

Dematerialization and Politicization of the Exhibition: Curation as Institutional Critique in Yugoslavia during the 1960s and 1970s

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Harald Szeemann, who prosaically dubbed himself an *Austellungsmacher* (exhibition-maker) in the late 1960s, has since come to embody what Bruce Altshuler calls “the rise of the curator as creator.”¹ This transformation from maker to creator, from craft to art, has been reinforced by a proliferation of critical discourses in the past two decades, leading to increased professionalization and the development of the field of curatorial studies. The ongoing theorization and historicization of exhibitionary practices, however, generally fails to take into account what has evolved beyond the prominent art world centers in Western Europe and the United States. Despite critical discourses that identify and deconstruct Western hegemony, and despite numerous artistic and research projects that have “restructured” the art historical canon, every new chapter in art history – which includes exhibition history – seems to open in the same way: by establishing a Western-based canon and only subsequently acknowledging interventions that are in conversation with it. By focusing on select projects in Yugoslavia during the 1960s and 1970s curated by Želimir Košević, Ida Biard, and Dunja Blažević, this article challenges conventional exhibition histories, not by merely adding new examples to established paradigms, but by presenting case studies as generators of new models for understanding curation today. The projects I explore disrupted the boundaries between artistic and curatorial practice and enable us to conceive of curation as a creative and transformative work of translation,

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informed by – or in Walter Benjamin’s terms, “under the spell of” – the then-emergent language of conceptual or “dematerialized” art.² The initial enthusiasm about conceptual art’s transformative political potential in the 1960s and 1970s coincided, however, with what is today recognized as the dawning era of cognitive capitalism, and the realization that not only objects (or object-based art) but also ideas (or conceptual art) could easily be commodified and swept into the system.

Biard, Blažević, and Koščević all organized exhibitions informed by the urgency to respond to the co-optation of conceptual art by bourgeois institutions. Their endeavors were decidedly situated in Yugoslav self-managed socialism, which cultivated perspectives alternative to both the capitalist West and the state-socialist East. All three curators were directly or indirectly affiliated with either the Student Center Gallery (SC) in Zagreb or the Student Cultural Center (SKC) in Belgrade. Student Centers were hubs of progressive artistic and cultural practices in Yugoslavia, gathering new generations of artists, critics, and cultural managers on the front line of what would later become known as *New Artistic Practice*, the movement that embraced conceptual, post-avant-garde, and process-based strategies in Yugoslav art.³ Student Centers were state institutions meant to incite and host the artistic and cultural activities of and for the youth. Today they are often described in oxymoronic terms, as places of controlled or relative freedom. Especially after the 1968 student revolts in Yugoslavia, the alternative youth culture was granted a space of social encounter and artistic experimentation, but was at the same time kept at bay, safely contained within one Student Center in each of the major cities.⁴ This is the perspective that Miško Šuvaković takes when he refers to centers as “reservations,” places where subversion was allowed but where its social impact and expansive potential were limited.⁵ The student “centers” were indeed actually the margins, but within those margins some of the most radical questionings of the social and political roles of art in Yugoslavia took place.⁶ They facilitated exchanges of people and ideas among different urban centers in the country, as well as between Yugoslavia and the international scene. They have also remained a key point of reference for later generations of artists and cultural workers.

New Artistic Practice evolved in an intense dialogue with neo-avant-garde practices of Western Europe and North America, where an enthusiastic discourse about “new art” was equally pervasive during the late 1960s and early 1970s.⁷ Both in Yugoslavia and abroad, this enthusiasm was linked to the reactivation of leftist theory and activism, especially following the 1968 student movements. What distinguished Koščević, Biard, and Blažević’s curatorial undertakings was their critical stance – anchored by their Yugoslav situatedness – towards the production and reception of art in the West, after it had become evident that dematerialized art was subject to cooptation by the art market and institutions that were becoming increasingly corporate.⁸

Most of their projects were included in surveys of the New Artistic Practice during the 1970s, which reveals that their creative contributions were acknowledged from the beginning.⁹ However, at the time there existed no analytical or theoretical apparatus that would situate them in a similar movement of “New Curatorial Practice.” When Davor Matičević wrote about Koščević’s accomplishments, for example, he attempted to articulate them as artistic, although he admitted that, “Želimir Koščević’s authorial approach cannot be fully identified because none of these exhibitions declared an awareness of the artistic act – what they [Koščević’s projects] emphasized was the precedence of ethics over aesthetics, which is one of the main characteristics of current art production that we want to review here.”¹⁰ Matičević did not have a name for what such practice should represent if not artistic, but he implicitly pointed to the creative processes of translation when he cited “ethics over aesthetics” as the key shared feature of art at the time. He then identified ethics as a key characteristic of Koščević’s un-artistic (i.e. curatorial) projects. Matičević was also aware of how such efforts blurred traditional roles, concluding that even if Koščević’s works would not be accepted as art, they demonstrated “how frontiers between professions can disappear.”¹¹ Although he refers only to Koščević in his text, Matičević’s analysis is relevant for a whole line of curatorial practices from the 1960s and 1970s that were articulated as anticapitalist and antibourgeois institutional critiques, and manifested through the radical dematerialization and politicization of the exhibition.¹²

Exhibition as Critical Intervention into the Discourse on Art

Želimir Koščević became director of the Zagreb Student Center Gallery (SC) in 1969, but he already began participating in its activities in 1966. Koščević was a young art historian informed by the *New Tendencies* exhibitions hosted at the Zagreb Gallery of Contemporary Art between 1961 and 1973, as well as international phenomena such as the Fluxus movement and the “conceptual turn” of the late 1960s.¹³ In 1969, he spent four months as an intern at Moderna Museet in Stockholm with Pontus Hultén, whose innovative approach to exhibition making encouraged Koščević’s own quest for new and experimental approaches to art and curation.¹⁴ However, Koščević had already presented his first curatorial experiment at the SC in 1966 with the exhibition *Imaginary Museum*, which consisted of a “free-style” arrangement of numerous ethnographic, archeological, art, and applied-arts objects taken from the storage spaces of several Zagreb museums. *Imaginary Museum* was located at a contemporary art venue, but instead of presenting art, it intervened into the politics of representation by granting visibility to objects that did not earn a place in the permanent programming of local museums. Besides disturbing the borders between high and applied arts, art and artifact, Koščević exposed what museums more generally conceal through the myths of objectivity and neutrality: that objects can be selected and presented in any number of ways that depend on the biases of curators and the demands of the moment.

Koščević therefore self-critically approached curation as a form of institutional critique with his very first exhibition at the SC.

After becoming the SC's director, and presenting a series of exhibitions that featured the youngest generation of artists (most of whom would later become the leading figures of the New Artistic Practice), Koščević conceived and organized *The Exhibition of Women and Men* (1969). For this production, the Gallery opened its doors to reveal an empty space, while handouts informed confused visitors that they were to be the exhibition: "For god's sake, be the exhibition. At this exhibition, you are the artwork, you are the figuration... you are socialist realism. Careful, your eyes are observing you. You are the body in space, you are a body that moves, you are the kinetic sculpture, you are spatial dynamism. Art is not situated next to you. There either is no art or it is you."¹⁵ In 1969, when the exhibition took place, no defined movement of conceptual art or institutional critique had yet manifested in Zagreb, although some artists were experimenting in this direction.¹⁶ Its subtitle, "didactic exhibition," functioned as a provocation for a new way of thinking about art; similar to John Chandler and Lucy Lippard's theorization of the dematerialization of art in 1968, *The Exhibition of Women and Men* implicitly framed "art as idea and art as action."¹⁷ Regardless of whether Koščević was at the time aware of the new terminology Chandler and Lippard proposed, the exhibition opened up the path for not only art, but also exhibitionary practices to be freed from the dictate of material presentation. Unlike Yves Klein's *The Void*



Figure 1: *The Exhibition of Women and Men* (1969), curated by Želimir Koščević. Student Center Gallery in Zagreb. Photo by Petar Dabac. Used with permission.

