypes” that embody the confrontation of political and economical systems and their respective ideologies. The forced eviction of the Roma settlement Belleville on the occasion of the summer Universiade Belgrade 2009 serves a concrete cause in this context. The ruling power – exemplified by a woman politician, an oligarch, a nationalist, and a Mafioso – encounters the oppressed, exemplified by a war veteran, a Romani woman, a worker, and a lesbian activist. A choir of “dead Partisans” functions as historical consciousness and political conscience commenting on the confrontation.

The exhibition also presents the current issue of the newspaper Chto delat International entitled “Transitional Justice”, produced in cooperation between authors and in connection to the previous realization of the video *Partisan Songspiel. Belgrade Story*, which was realized in Belgrade in Summer 2009. The authors gathered for this issue give a contextual overview of the situation and condition of transitional Serbian society, which during the last two decades 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 being homeless and deprived of any state protection.

Chto delat? / What is to be done? was founded in early 2003 in Petersburg by a workgroup of artists, critics, philosophers, and writers from Petersburg, Moscow, and Nizhny Novgorod with the goal of merging political theory, art, and activism. Since then, Chto delat? has been publishing an English-Russian newspaper on issues central to engaged culture, with a special focus on the relationship between a re-politicization of Russian intellectual culture and its broader international context. These newspapers are usually produced in the context of collective initiatives such as art projects or conferences and are distributed for free. The workgroup Chto delat? includes: Olga Egorova/Tsaplya (artist, Petersburg), Artiom Magun (philosopher, Petersburg), Nikolai Oleynikov (artist, Moscow), Natalia Pershina/Glucklya (artist, Petersburg), Alexei Penzin (philosopher, Moscow), David Riff (art critic, Moscow), Alexander Skidan (poet, critic, Petersburg), Kirill Shuvalov (artist, Petersburg), Oxana Timofeeva (philosopher, Moscow), and Dmitry Vilensky (artist, Petersburg). www.chtodelat.org

Vladan Jeremic and **Rena Rädle** have been working together since 2002 in Belgrade, Serbia and elsewhere. They use art as one possible format for radical criticism and take an active public position in different fields of social activism. Jeremic/Rädle are founders and members of the organizations for culture and communication Biro Beograd, slobodnakultura.org in Belgrade and Top e.V in Berlin. www.modukit.com/raedle-jeremic

Nina Höchtl

Tales of Protest. A Necessity, 2009
5-channel-video installation

After a two-year long fight against the privatization of their factory “Jugoremedija“ in Zrenjanin/Serbia the workers finally succeeded: for the first time in former Yugoslavia, this factory has been recovered and handed over to self-management. The experiences of the workers are the basis of five fictive stories that are linked with footage from the silent film “Strike” by Sergej Eisenstein in Nina Höchtl’s 5-channel-video installation “Tales of Protest. A Necessity”. In 1925, Eisenstein and the Proletkult Theatre restaged a workers’ fight that had taken place in pre-revolutionary Russia in 1912. Höchtl revisits history and its political potential on many different levels, not only depicting but actualizing it. She asks for the relation between collectivism and individualism and how they are represented.



Montage out of stills
Tales of Protest. A Necessity.

Nina Höchtl

Nina Höchtl was born in Austria and lives in Vienna, Mexico City, and currently London. She studied at the University of Applied Arts in Vienna and the Piet Zwart Institute in Rotterdam. Presently, she is a doctoral candidate in Art by Practice at Goldsmiths College, London. Her projects deal with identity, language and communication and employ different media. Most recently, she has exhibited *Tales of Protest. A necessity*, CZKd, Belgrade; *Print Matters*, CHAUVEL CINEMA, Sydney; *moved, mutated and disturbed identities*, Casino Luxemburg, 2009; *Too Early for Vacation*, OPEN/INVITED e v +a, 2008, Belltable Arts Centre, Limerick (Curator: Hou Hanru). <http://www.ninahoechtl.org>

Marija Mojca Pungercar

Brotherhood and Unity, 2006
Photo-video-installation



Fotomontage
Brotherhood and Unity

Marija Mojca Pungercar

The most famous slogan of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, “Bratstvo in Enotnost” – “Brotherhood and Unity”, serves as a multi-leveled frame of reference for the photo-video installation of the same title by Marija Mojca Pungercar. Coined by Tito as a motto of the Yugoslavian fight for liberation in 1941, it was opposed to nationalist and separatist tendencies in the different ethnic and religious groups and later designated the official policy of inter-ethnic relations aiming at the equalization of nations and ethnicities. “Brotherhood and Unity” is also the name of the motorway that connects Ljubljana, Zagreb, Belgrade and Skopje, and which was built in the 1950s by shock-work brigades from the different republics. On occasion of the reconstruction of its Slovenian section in 2006 Pungercar looks into the changed political, social, and economic conditions of this kind of work. Today, it is mostly migrants from the former republics of Yugoslavia who are working in road construction for comparatively low wages. How about the relevance of ideals

like Brotherhood and Unity or solidarity and community in fragmented societies now urged to follow a neo-liberal logic?

Marija Mojca Pungercar

Born in Novo Mesto, based in Ljubljana, Slovenia. A former fashion designer (1983–87), she holds a BFA in painting from the Academy of Fine Arts in Ljubljana (1989) and an MFA in new genres from the San Francisco Art Institute (2001). Since its foundation in 2004, she has been a member of Trivia Art (KUD Trivia). She works as a freelance artist (video, photography, performance, installation, theatre costumes design). Her work is marked by strong social engagement, critically rethinking consumerist culture and underscoring issues of locality and community. Recent projects have involved examining fate of the Slovene industry: *Singer* (2003), *Brotherhood and Unity* (2006); developing the art-fashion brand name *Socialdress* (2006–ongoing); and documenting her local neighborhood: *Special Offer, Stereo-Visions* (2005); *Outside My Door* (2004) – a work that has been included in the permanent collection of the Museum of Modern Art Ljubljana.

www.mojca.info

supported by:

BM:UKK
Stadt Wien - Kulturabteilung MA 7

in kind support by:

IG Kultur Wien

About us:

Open Friday, Saturday 11.00 - 18.30 and open for the rest of the week days by appointment only.
Admission free



Open Space
Zentrum für Kunstprojekte
Lassingleithnerplatz 2
A- 1020 Vienna
Austria

(+43) 699 115 286 32

for more info: office@openspace-zkp.org

<http://www.openspace-zkp.org>

Open Space - Zentrum für Kunstprojekte aims to create the most vital facilities for art concerned with contributing a model strategy for cross-border and interregional projects on the basis of improving new approach.