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Found Stuff New Art From Ukraine

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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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One weekend we were once again reveling in aimless shopping, which, besides boutiques and supermarkets, included flea markets, second-hand stores and sex-shops. Upon arriving home with our purchases we noted one characteristic peculiarity - all the things bought were "found" by us, and this quality of theirs instantly obviated the question of their "necessity" or "unnecessity". For shopping is activated lateral vision. The objects of shopping are glanced at in passing and discovered by accident. Having taken a stroll through the shops, you have acquired a Spanish corduroy jacket, a Chinese battery-powered ashtray and a bottle of cheap Mexican rum. Now think - were you going to buy all this before leaving the house? The practicability of such purchases is doubtful, but the "finding", "chance discovery" of these objects brings real pleasure. Shopping resembles a Ketamine trip in many ways - narcotic vividness generated by this substance is also concentrated at the level of lateral vision. Or, for instance, the Internet, this technological version of an expanded state of mind, - here also you often "find" what you haven't really been looking for.

In conversation with Miroslav Kulchitsky there emerged an idea of an exhibition, in which the "shopping model" could be utilized and a more flexible, "mobile" way of organizing information in an art project found. Besides, a couple of years ago Miroslav Kulchitsky together with Vadim Checkorsky curated the "Supermarket" exhibition, in which he focused attention on the "mechanics of interaction among the audience". At this exhibition visitors encountered and interacted with different objects from everyday reality. Situations constructed by these objects created conditions for intensive interpersonal exchange.

Thus, as the result of our discussion we have arrived at the idea of a new

project, in which the dominant element would be the notion of "finding", "a chance discovery".

It was clear to our curatorial group that such a model of an art project could not be described through its relation to historical roots, national peculiarities, ideological commonality or formal integrity and originality. The previous generations of Ukrainian artists, having learned about the modern marketing technologies, have their tails between their legs like spermatozoids locked in a condom. Regional theoreticians are still analyzing these technologies with the air of people evaporating cocaine from Coca-Cola. Curators and artists of the new generation no longer have time for these "games".

Since the local cultural tradition in Ukraine has not been clearly articulated so far, we have lost sight of this notion altogether. Instead we preferred to proceed from the idea of new contemporary Ukrainian art and the tactics of "fast reaction" to the universal cultural stimuli of surrounding reality. Using the analogy of the model of "shopping"- perception, which is often based on such reactions, we have formed in this project a situation based not on the principle of "make art", but, rather, on the principle of "make arting". The exhibition Found Stuff immerses the viewer in a situation where he is not altogether sure just at which stage the artist's "invasion" into any given work had taken place. The paradoxical synthesis of fragments of everyday reality and gaps in meaning within the works, "provoked", "found" rather than "created" by the artists, makes fitting their works within clear interpretational schemes rather difficult.

At this exhibition we are presenting the work of several Ukrainian artists of a new generation formed in the late 90's. They all have rather diverse personal creative experience, which by the way doesn't prevent one from determining a common reflexive level for this "crew". Boris Godzhulov photographed homeless children and poor neighborhoods of Odessa. Andrey Moskvichev has worked in fashion photography, taking pictures of night streets, clubs and bars. Vladimir Kozhukhar created series of paintings depicting "teenage fetishism" of roller-skaters and images of naked children inside strange laboratories. Victor Malyarenko has experimented with video art and dance performances. Miroslav Kulchitsky and Vadim Checkorsky, working with video, photography and computers were the only "crew" members who from the very start developed ideas similar to the ones in Found Stuff. Projects by this tandem (besides the above-mentioned Supermarket), presented in Moderna Museet, Stockholm, at After the Wall" exhibition and

on the pages of Creative Camera and SIKSI magazines, have significantly influenced the formation of our new exhibition.

All these artists, emancipated from the local artistic tradition, produce convertible art. They are well familiar with conventional cultural and social problematics, and are creating their own institutional model of contemporary art based on their own experience and preferences. They do not aim at creating Utopian realities, but put forward different models of existence and action while working with socio-cultural phenomena. For them art is an adventure based on intellectual play and hoax.