(1958), which was made by an artist and evoked an ontological questioning of emptiness, *The Exhibition of Women and Men* was developed by a gallery director and intervened into the structure of social relations between an art institution and its audience.¹⁸ The community that gathered at the openings in Zagreb took central stage, exercising an awareness of its own role as audience, while the curator and the institution relinquished control over the content they were presenting. Of course, the institution gave up control only in principle, as it still provided visitors with instructions, which the subtitle self-critically recognized as the Gallery's educational and disciplinary functions. Nonetheless, *The Exhibition of Women and Men* pioneered gestures of institutional openness, self-reflection, and participation in exhibition making.

Additional expressions of Košćević's disobedience towards conventional models of curation and the art system materialized in *Postal Packages* (1972). The event was part of a travelling presentation of mail art from the Seventh Paris Biennial (1971), itself announced as the first comprehensive display of international conceptual art in France.¹⁹ The exhibition *Postal Packages* was first presented at the Belgrade SKC in January 1972, after which it was supposed to open in Zagreb.²⁰ However, Košćević decided to exhibit nothing but the unopened package in which the works arrived, along with a statement printed in the gallery's newspaper through which he rejected any complicity in the further commodification and institutionalization of conceptual art. The fact that conceptual art had become so harmless as to be included in a biennial signaled for Košćević the beginning of its demise:

Unconventional, brave and provocative, conceptual art has witnessed its own history by the establishment of a special section at the Paris Biennial. There were also earlier attempts, as some museums and corporations have tried to systematize artistic concepts and reduce them to the level of catalogued data. Many artists accepted this game. The positive valorization of the Paris Biennial officially marked the end of the life of this idea which, at its core, is not foreign or unacceptable to us.²¹

Rather than offer local, peripheral Yugoslav audiences examples of the latest international trends, Košćević intervened with a critique of what he saw as conceptual art's self-annulling complicity with commodification and institutional validation of art and artists. Concluding his written statement, he explicated his gesture:

Instead of participating in the further deterioration of conceptual art, instead of supporting its demise under the gallery and museum lights, we have



Figure 2: *Postal Packages* (1972), curated by Želimir Košćević. Student Center Gallery in Zagreb. Photo by Petar Dabac. Used with permission.

exhibited the content of this exhibition in its genuine state. We have exhibited – we believe – the sublimate of conceptual art – the postal package as postal package... Art is not to be found under a glass, under a glass bell, art is facing us.”²²

Koščević’s intervention was a curatorial translation of the conceptualist language game, by which he turned Kosuth’s *art as idea* into art as mail art as postal package, or art as postal package as postal package. He kept the original title of the presentation – “Postal Packages” (*Envoi*) – at the same time that he transformed it from a generic designation for mail art into a literalized manifestation of mail art’s materiality. This curatorial translation challenged the axiom, taken from the Paris Biennial catalogue and cited next to Koščević’s statement, which claimed that “transmitting information has become more important than transporting goods.”²³ The unopened package placed in the center of the gallery space ironically pointed to the fallacy of such a claim and underscored how the transport of goods was still central to the art system and its material(istic) premises.

Koščević’s interventions were dematerializations, subversions, and politicizations of the exhibition format, motivated by a self-reflexive examination of the roles of the curator and gallery director in contemporary art and society. If we compare these projects with U.S.-based curator Seth Siegelaub’s *January 5-31, 1969* (1969), also known as *The January Show*, an oft-cited example of exhibitionary experimentation, we will see that Koščević accepts and provokes significantly wider consequences of art’s dematerialization into idea, action, and information. According to Siegelaub, “the catalogue was primary, and the physical exhibition was auxiliary to it,” a line of reasoning that he supported to such a degree that the catalogue for *The January Show* was prominently on display in its own gallery room next to the one that featured artworks by Joseph Kosuth, Lawrence Wiener, and other major conceptual artists. Siegelaub’s curatorial approach twisted the hierarchy that determines primary and secondary information as he called into question how we value originals and reproductions.²⁴ The inclusion of text in the physical gallery space, according to Siegelaub, had no advantage over its reproduction in a catalogue or magazine, as the ideas were more important to the art than the visual-material components used to convey them. Still, both the exhibition and catalogue in the case of *The January Show* consisted of presenting works and statements by four selected artists, whereas Koščević showed that by radicalizing the conceptual approach through curation it was possible to present the new art even without involving artworks and artists. This does not mean that Koščević’s exhibitions were the attempts of a curator to take on the role of the artist; on the contrary, they were curatorial projects *par excellence*, in which he positioned himself as a disobedient translator, and not creator, of new art.

To further theorize Koščević's praxis it will be helpful to turn to terminology proposed by theorist Lawrence Venuti, who distinguishes between two types of translation: *domestication* and *foreignization*. In the first case, a foreign language is domesticated, or tamed, by the act of its translation into the local language, while in the second case, which was advocated by Venuti, the foreign language affects the local language in a transformative way.²⁵ In the latter type, the local language is under the influence (or Benjaminian "spell") of the foreign language, and becomes reinvented and enriched. Koščević did not tame the language of new art under the gallery reflectors, subjecting it to the established lexis of museology. He rather used the language of new art to foreignize and reanimate institutional rhetorics and practices.

The Exhibition of Women and Men was thus a translation of one of the postulates of conceptual art – art as a practice of definition – which, as Peter Osbourne points out, is a cultural activity not limited to the definition of art.²⁶ In Benjamin Buchloch's terms, "the definition of the aesthetic becomes on the one hand a matter of linguistic convention and on the other the function of both a legal contract and an institutional discourse (a discourse of power rather than taste)."²⁷ At *The Exhibition of Women and Men* the gallery director (with a defined position in the hierarchy of power in relation to the practices of defining the aesthetic) offers the audience a contract embodied in the performative statement: "For god's sake, be the exhibition." By accepting this instruction, the audience engaged with the institution in a shared process of redefining the borders as well as the social function and transformative potential of the exhibition as a cultural convention. On the other hand, *Postal Packages*, even while refusing to exhibit any individual examples of conceptual art, truly embodied – and, ultimately, exhibited – the "sublimate" of the radical anticommercial and politicized attitude of conceptual art. Even when art itself, according to Koščević, has betrayed these initial principles, it remains possible to practice them, not through showing more examples of conceptual art, but indirectly through transforming and politicizing the very language of exhibition which involves the discursive power and role of the curator within the system of art. Leaving the arrived artworks concealed or reframed in an unopened package yet – or therefore – revealing many of the characteristics that define conceptual art, *Postal Packages* embodied the enthusiasm with which John Cage wrote about the dissolution of the visual and metaphorical content of Rauschenberg's *White Paintings*: "After careful consideration I have come to the conclusion that there is nothing in these paintings that could not be changed, that they can be seen in any light and are not destroyed by the action of shadows. Hallelujah! the blind can see again; the water is fine."²⁸

To be sure, we cannot claim that artistic language is fixed in some initial point from whence curatorial translation would start. Rather, to achieve the transformative effects of foreignization, we must acknowledge, and engage in, a continuous and multi-directional

process of translation whereby borders would constantly shift and transform, so that art and curation can reinvent themselves and each other. This does not mean a complete relativization of their different roles or an erasure of their boundaries, in which curators might assume absolute power of creation and supplant artists, as per some scenarios that pose a threat of “art without artists.”²⁹ Koščević’s projects do not present themselves as art; the position he assumes – that of a gallery director, a curator who determines the rhetoric of a gallery program and opens it up to engagement with the public – is not ambivalent. His exhibitions are not instances of art without artists, but of curating without artists, which shows that curating is not merely a practice of secondary creative and political significance that should always come after, both temporally and hierarchically, artistic creation.

