

ivana
bago

zanimanje:
kustos

occupation:
curator

TEČAJ ZA KUSTOSE
SUVREMENE UMJETNOSTI
U LJUBLJANI

THE COURSE FOR CURATORS
OF CONTEMPORARY ART
IN LJUBLJANA

▼ U Zavodu za suvremenu umjetnost SCCA u Ljubljani prije nekoliko mjeseci je započeo još jedan, deveti po redu, *Tečaj za kustose suvremene umjetnosti*. Pokrenut 1997. godine, tečaj je u međuvremenu postao dijelom šire zasnovanog, jednogodišnjeg programa *Svijeta umjetnosti - škole za suvremenu umjetnost*, koja uključuje i *Seminar iz pisanja o suvremenoj umjetnosti*, kao i niz teorijskih predavanja o kustoskim i umjetničkim praksama suvremene umjetnosti. Ovim se programom SCCA u Ljubljani pridružuje brojnim institucijama u Europi koje još od kraja osamdesetih i početka devedesetih godina 20. stoljeća razvijaju i nude različite obrazovne programe za kustose poput, primjerice, već legendarne École du Magasin u Grenobleu ili izuzetno popularnog programa centra De Appel u Amsterdamu. Ljubljanska škola ima posebno značenje u lokalnom, ali i u širem regionalnom kontekstu kao prva i još uvijek jedina "škola za suvremenu umjetnost" sa sistematiziranim programom i višegodišnjim djelovanjem na području bivše Jugoslavije.

Predstaviti se kao kustos suvremene umjetnosti pred neupućenim sugovornikom redovito povlači rizik potencijalnog nesporazuma i potrebe dodatnih objašnjenja, što ponekad izaziva nelagodu, podsjećajući na još uvijek nedovoljno jasno određenje ove profesije. Umnažanje i raznolikost obrazovnih programa za kustose, koji sežu od jednokratnih radionica preko višemjesečnih tečajeva do doktorskih studija, ukazuju, međutim, na sve veću atraktivnost posla kustosa, te dokazuju, odnosno ozakonjuju nezavisni status ove profesije, unatoč nepostojanju konsensusa o njezinoj definiciji, razini suvereniteta a i o samoj potrebi specijalističkoga obrazovanja. Neki od postojećih obrazovnih programa nastoje problematizirati upravo ulogu i položaj kustosa unutar sustava umjetničke proizvodnje, kao i društva općenito, te se fokusiraju se na teoretizaciju i historizaciju same profesije, potičući preispitivački i (samo)kritički način kustoskog djelovanja. Kako na temeljnoj, praktičnoj razini ipak postoji općeprihvaćena i pojednostavljena definicija kustosa kao osobe zadužene za selekciju i organizaciju izložbi suvremene umjetnosti, tako je i fokus većine obrazovnih programa za kustose temeljen upravo na procesu realizacije zajedničkoga projekta / izložbe.

Ljubljanski tečaj koncipiran je kako bi, prije svega, polaznicima omogućio prvi sus-

● The ninth "edition" of the *Course for Curators of Contemporary Art* is currently taking place at the Institute of Contemporary Art SCCA-Ljubljana. Since 1997, when it was launched, the course has become part of a more complex, yearly program of the *World of Art - School for Contemporary Art*, which includes also the *Seminar of Writing on Contemporary Art*, a series of theoretical lectures on contemporary curatorial and art praxes and a yearly publication, both presenting and expanding the content of the whole program. The *World of Art* is one of numerous programs of curatorial education in Europe, where they were first initiated and developed at the end of the eighties and the beginning of the nineties, by institutions such as the already legendary École du Magasin in Grenoble, or De Appel centre in Amsterdam, which hosts one of the most popular curatorial programs in Europe. The school in Ljubljana has a special significance in the local, but also the regional context, remaining the first and the only "school for contemporary art" in the region, with a precisely defined program and almost a decade of work behind it.

Declaring oneself a curator of contemporary art - in the company of people who are not art professionals - always involves the risk of potential misunderstanding and need for further explanation which is sometimes an unpleasant reminder of this profession's lack of clear definition. The proliferation and diversity of educational curatorial programs - ranging from small workshops, more complex curatorial courses to academic postgraduate studies - evidence, however, an increasing popularity of curatorship, while at the same time "proving", i.e., legitimizing the independent status of the profession, despite the lack of consensus about its definition, level of sovereignty and, with it, the necessity of specialized education. Some of these educational models focus exactly on the problematics of the role and position of curator within the system of art production and society in general, by encouraging the study (and also the production) of the yet undeveloped theory and history of curatorship, stimulating a reflexive and (self)critical model of curatorial work. As there exists, on the basic, practical level, a widely accepted and simplified definition of curator as someone in charge of commissioning and selecting artworks and organizing contemporary art exhibitions, most educational programs for curators focus, however, on the process

1. Polaznici Tečaja za kustose suvremene umjetnosti SCCA pri radu s mentorima Nevenkom Šivavec, Alenom Ožboltom i Barbarom Borčić / *Attendants of the Course for Curators of Contemporary Art SCCA during the work with mentors Nevenka Šivavec, Alen Ožbolt and Barbara Borčić*, Ljubljana, 2004/5.

