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9 1/2: New Macedonian Art

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Macedonia



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This text was archived at the Institute for Contemporary Art in Zagreb collection, as part of the **Research project** conceived in 1997 by a SCCAN – Soros Centers for Contemporary Art Network, funded by the Open Society Foundation, New York.

The purpose of the project was to select, collect and disseminate texts on contemporary art practices in the Central and Eastern Europe and Central Asia, around Soros Centers for Contemporary Art, written in and about art of the 1990s. The coordination of the project was carried out by Janka Vukmir, SCCA – Zagreb, today the Institute for Contemporary Art, Zagreb.

We did not intervene in any of texts more than just correcting obvious typos and spelling. On the occasion of collecting texts, we were given permission from all authors, to rightfully use them. If anyone now has different instructions, please, contact us at the info@institute.hr.

All of the texts we have collected at the time have been later published on the website of the I_CAN, International Contemporary Art Network, the short-lived successor of the SCCAN.

On the occasion of the exhibition **90s: Scars**, revisiting the art practices and social and political context of the 1990s in the postcommunist countries, the Institute for Contemporary Art is now reoffering a collection of **89 texts and a comprehensive list of then proposed further readings**, on the website of the Institute for Contemporary Art, www.institute.hr.

The exhibition 90s: Scars is curated by Janka Vukmir and organized by the Institute for Contemporary Art and the MMSU – Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art in Rijeka, on the occasion of the **European Cultural Capital Rijeka 2020**. Originally planned to open May 14, 2020, at the MMSU in Rijeka, due to COVID-19 crisis, is postponed until further notice.

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With his successful anticipation of the necessity to engage the artists who seemed to have fallen into a state of apathy, captured in the clash between their own will and the general unmotivated cultural politics, on one hand, and the obviously reduced interest and attention of the audience and the cultural public in the events of the fine art, on the other hand, the curator of this exhibition, Zoran Petrovski, seems to have made the right move at the right time. Including 25 mainly younger artists he tried to make something more than a group exhibition of the "current artistic scene" type. Although in the coordinates of our cultural environment authorial exhibitions concerned with certain conditions and artistic expression are hardly happening, this exhibition could be considered an attempt to step out of the usual schematic conditions of presentation, an attempt to exhibit our own concern and engagement in the current art production.

The title of the exhibition "9 1/2: New Macedonian Art" calls for double understanding: both as a reflection of the recent art production and, with its hidden connotations, as an alarming anxiety before the challenges and temptations of the art at the beginning of the 21st century. The dominant presence of installations, or, more precisely, the type of works created *in situ*, works whose ontological status is disturbed in the very idea of the artist, very clearly articulates the question: are we experiencing the situation predicted long time ago by Duchamp who claimed that he did not believe in the art but only in the artists? And, does the art offer a choice - personal, individual (inherited from the modern thought), or is it excluding any possibility for orientation? These questions (that could be read at the 4th Biennial in Istanbul) present this exhibition with a certain topic gravity. The choice of the artists and the works, as well as the way of displaying, sets us, in an indicative way, into an extremely non-referential "artistic" space: surrounding the works, with an emphasized juxtaposition, a

communicative knot seems to be tying up, disabling any attempt for orientation. Each work transmits its own expression, its own position, its appearance. Opposed to the "In the White or the One That Could Not Be Seen - Absorbed Concrete" by Stanko Pavleski is the graphic map "Nothing" by Dušan Perčinkov. Two conceptually perfectly structured works, but except for the minimalism as a reference, nothing else is encouraging our urge for mutual reading. Even the minimalism could have different connotations. Or, "Place I" and "Place II" by Tome Adziewski opposed to the "Opening of the Eye" by Ibrahim Bedi... Although both installations incorporate the problem of space, with the first artist the place as a spatial orientation, and with the second artist the space as an infinite multiplying, the non-referencing of their expression is obvious. Or, Blagoja Manevski and Jovan Šumkovski opposed to Iskra Dimitrova and Mirna Arsovska, or Ismet Ramičević opposed to Aneta Svetieva and Kojlo Mišev, or Margarita Kiselička opposed to Bogoja Angelkovski, or Žaneta Vangeli opposed to Violeta Blažeska and Bogdan Grabuloski, or Antoni Maznevski and Robert Jankuloski, or Dragan Petković opposed to Dimitar Manev and Slavčo Sokolovski and Sašo Barjaktarov, or Aleksandar Stankovski opposed to... And, again, we come to the conclusion that each work transmits its own expression, its own position, its appearance. Yet, each work (or, at least each) is attractive in its own way, involving us into a complex net of riddles, ironic touches, "soft" looks, mythological-poetical presentations, and, above all, personal challenges and daringness to play on the edge of "art". "Tootaka" by Blagoja Manevski is, perhaps, most convincingly confronting us to the question of whether we are living the time that Duchamp had predicted in his claim: time when we could not refer to the art but only to the artists? If the exhibition was meant to pose that question, then it has reached its goal.