Against the Commodification of Art in the West: Mapping the “Third Way”

The problems raised by Koščević – revolving around the dichotomy of emancipatory cultural practices versus their commodification and institutionalization, as well as debates about biennial culture – sound only too familiar to us today. Ironically, we often resolve them by seeking refuge in the art of the 1960s and 1970s, only to come full circle and find the same questions there. Of course, to discuss the commodification of art, both in the 1970s and today, does not mean the same thing when one speaks from Zagreb or New York. A curator in Zagreb or Belgrade was not (and still is not) exposed to the challenges of corporate cooptation, nor was the art sphere in general linked to corporate funds or a developed art market. Culture in Yugoslavia was mainly funded by the socialist state, and opposition to art’s commodification was the expression of a leftist opposition to bourgeois ideology. What is characteristic of all the projects presented in this article is their resistance to market-driven and capitalist logic despite the non-existence of an art market or corporate sponsorship of the arts in Yugoslavia. For this reason, the resistance was often oriented towards the art of the West, or what has been deemed to be the negative influences of the West. Here we encounter a point in which translation shifts from the registers of art-exhibition/artist-curator to the translation and negotiation of relations between East and West. *The Exhibition of Women and Men* is not only an experiment with museological conventions, but it also plays with the expectations of audience members who were supposed to, before experiencing the event, interpret its announced display of women and men in the spirit of the “overall abuse of [...] nudity imported from rotten capitalism.”³⁰ Similarly, *Postal Packages* is a critique of the art system in the West, which followed the initial enthusiasm for the revolutionary potential of dematerialized art and its supposed resistance to art-market cooptation and commercialization. This enthusiasm is revealed by art critic Ješa Denegri’s response to the first international presentation of conceptual art in Yugoslavia that artist Braco Dimitrijević and art critic Nena Dimitrijević organized as a one-day show at the doorway of a building on Frankopanska Street in Zagreb, entitled *At the Moment* (1972).

Denegri argued that such a prompt reaction to most recent events in the world of art could not be expected from museums, but from self-organized individuals. He presumed that the participating artists were in any case too radical to even work with institutions: “it is certain that many of the artists presented here would not be willing to participate in events that would resemble an official or even conventional exhibition.”³¹ Soon it became obvious that most conceptual artists in the West willingly became part of the conventional institutional and market-driven system of art, just like their predecessors that made the so-called object-based art.

The critique of the Western art system resonates with a much broader social fear of contamination by the West at a time when Yugoslav socialism was undergoing a major economic crisis that involved the rise of unemployment and the emigration of the work force to capitalist countries, coupled with an increased presence of Western commercial products and advertising patterns, epitomized by the image of the nude female body, which Košćević denounced.³² Another form of translation was thus operative in the exhibition projects discussed here, albeit never explicitly articulated as such; expressions of disenchantment with the (global) revolutionary potential of conceptual art inexplicitly triggered an anxiety about the failure of the idiosyncratic revolutionary potential of the Yugoslav path to socialism and the idea of socialist self-management. As already noted, protagonists of the 1968 student revolts believed that the state betrayed the principles of social justice and equality that were the very basis of the Yugoslav socialist revolution and the formation of the Yugoslav socialist state in 1945. They therefore demanded a genuine application of those principles when they protested, or in Jelena Vesić’s formulation, they were “fighting socialism with socialism.”³³ Students criticized the bureaucratization of the revolution and the increase in social and economic differences, which resulted in a new ruling class that held high political positions and nominally declared socialist principles but was in fact evolving into the oxymoronic “red bourgeoisie.” The artistic and cultural scene at the time emerged in the midst of this paradoxical and ideologically-charged social environment, which radicalized the critical potential of conceptual art and its anticapitalist stance. In terms of practice, this did not mean that artists were more engaged with activism or daily politics than in the preceding decades or in concurrent art developments outside of Yugoslavia. Their field of struggle was mainly the bourgeois institution of art, but projects such as *October 75* at the SKC Gallery in Belgrade placed that struggle in direct relation with the state structures and political models governing culture.

According to an interview between the Prelom kolektiv (Infraction collective) with Dunja Blažević, she initiated *October 75* as an attempt to question the role of art in the framework of self-managed Yugoslav socialism, although there is no consensus on the exact



Figure 3: Counter-exhibition poster for *October 75* (1975). Student Cultural Center in Belgrade. Used with permission.



Figure 4: *The Case of Student Cultural Center* (1975) by Prelom kolektiv. Student Cultural Center in Belgrade. Used with permission.

genealogy of the project.³⁴ Dunja Blažević was a Belgrade-based art critic and curator, and the first “editor” of the visual arts programme of the SKC Gallery, from 1971 to 1975. *October 75* was part of a series of alternative *Octobers*, organized at SKC from its beginning in 1971 as a response to the *October Salon*, an annual exhibition in Belgrade that featured mainstream and modernist art. The *October Salon* could be seen as another manifestation of the Yugoslav oxymoronic structures that the students who revolted identified, as it glued together the revolutionary symbolism of “October” (an evocation of the October Revolution) and the quintessential bourgeois institution of the salon. However, according to Jelena Vesić, alternative *Octobers* did not merely represent the confrontation of an alternative scene with the official one; rather, they challenged this dichotomy, as the very space of the SKC was an “ambivalent combination of *horizontal* and *vertical* forms of organization,” while at the same time a state institution of culture and “the site of spontaneous, occasionally subversive gatherings of heterogeneous communities of artists, intellectuals, and political activists.”³⁵ Similarly, with *October 75*, Dunja Blažević, as the institution’s art program editor, symbolically withdrew from the position of authority by inviting these communities to horizontally engage in a “participatory artistic-curatorial-theoretical project,” a discussion about the relations of state politics and cultural production.³⁶

Instead of creating another exhibition (even if it were one of “progressive” art), Dunja Blažević invited artists and art historians to rethink their attitudes about art in the Yugoslav context, particularly in relation to the economic and ideological model of socialist self-management. Their ideas were documented in writing and the exhibition was then presented in the form of a publically distributed hectographed notebook, an experiment that resulted in a dematerialization of the exhibition and a radical departure from the “salon” idea of art that it confronted. Not everyone accepted participation in the project; the invitation to rethink self-management was, as Vesić suggests, seen by some as an imposition of “homework” in line with the ubiquitous state and Party-line propaganda of Yugoslav socialist self-management. On the other hand, the SKC Gallery as an institution founded by the state was already in such “collaboration,” and Vesić ultimately encourages us to read *October 75* as a stage where the Belgrade 1968’s appeal to “fight socialism with socialism” was re-enacted seven years later, but this time as “the translation of common social demands ... into artistically specific demands.”³⁷ The official project of socialist self-management, originally conceived as a path towards achieving communism and a withering away of the state, was, as it were, taken by its word: by addressing the theme of self-management, the participants of *October 75* truly put it into practice and questioned its emancipatory potential, at least as it was refracted in the field of art and culture.³⁸