ret s praksom osmišljavanja novih izložbenih projekata, s različitim mogućnostima njihove realizacije, kako bi im se ponudilo iskustvo grupnog rada, rada s umjetnicima, medijima, sponzorima, itd. Na samom se početku polaznicima tečaja postavlja određeni okvir unutar kojega će se odvijati njihovo istraživanje, koje je ujedno polazište za završnu izložbu. U akademskoj godini 2004./05. zadani okvir temeljio se na istraživanju slovenske suvremene umjetnosti nastale tijekom proteklog desetljeća. Zadatak stalnoga praćenja aktualnih zbivanja, detaljnog proučavanja rada pojedinih umjetnika i kustosa, "mapiranje" dominantnih strujanja na sceni itd., za polaznike tečaja često predstavlja i prvi susret sa sustavnijim proučavanjem suvremene umjetnosti. Budući da se uglavnom radi o studentima i apsolventima povijesti umjetnosti, čiji studij na domaćim sveučilištima programski najčešće zanemaruje dionicu suvremene umjetnosti, odnosno njenu povijest i teoriju, takvi tečajevi za studente/polaznike nerijetko predstavljaju inicijaciju i suočavanje s novom gradom. Tijek i karakter tečaja tako bi se na provedbenoj razini mogao uspore-

of development and realization of a final, collaborative project / exhibition.

The course in Ljubljana is conceived as an introduction into the praxes of conceptualizing new exhibition projects, analysing different possibilities of their realization, providing opportunities for group work, experience of working with artists, the media, donators, etc. A certain frame is set from the start, defining the range of research and forming a base for the conceptualization and realization the final exhibition. In the year 2004/05, when I attended the course, this frame was set around the study of contemporary Slovene art of the last decade. The course participants are expected to actively engage in keeping track of art exhibitions and events, in mapping the dominant tendencies and working on a detailed study of individual artists, curators, art strategies, etc. For the course participants, mostly art history students at local universities - in which the teaching of art history is often seriously lacking in the study of history and theory of contemporary art - engagement in these kinds of tasks is often their first encounter with a systematic research of con-

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diti sa zadatkom stranoga, gostujućeg kustosa kojemu je cilj osmisliti skupnu izložbu na temelju produkcije koja mu je dotada bila nepoznata. Uz vodstvo dvaju mentora (u pravilu jednoga umjetnika i jednoga kustosa), polaznici tečaja na temelju proučenoga "gradiva" i brojnih diskusija pronalaze zajednički koncept koji se zatim razrađuje, nadograđuje te, na kraju, konkretizira u obliku završne izložbe, uz redovitu suradnju s ljubljanskom Galerijom Škuc.

Kao polaznica prošlogodišnjeg tečaja za kustose u Ljubljani, najdragocijenijim iskustvima smatram redovite i mnogobrojne susrete s umjetnicima i kustosima, tijekom kojih smo imali priliku iz prve ruke saznati o njihovoj radu, stavovima, ciljevima i strategijama te istovremeno kroz diskusije osvjestiti formiranje vlastitih sklonosti i želja te smjernice budućeg pozicioniranja. Tečaj za kustose prije svega je platforma koja polaznicima nudi široki raspon mogućnosti te otvara pristup znanjima, ljudima i sadržajima do kojih bi, bez takve podrške, put bio, u najmanju ruku, dugotrajniji. Količina stečenog znanja, motivacije i nadahnuća za daljnji rad ovisi prvenstveno o samim polaznicima tečaja, što je možda i jedna od problematičnih točaka: budući da je doprinos svakog pojedinog polaznika ključan za dinamiku cijeloga tečaja i njegove rezultate, kvaliteta tečaja uvijek ovisi o sastavu i grupnoj dinamici koja se više ili manje uspije formirati tijekom samog tečaja. Naime, u lokalnom kontekstu u kojem standardni modeli obrazovanja uglavnom ne potiču samostalnu inicijativu učenika i studenata i u kojemu se ne razvijaju "eksperimentalni" načini rada, kolegijalni odnos s mentorima i prepuštanje inicijative studentima naučenima na pasivnost i poštivanje autoriteta ne donosi nužno najbolje moguće rezultate.

Ljubljanska *Škola za suvremenu umjetnost* može se, međutim, pohvaliti činjenicom da polaznici njezinih programa kasnije u velikom broju postaju aktivni sudionici domaće, pa i međunarodne, suvremene umjetničke scene, od kojih neki preuzimaju odgovorne pozicije u muzejima i drugim institucijama, dok drugi rade kao samostalni kustosi i kritičari. Taj uspjeh, naravno, doista odražava razinu kvalitete programa tečaja, kao i samih polaznika i njihova angažmana, ali takvi podaci upućuju prije svega na činjenicu da sada postoji institucionalizirano (iako u odnosu na sveučilište još uvijek "neformalno" i "nezavisno") mjesto na kojemu se obrazuju buduće generacije kustosa i

temporary art. In that sense, courses like these are a true initiation and a "confrontation" with a new subject matter. On the practical level, the experience of the course resembles the experience and procedures of a visiting curator, invited to set up a group, "thematic" exhibition, based on a local art production he was, until then, unfamiliar with. With constant coordination and supervision by the two tutors (usually one artist and one curator), the students meet various artists and curators, research and discuss their work and the dominant art tendencies on the scene. Based on this research, numerous discussions and individual ideas of each participant, a general concept for the exhibition is set, then analysed, upgraded and, finally, materialized in the form of the final exhibition in Škuc Gallery in Ljubljana, which is the permanent partner of the curatorial course.