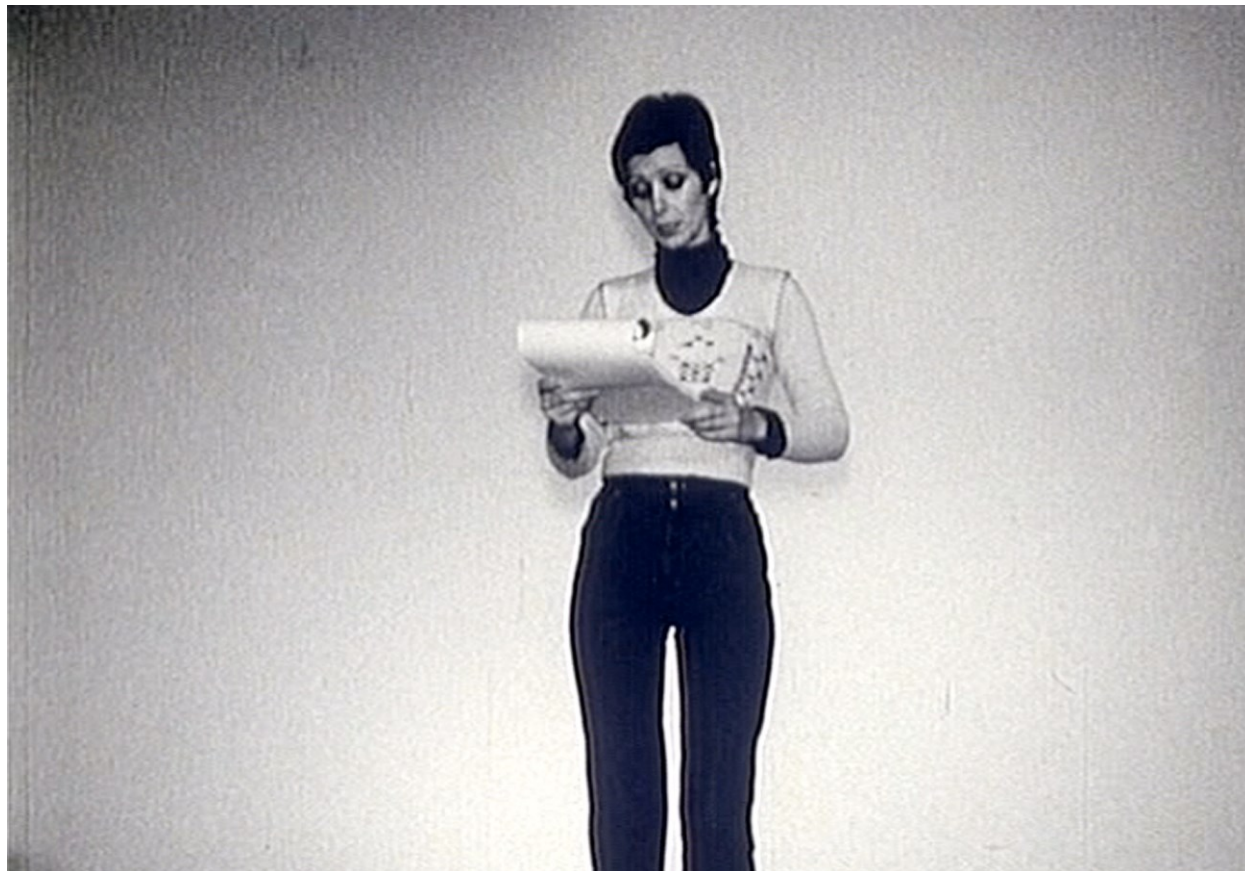


Figure 5: Lutz Becker's *Portrait of Dunja Blažević* (1975). Student Cultural Center in Belgrade. Used with Permission.

Blažević's curatorial gesture thus involved a literal translation of the discourse of self-management from the register of state to that of art and cultural politics. We could say that she demystified her own position as someone in whom, as a representative of the state institution, the two registers merged and revealed their interdependence. This also enabled a more general discussion on the existing models of interrelations between culture and politics. Repeated references in the texts to the inadequacies of the Western market-oriented and *l'art-pour-l'art* models, as well as the Eastern statist and instrumentalized notion of art, made apparent the need to find a "third way" for art. This is especially true for contributions by Blažević herself, but also Denegri, Raša Todosijević, and Zoran Popović, who gave his contribution the explicitly advocating title "In favor of self-managed art." The model of socialist self-management appeared to be a possible pathway for art that would at the same time be autonomous and socially engaged. However, culture in Yugoslavia was identified to have remained trapped within the petit-bourgeois frameworks where it existed merely as decoration, or, in Blažević's words, "while we keep on creating, through the private market, our own variant of the *nouveau riche* or *kleinbürgers*, art will remain a social

appendage, something it is not decent or cultured to be without...Is it not extremely comical to build a self-managing social system using the political means of a feudal or bourgeois structure?”³⁹ In other contributions art was portrayed literally as a political tool, its transformation and “permanent revolution,” as Raša Todosijević described it, also a way towards social revolution. In his contribution to *October 75*, we encounter yet again a critique of the appropriation and commodification of engaged art, primarily by the Western art establishment: “A CONSOLIDATED ESTABLISHMENT accepts art at a moment when its revolutionary and subversive spirit wanes. Thus the bourgeois society of the West today appropriates historical avant-gardes as their own history of art, and yet, did not the avant-gardes of that time spit in the face of that same society?”⁴⁰

The institutional critiques expressed in *October 75* thus surpass the tautological and art-for-art’s-sake twists that are often present in Western art of the 1960s and 1970s. Indeed, we can trace such critical characteristics throughout all of the projects presented in this paper. The undeniable links between the Yugoslav exhibitions and international events, plus the awareness of the artists’ and curators’ own marginal positions in relation to the international events, did not result in an emulation of Western art practices. Instead, exhibitions at the student centers enacted forms of translation that critically maneuvered between the “foreign” discourse on conceptual art and the “domestic” artistic landscape dominated by what is often dubbed “socialist modernism.”⁴¹ On a broader level, they triggered negotiations between these art spheres and the geopolitical landscapes of the liberal-capitalist West, the statist socialist East, and the non-aligned position of Yugoslav self-managed socialism. Such a transformative curatorial practice of translation thus established an imperative to search for new articulations of art and its relations to concrete social and political realities.

Curation Outside of the Museum and Gallery System

Curator and critic Ida Biard committed her practice to an examination of how the relations between art and politics shift, depending on geopolitical and institutional contexts. Her performative double perspective was enabled and shaped by connections to cities in both Eastern and Western Europe. Biard grew up in Zagreb and later studied in Paris. Starting in 1971 she initiated numerous projects in both cities, as well as others such as Belgrade, Novi Sad, Budapest, Dusseldorf, London, and Milan. Her long-term project, *La Galerie des Locataires* (Tenants’ Gallery), was a search for the autonomy of art so it could be free from both state and corporate sponsorship, including the affiliations and complicities such sponsorship implies. Although it was founded in Paris and known for its collaborations with artists that would later become key protagonists of the European conceptual art scene – such

as Daniel Buren, Christian Boltanski, Annette Messager, and Sarkis – *La Galerie*'s link with the Yugoslav (and specifically the Zagreb) scene was crucial.

The conceptual beginnings of *La Galerie* in 1972 were closely related to Biard's collaboration with the artist Goran Trbuljak, and it is precisely his approach to institutional critique that found its correlate in Biard's curatorial practice. Before their collaboration in Paris began, Trbuljak produced several projects in Zagreb, the most notable of which was his first major solo show at the SC Gallery in 1971. There he displayed nothing but the poster that advertised the exhibition which included his photographic self-portrait and the text, "I do not wish to show anything new or original." What Trbuljak aimed to exhibit in this and related projects were the very operations and ideologies that conditioned the production of art exhibitions, dependent upon canons, institutional hierarchies, and the myths of novelty and originality. In one interview, he called his projects "works-exhibitions," revealing how they could be read as an artistic translation of the curatorial.⁴²

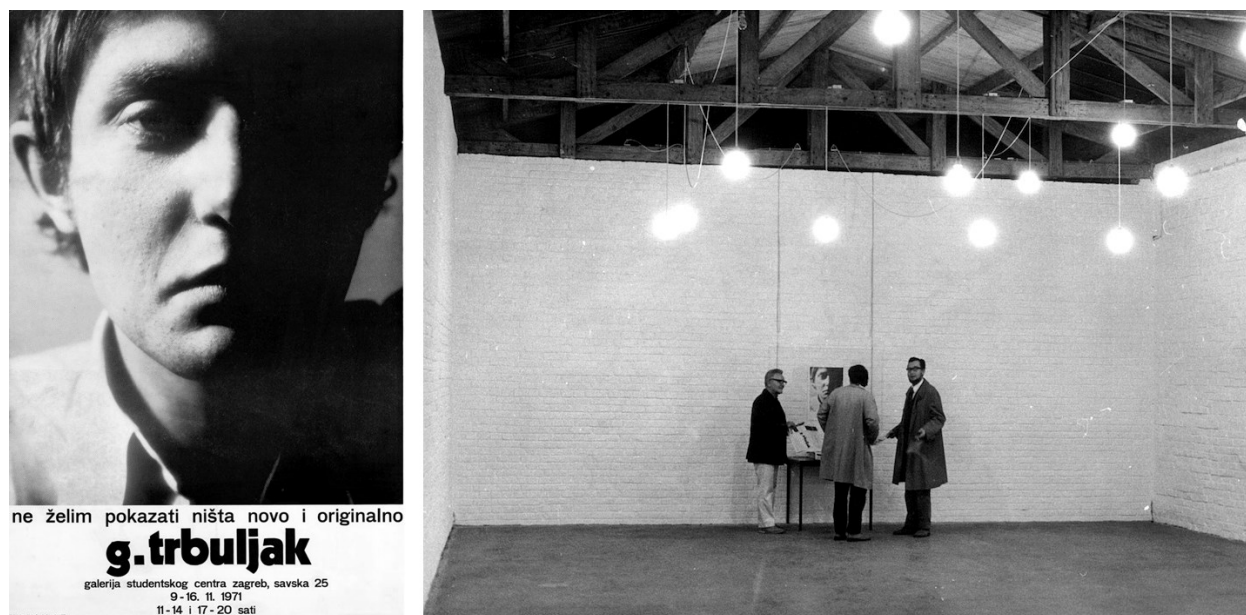


Figure 6 (left): Goran Trbuljak, *I do not wish to show anything new or original* (1971). Figure 7 (right): Exhibition view of Goran Trbuljak's *I do not wish to show anything new or original* (1971) at the Student Center Gallery in Zagreb. Photos courtesy of Goran Trbuljak. Used with permission.

In 1972, Trbuljak visited Paris where he walked into galleries and other arts institutions without identifying himself or showing any documentation of his work. He asked their directors to fill out a survey on whether or not they would exhibit the artwork he presented them, which was the survey itself.⁴³ Collecting the answers, he mapped the Paris gallery

scene in terms of its readiness to judge art not by the biography of the artist, or her or his oeuvre, but immediately as it were, at first sight. Trbuljak would continue to pursue his examination of art and the artist's potential anonymity, claiming a sort of transcendent ideal of "an art without artists, without criticism, without audience."⁴⁴ It is this utopianist belief in art, liberated from the constraints of its institutional conditioning, that *La Galerie des Locataires* and Trbuljak shared. Ida Biard and Trbuljak's acquaintance precedes his visit to Paris, and it would be impossible to claim any unidirectional "influence" between the two. Their relationship is better described in terms of synergy; it was a multidirectional web of translations, in which Trbuljak appropriated and incorporated elements of the critical, curatorial, and institutional art apparatuses, while Biard construed an experimental and nomadic gallery, with creative input and freedom usually ascribed to artistic endeavors.⁴⁵

Among the first exhibitions that *La Galerie* organized in 1973 in Biard's Paris apartment was *Information on the Work of Young Yugoslav Artists (1969-1973)*. The cover page of the exhibition brochure featured photographic documentation of Košćević's *The Exhibition of Women and Men*, which could be read as *La Galerie's* acknowledgment of a direct link to the experimental practices of the SC Gallery in Zagreb.⁴⁶ In November 1973, Biard curated in the SC Gallery *Another Opportunity to Be an Artist*, with the participation of 44 artists from Yugoslavia as well as other European countries such as France, Germany, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Poland, and Great Britain. Biard's curatorial statement, published in the SC Gallery newspaper, insisted that "The opportunity to be an 'artist' is not given by chance," which was a nod to an intervention by Trbuljak in 1973 at the Zagreb Gallery of Contemporary Art, where he exhibited only a poster of the Gallery's building with the words, "The fact that someone was given the opportunity to make an exhibition is more important than what will be shown in it."⁴⁷

Alongside *La Galerie's* ties to the Yugoslav scene, its intervention in the bourgeois system of art and its distribution of "opportunities" have been strongly informed by its embeddedness in the Parisian context, with the city's pressures to commercialize and institutionalize conceptual art. We have seen similar concerns in Košćević's and Blažević's projects; however, for them the threat of the art market was primarily external, a potential infiltration from the West.⁴⁸ Their work was anchored in thinking about the transformation of public art institutions within given socialist contexts, whereas Ida Biard almost utopically insisted that fully autonomous ways of producing and mediating art were possible beyond, or on the very edges of, the art system. Although it was based in Biard's Paris apartment, the "gallery" had no permanent residence, nor did it have a director or owner. The apartment functioned more as an index of *La Galerie's* credo of uniting art and life; it was somewhere to meet and communicate, rather than a programmatically governed exhibition space.⁴⁹ As noted in a text that could be considered *La Galerie's* manifesto, "*La Galerie des*

Locataires is a state of mind. It exists where it decides to be. It has no walls or decrees; it is not impossible. Its reason for existing: the artist is one whom others give the opportunity to be an artist.”⁵⁰ By subverting the idea of the artist as predestined genius and asserting instead that to become an artist is a socially conditioned process, *La Galerie* intervened into the very architecture of the bourgeois art system and its distribution of “opportunities.”

Contrary to what its name suggests, the activity of *La Galerie des Locataires* was not localized but nomadic. For a number of young artists, *La Galerie* opened up a platform through which their projects and ideas could be “communicated,” a term *La Galerie* used to describe its activities in opposition to “exhibited.” Artists were invited to send proposals to mailboxes at post offices in Paris, Milan, Zagreb, Dusseldorf, and New York. Biard realized the proposals according to instructions and presented them either in the window of her apartment or other public places throughout various cities. For example, in 1974 she realized Daniel Buren’s public interventions *Blue and Orange Stripes* in Budapest, and in that same year she also reproduced Sarkis’ signature, following his instructions, whenever and wherever she wished. Interestingly, conceptual art’s potential to be formulated as idea, and so overcome temporal and spatial divides, inadvertently created a new division between immaterial and material labor: *La Galerie* (i.e. Ida Biard) was outsourced to physically realize the “dematerialized” proposals, a practice that in many cases stemmed from a lack of funds and the impossibility for an artist to actually be present everywhere that *La Galerie* operated. Authorship remained tied to the artists, but it is important that the realization, the curation, was conceived also as a creative act. For example, the impressum of the *French Window* catalogue credits Goran Trbuljak with the “idea” (*idée*) for the project, while Ida Biard is credited for the “concept and realization” (*conception et réalisation*).⁵¹ It is unclear from the documentation where they drew the borders between the “idea” and the “concept,” but it is clear that the concept as the key substance of conceptual art was translated into curatorial practice.