The experiences I found most rewarding, as participant of last year's Ljubljana course for curators, are regular meetings with artists and curators, offering a firsthand opportunity to learn about and from their work, their attitudes, objectives and strategies, enabling us, at the same time, to develop an awareness about the process of formation of our own inclinations and desires, and direct us in the search of the ways of our own future positioning. The course for curators is primarily a platform, offering a wide range of possibilities and opening doors into new insights, new information and new people. Without such support, this "introductory" process would certainly be more difficult and longer, to say the least. The level of acquired knowledge, motivation and inspiration for future work depends primarily on each individual student, which is, maybe, one of the problematic aspects of the course: since the individual contribution of each course participant is crucial for the overall process of the course, including its final "results", its quality always depends on the structure of participants and a group dynamics, which establishes itself more or less successfully during the course. In the local context, in which standard models of education usually discourage independent student initiative and where "experimental" models of teaching barely exist, encouraging an informal, partnership-based relation with the mentors and leaving initiative to students - accustomed to passivity and respect of authority - is not necessarily the best possible approach.

kritičara, dok je prije bilo nesumnjivo teže ući u trag putevima kojima neadekvatno obrazovani mladi povjesničari umjetnosti stječu kvalifikacije unutar struktura suvremene umjetnosti, kuratorstva i kritike, a posebno sistematizirati takve puteve. Ovakvim iščitavanjem statističkih podataka postaje jasno da ljubljanska *Škola za suvremenu umjetnost* nosi teret velike zadaće i odgovornosti za buduće naraštaje sudionika, a samim time i za budući razvoj događanja na domaćoj, kao i široj, sceni suvremene umjetnosti. Jedno je sigurno: *Svijet umjetnosti - škola za suvremenu umjetnost* neprekidno se razvija, uvijek iznova razrađujući svoje programe na temelju vlastitih iskustava, međunarodnih modela te, prvenstveno, povratnih informacija samih polaznika. Jedna od mogućnosti koja se razmatra je transformacija škole u ozbiljan dvogodišnji međunarodni program koji bi postao regionalno pa i međunarodno relevantno središte obrazovanja novih naraštaja kustosa i kritičara suvremene umjetnosti. Bez obzira na oblik u koji će evoluirati, namijenjen budućim kustosima iz regije ili cijeloga svijeta, treba očekivati da će se ljubljanska *Škola za suvremenu umjetnost*, kao uostalom i SCCA u Ljubljani, nastaviti razvijati u sve relevantniju platformu koja bi, ozbiljnim teorijskim pristupom, mlade kustose potaknula, prije svega, na osvješćivanje svojih pozicija unutar sustava umjetnosti i društva, kao i brojnih mogućnosti aktivnog posredovanja i problematizacije konkretne društvene stvarnosti. ▼

A great percentage of students of the Ljubljana *School for Contemporary Art* later become active protagonists on the local, and also international, contemporary art scene, some working at state museums and other institutions, others as freelance curators and critics. On the one hand, of course, this fact reflects the level of quality of the program, as well as the individual quality of its participants and their involvement. On the other hand, such statistic data primarily reveal the fact that there exists now an institutionalized (although, compared to the university, still “informal” and “independent”) place in which future generations of curators and critics are educated, while before it was less possible to trace and systematize the ways in which the inadequately schooled young art historians, obtain qualifications within the system of contemporary art, curatorship and criticism. Viewed from this perspective, it is obvious that the Ljubljana *School of contemporary art* carries the burden of a great mission and responsibility for future generations of protagonists, and at the same time future developments, on the local, as well as the regional and international, contemporary art scene. One thing is certain: *The World of Art - School for Contemporary Art* is constantly evolving, always redeveloping its programs based on its own experiences, international models and, above all, experiences and feedback information of participants themselves. One of the next possible stages of development is the transformation of the *School* into a more complex, two-year long and international program, which would become a regional and, hopefully, international landmark of education of young curators and critics. Regardless of the form the *Course for curators of Contemporary Art* takes in the future, educating young curators of the region or those of the whole world, we can expect that the Ljubljana *School*, including the SCCA - Ljubljana as a whole, will continue evolving into a relevant platform with a serious theoretical approach, which would encourage young curators to - above all other things - become aware of their specific positions within the systems of art and society and introduce them to various possibilities of active mediation and interaction with a concrete social reality. ●
www.worldofart.org

prijevod / translation: Ivana Bago

→ Ivana Bago - povjesničarka umjetnosti i asistentica programa u Galeriji “Miroslav Kraljević”.

Ivana Bago - art historian and program assistant in Miroslav Kraljević Gallery.