French Window also enables insight into *La Galerie*’s approach to a more conventional feature of curating: selection. Here, the choosing of proposals was deemed unnecessary as *La Galerie* counted on “a parallel state of mind,” a form of mutual recognition that privileged “ethics over aesthetics.” An invitation to artists published in 1973 in *Art Vivant* magazine summed up this principle in the following way: “The artists whose works (work + action) transcend the boundaries of the aesthetic and are rather situated in ethics are informed of the existence of FRENCH WINDOW. This space is exclusively oriented onto the street. The works will be presented in the order of their arrival to the address listed below.”⁵² In other words, “ethics over aesthetics” was a kind of passcode that unlocked the door – or window – of opportunity that *La Galerie* offered: one of becoming or continuing to be an artist. An artist who agreed with such a stance towards art production was admitted into the program

without further judgment on her or his work. A mere submission to one of the mailboxes was proof enough of the “parallel state of mind,” as those who did not share that “state” would not desire to participate in the first place.

La Galerie additionally commissioned and produced artist projects in the “living spaces” of the city among its residents – the streets, marketplaces, post offices, cinemas, and taxis – experimenting with strategies that communicate art to the public and, again, distancing itself from conventional gallery and museum presentations. André Cadéré’s contribution was to secretly “infiltrate” into the opening of a solo show at the prestigious Maeght Gallery in Paris, which created an exhibition within an exhibition, and intervened directly into the existing market-driven distribution of opportunities. In the framework of the Ninth International *Malerwochen* (“painting week”) at the Neue Galerie am Landesmuseum Joanneum in Graz (1975), instead of showing works of art, Biard presented a living person, Nina Kujundžić, as someone “who wished to become an artist.” In Zagreb, Biard produced curatorial interventions such as placing artworks on billboards (*The Yugoslav Vitrine*, 1973), as well as in movie theaters (*Balkan Cinema*, 1974) where she projected slides with works of art to replace advertisements during the breaks.



Figure 8: André Cadéré and *La Galerie des Locataires*, intervention at an exhibition opening at Maeght Gallery, Paris (1973). Image courtesy of Ida Biard. Used with permission.

La Galerie's anti-commercial stance was not a mere statement that reflected the global new-leftist spirit of the times; it was rather a manifesto exercised by almost militant rigor. Reasserting its critical position in relation to the art market and art institutions, *La Galerie* introduced in 1975 the *Moral Contract*, by which the artists who signed it promise(d) to "analyze the relation of the space where she/he exhibits with the work that is exhibited" and to "explain the aims of her/his interventions in traditional exhibition venues."⁵³ *La Galerie* for its part agreed to "remain an open field of communication," and to "intervene in the structures of existing relations between artists and galleries."⁵⁴ Here, the earlier postulate of "ethics over aesthetics" was translated into a "moral" commitment, but now the requirements for admission became more strict and formalized in the form of a contract. The *Moral Contract* implied that that the complicity of artists in the "traditional" system of art institutions and galleries was a much more personal question related to the moral integrity of the artist as an individual, with a choice to either resist or perpetuate that system, posited as a choice between good and bad. At the same time, in order to give weight to the raised stakes, *La Galerie* appropriated the contract form used to determine the ownership and value of artworks whose "dematerialized" state now threatened that everything could be art and everyone an artist. In order to assure authenticity, the artists' signature was no longer required on paintings, but on contracts. In its typical gesture of translating the institutional into a utopian language of art, *La Galerie* used the contract not to warrant the authenticity and value of individual artworks, but to assert its very own oppositional position, to which it simultaneously committed the artists.

Unlike Košćević's first exhibitions in Zagreb that evolved in the context of a highly active but nonetheless peripheral scene, Biard's projects featured individuals who would soon become the most well-known artists of the 1970s. However, in 1976 Biard detected an important change that had been occurring in the Western art world since the beginning of the 1970s: artists were increasingly breaking the *Moral Contract* as they uncritically collaborated with, and profited from, the commercial and capitalist art world. Biard thus sent a letter to all of her previous artist-collaborators, proclaiming that, "In order to express its disagreement with the conduct of artists/so-called dissenters and the avant-garde within the current system of the art market, LA GALERIE DES LOCATAIRES is on strike and will not communicate any so-called artistic work as of the 7th of March 1976."⁵⁵ Inverting the logic by which artists are expected to rebel against the system while curators and critics perpetuate it and secure their positions within its hierarchies, Biard as a curator/gallerist protested against the integration of artists into the commodity system thereby betraying the "essence" of conceptual art and their own earlier practice. The strike was not an empty gesture; it lasted until 1981, when *La Galerie* resumed its activities, although with less intensity, occasionally entering into new collaborations and initiating new projects.⁵⁶

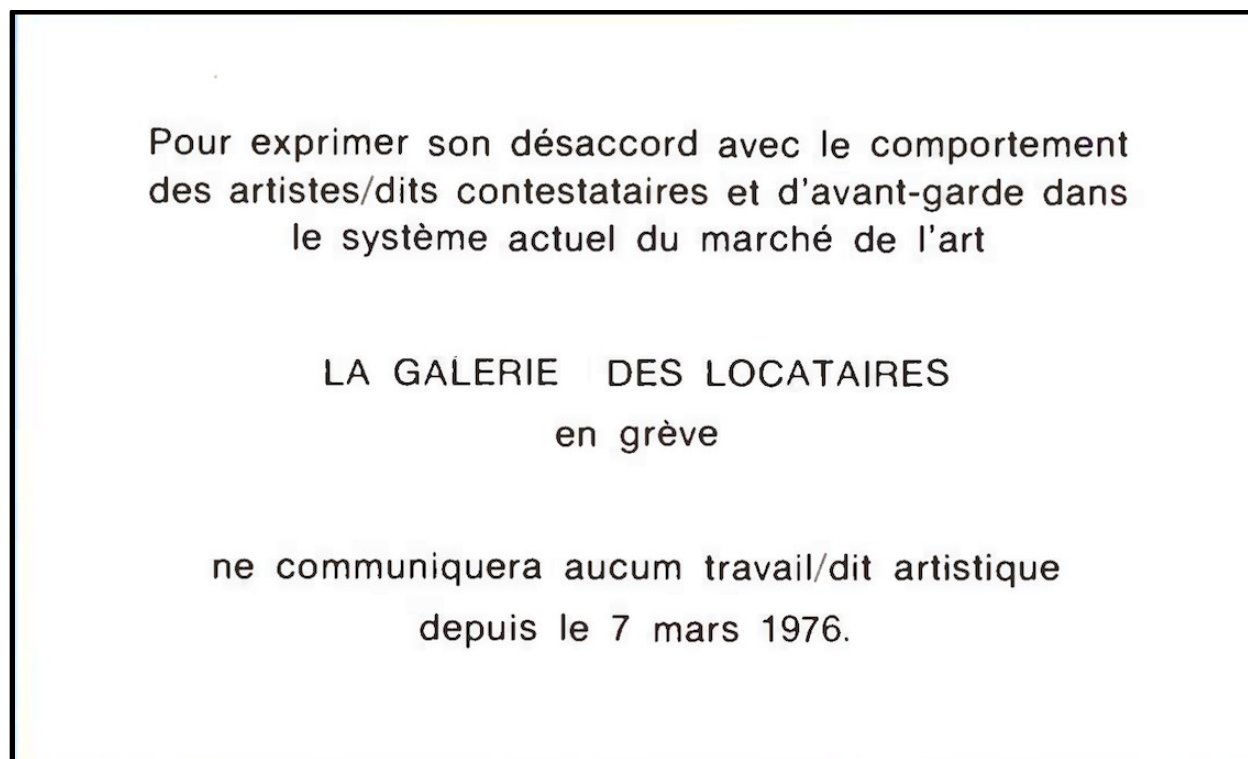


Figure 9: Ida Biard, *La Galerie des Locataires, On Strike* (1976). Image courtesy of Ida Biard. Used with permission.

The parallel with Košćević's act of disobedience in *Postal Packages* is telling. In both cases – and less explicitly in *October 75* – we have a curator refusing to exhibit, an exhibition-maker launching a boycott on any further exhibition until basic questions about the purpose of art within established social, political, and economic relations are addressed, until a “moral contract” that clearly defined an oppositional role for art is articulated and endorsed. They each showed how a curator's responsibility is not only to exhibit, but also to not exhibit. Their acts of censorship were not directed against the freedom of artistic (or any other) expression, but were overt political statements that called for a reconsideration of art and curation in the broader social relations that govern the conditions of im/material labor and the distribution of wealth.

Interestingly, Biard noted that the *Strike* was initiated precisely after she moved back to Zagreb from Paris in 1975, after which she occasionally visited Paris, where she witnessed the increasing power of the market and art institutions. The vantage point of the periphery, which starkly contrasted to the French context, is what enabled her to see with more clarity the paradoxes of conceptual art and the art system. In 1979, the Belgrade artist Goran Đorđević initiated another boycott gesture: the *International Strike of Artists*, for which he sent out letters to Yugoslav as well as international artists and called for an end to any activities

within the art system. The responses he received from most international artists revealed that they considered his idea to be meaningless and naïve. However, it is precisely this “naïveté,” this stubborn rejection of the art system that was the basis of *La Galerie des Locataires*’ strike, that can be traced throughout many other examples within New Artistic and Curatorial Practice. Yugoslav artists and curators of the period ultimately dared to pose questions about alternative ways to create and curate art, either by searching for an “outside” (as in the case of *La Galerie*), or pursuing autonomy from “inside” a state institution and the ideological framework of socialist self-management (as in the case of the Student Centers).

Historicization and the Political Potentials of Curatorial Practice

Želimir Košćević, Dunja Blažević, and Ida Biard shared a politics and methodology that eschewed the logic of curation as a stable exhibition of art. Their projects did not merely show dematerialized or critical art; they searched for modes of dematerialization, critique, and intervention in their own right. Curation for them became about idea and action, with all the political implications and potentials that such transformation from object to praxis, from commodity to activation and activist gesture, implied. They did not assume the role of the artist, or merely copy existing artistic procedures, but rather they radically undermined the borders that have traditionally divided artists and curators. Their projects engaged in the processes of translation, which, as Benjamin warned, is not a mere transfer of information or a message, but is a transformation of both the original and the translating languages. In Rudolf Panwitz’s words, which Benjamin famously quoted, “The basic error of the translator is that he preserves the state in which his own language happens to be instead of allowing his language to be powerfully affected by the foreign tongue.”⁵⁷ We may understand Košćević, Blažević, and Biard as early examples of curators who rejected the domestication of artists and artistic practices into a fluent and stable vocabulary of curatorial discourse, into institutional and market-driven agendas or the easy flow of global capital, where the art world reveals itself to be nothing but a micro-model of global geopolitical and economic relations of power. Through gestures directed against artists’ complicity with the spectacle- and career-oriented world of art, they also challenged the persistent sacrality of art creation and the artwork – which was deconstructed but not annulled by conceptualism – proving that curation (and other practices, by implication) wields equal creative and political potential.

Instead of perpetuating artist-curator dichotomies and warning about a newly arisen “power” of the curator (presently a prominent issue), we should advocate for a radical interrelationality between these two positions, which ultimately means a critical deconstruction and rearticulation of both. Such an approach could enable an exploration of the ways in which artistic and curatorial practices may be mutually empowering and

transformative, in order to resist “preserving” the state in which the art world “happens to be.” This, however, should not be understood as an annihilation of differences between artistic and curatorial practices. Nor should the constant process of translation be understood in this way – especially not today, when there is so much hype around curation, which itself relies upon perpetuating a limited set of methods and discursive mannerisms. If we were to characterize *La Galerie des Locataires*, *October 75*, *Postal Packages*, and *The Exhibition of Women and Men* – as well as other projects that are similar to them – as artistic endeavors that have eliminated the distinctions between artists and curators, we would negate the transformative political potentials of curatorial practice. At the same time, we would allow curatorial practice to hide behind the alibi of its dependence on art production and institutional frameworks. Critical examples of the dematerialization and politicization of the exhibition in Yugoslavia during the 1960s and 1970s, as modes of institutional critique, reveal to us the transformative power and responsibilities that curators still have in our present moment. This is why the historicization and theorization of exhibitionary practices is so crucial: to establish a foundation and wider political significance for working in the present.

Notes:

¹ Altshuler (1998), page 236. Altshuler also refers to “dematerialization” in relation to curatorial practices of the 1960s and 1970s, citing projects by Lucy Lippard, Seth Siegelaub, and Harald Szeemann.

² “It is the task of the translator to release in his own language that pure language which is under the spell of another, to liberate the language imprisoned in a work in his re-creation of that work.” Benjamin (2004), page 82.

³ New Artistic Practice was informed by its opposition to the modernist understanding of art as an autonomous and self-contained field, as well as the bourgeois approach to art as a source of aesthetic enjoyment. Instead, it called for a decommmodification and democratization of art, a critique of institutions and the art system, as well as active engagement of art in social processes and ideological discourses. Some of its protagonists include: Sanja Iveković, Mladen Stilinović, Goran Trbuljak, Braco Dimitrijević, Tomislav Gotovac, OHO Group, Marina Abramović, Raša Todosijević, Goran Đorđević, and others. See Susovski (1978).

⁴ It should be noted that, unlike the Zagreb Student Center that was formed already in 1957, the Belgrade Student Cultural Center evolved as a direct response to the 1968 student protests.

⁵ See Prelom kolektiv's interview with Šuvaković in Prelom kolektiv (2008), page 85. Šuvaković refers to a statement by Achille Bonito Oliva who, during a visit to Belgrade, said that the Center's activities were admirable, but represented a sort of reservation, in which the state enclosed them in order to prevent greater impact. As insightful and provocative as such interpretations are, they are themselves conditioned by a limited, if never explained, notion of "impact."

⁶ See for example Vesić (2012) and her analysis of the SKC Belgrade as a performative "institution-in-movement" or "institution-movement," which challenged the stability of the boundary between the state and self-organization. See also Denegri (2003); Koščević (1978).

⁷ For example, Szeemann (1968).

⁸ For an extended discussion of how dematerialized art has been commodified, including how artistic critiques of capitalism have been integrated into its systems, see Lippard (1997), pages 263-64. See also Boltanski and Chiapello (2005).

⁹ See for example Susovski (1978; 1982). Activities of the Student Center Gallery in Zagreb have been documented regularly through the Gallery's Newspaper, as well in the book published on the tenth anniversary of the gallery (Koščević 1975). See also Koščević (1978).

¹⁰ Matičević (1978), page 23. Translation slightly modified.

¹¹ Matičević (1978), page 23.

¹² Many other projects shared similar ideological propositions, as well as the idea of artistic and exhibition practice as a socially-constructive and transformative activity. This is primarily the case in numerous exhibition projects realized in public space and the city in the beginning of the 1970s in Zagreb, whose history and present repercussions could be read through a line of curatorial practice as a democratization of art by going beyond gallery walls and activating direct participation of citizens. These are, for example, the section *Proposition* at the 1971 Zagreb Salon ("The City as the Scene of Visual Happening"), the exhibition *Possibilities*, organized by the Gallery of Contemporary Art Zagreb, 1971, the project *Popular*

Festivities in New Zagreb (1975) which could be read as precursor of community art in the local context. Even this short list reveals that curatorial practice is not merely a presentation of art, but one that often instigates the very production of individual artworks as well as whole artistic trends (for example, the famous works *Landed Sun* by Ivan Kožarić or *Accidental Passer-By* by Braco Dimitrijević have been produced as part of the above projects and would not be possible without wider institutional support and critical and ideological valorization of such art.

Another potential line could be formulated as curatorial interventions into art critique and art history, encompassing numerous projects that set relevant ground for interpreting and historicizing new artistic practices simultaneously as they developed, or that included some earlier phenomena in the interpretative and ideological framework of “new art.” These are exhibitions such as *Examples of Conceptual Art in Yugoslavia*, by Ješa Denegri and Biljana Tomić, Museum of Contemporary Art, Belgrade (1971); *Documents on Post-Object Phenomena in Yugoslav Art 1968-1973*, Museum of Contemporary Art, Belgrade (1973); *Gorgona* by Nena Dimitrijević, Gallery of Contemporary Art, Zagreb (1977), and key exhibitions that historicized the new art: *New Art Practice in Yugoslavia 1968-1978*, Gallery of Contemporary Art, Zagreb (1978), *Innovations in Croatian Art of the Seventies*, Gallery of Contemporary Art, Zagreb (1982), *New Art in Serbia 1970-1980, Individuals, groups, phenomena*, Museum of Contemporary Art, Belgrade (1983).

¹³ The New Tendencies movement was a series of international exhibitions organized by the Zagreb Gallery of Contemporary Art between 1961 and 1973, propagating neo-constructivism, op-art, kinetic art, art as research, and computer art. See Rosen (2011).

¹⁴ Moderna Museet had, under the directorship of Hultén, among the most experimental approach to exhibition making. See Obrist (1997).

¹⁵ Excerpt from the exhibition statement addressing the visitors, published in the gallery’s newspaper. *Novine Galerije SC* (1968/69), page 21. The text is not signed, but according to Koščević, it was written in collaboration with Vjeran Zuppa.

¹⁶ This refers primarily to the work of Braco Dimitrijević and Goran Trbuljak, both concerned with the mechanisms by which something becomes art or someone becomes an artist within the art system.

¹⁷ Cited in Lippard (1997), page IX.

¹⁸ This project could also be read from the perspective of historical and ideological propositions of exhibition, or what Tony Bennett calls the *exhibitionary complex*. Referring to the first world exhibitions in the 19th century, Bennett discusses the architecture of the exhibition and its panoptic qualities, framing the audience as those who observe but are also being observed. Bennett (2005), pages 58-80.

¹⁹ The Seventh Paris Biennial was also presented as a major break with its previous editions, by focusing on more experimental approaches to making art. Three main programs were presented at the biennial: conceptual art, hyperrealism, and interventions. The mail art section (“Envoi”), according to the organizers, was an “annexed section” gathering projects that are “close to,” but are not quite, conceptual art. See Boudaille (1971).

²⁰ See Denegri (2003), pages 27-29.

²¹ *Novine Galerije Nova* (1972), page 135. My translation. It is published next to an unsigned text that reads as a curatorial statement of the section “Postal Packages” (*Envoi*) at the Seventh Paris Biennial. The text is in fact composed of excerpts from Jean-Marc Poinso’s “La communication à distance et l’objet esthétique,” published in the framework of the Biennial. See Poinso (1971).

²² *Novine Galerije Nova* (1972), page 135.

²³ *Novine Galerije Nova* (1972), page 135.

²⁴ Seth Sigelaub cited in Osbourne (2011), page 29.

²⁵ Venuti (2005), page 19 and onwards.

²⁶ “Conceptual art, one might say, is art about the cultural act of definition – paradigmatically, but by no means exclusively, the definition of ‘art.’” Osbourne (2011), page 14. In fact, we are dealing here with the appropriation of critical and theoretical discourse by art, or their translation into artistic practice.

²⁷ Buchloh (1990), page 118. Here we could also talk about translations of the administrative language into artistic practice.

²⁸ Cited in Buchloh (1990), page 118.

²⁹ Vidokle (2010).

³⁰ *Novine Galerije Nova* (1968/69), page 21. Here the reference is to the various magazines with erotic content that started appearing in Yugoslavia during this period.

³¹ Denegri (2003), page 23.

³² For an analysis of representations of femininity in popular culture as a sign of the threat of invasion of Western decadence, see Bago (2013).

³³ Vesić (2012), page 32.

³⁴ There are two versions of the history of *October 75*. One claims that it evolved without individual authorship and under the influence of the discursive practice of the Art & Language group and their presentation in Belgrade in 1975. The other refers to the exhibition as initiative of Dunja Blažević, also according to her own testimony in the interview given in the framework of the project SKC in ŠKUC. See Prelom kolektiv (2008), pages 82-83.

³⁵ Vesić (2012), pages 32-33.

³⁶ Vesić (2012), pages 35 and 43.

³⁷ Vesić (2012), page 35.

³⁸ “In other words, one may say that the protagonists of *October 75* used Kardelj’s self-management as a starting point, embodied in a critique of the state as the constitutive element of state praxis, in order to *actually* criticize the state, or rather the state institution of art.” Vesić (2012), page 45.

³⁹ Dunja Blažević cited in Prelom kolektiv (2008), page 7.

⁴⁰ Raša Todosijević cited in Prelom kolektiv (2008), page 9.

⁴¹ “Socialist modernism” is used to refer to Yugoslav modernist, i.e. autonomous, art supported by the state – unlike most other socialist countries that advocated socialist-realist art, or art directly engaged in the building of socialism.

⁴² Petercol (1981), page 15.

⁴³ The form included an image of the gallery exterior, the question, and the three available answers (yes, no, and maybe), as well as the space for the signatures of the gallery director and the “anonymous artist.”

⁴⁴ It is thus Biard’s response to Trbuljak’s anonymous artist Paris query in November 1972 that can be read, as I have suggested elsewhere, as the marker of this synergy, a symbolic “initiatory encounter” that shaped *La Galerie’s* entire mission: “to construe a gallery as a space without walls, and one of lived experience; to renounce the system of art driven by spectacle and the market; to profess that an ‘outside’ was possible; and to constantly invite others to join this pursuit.” From a text-based work by Goran Trbuljak. Cited in Trbuljak (1973), no page numbers.

⁴⁵ Bago (2012), page 123.

⁴⁶ Analogously, the activities of *La Galerie* were regularly announced in the Student Center’s newspaper, and there were a number of direct collaborations as well: *La Galerie’s* project in the Zagreb “Balkan” cinema (1975) was made in collaboration with the SC Gallery, which was also a publisher, in 1975, of the book documenting Biard and Trbuljak’s collaborative project, *The French Window*.

⁴⁷ *Novine Galerije SC* (1973), page 2. Trbuljak had already introduced the theme of opportunity in an earlier work: in July 1972, he performed in Zagreb the piece *Referendum*, in which he asked the passers-by to vote whether he was or was not an artist. The work was performed under the motto that the “artist was the one whom the society grants with an opportunity to be an artist.” Cited in Trbuljak (1973), no page numbers.

⁴⁸ Even when a market can be identified as having developed in Yugoslavia, the threat does not extend to the New Art Practices, but to conventional art forms and genres connected mostly to paintings for home interiors.

⁴⁹ For an analysis of *La Galerie des Locataires* as an alternative concept of autonomous space of merging life and work, as well as its work with artists through a constant negotiation of contracts of hospitality, see Bago (2012).

⁵⁰ *Simplon-Express* (1989), page 1.

⁵¹ *French Window* (1973).

⁵² *French Window* (1973). My translation.

⁵³ My translation of the text from an example of a signed moral contract; digital reproduction from my research archive.

⁵⁴ See note directly above.

⁵⁵ *Simplon-Express* (1989), page 93.

⁵⁶ In June 2012 the Galerie realized the project *Simplon-Express: the Return*, taking place in a train from Zagreb to Paris and referring to the journey that took place in the opposite direction in 1989 (*Simplon-Express*).

⁵⁷ Rudolf Pannwitz, cited in Benjamin (2004), page 22.

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