

nada
beroš

carevo novo ruho the emperor's new clothes

▼ “Dva se stranca predstaviše kao tkalci koji mogu istkati najljepšu tkaninu na svijetu. Pripovijedali su o boji i uzorku te predivne tkanine kazavši kako tu tkaninu nije u stanju vidjeti samo onaj koji je po prirodi glupav.”

H.C. Andersen

Kustos je, u najmanju ruku problematična figura u svijetu suvremene umjetnosti. Da je riječ o elementarnoj nepogodi novijeg datuma svjedoči činjenica da se mnogi računalni programi još uvijek nakostriješe na izraz *curated by* kao neispravnu gramatičku tvorevinu, optužujući ga potcrtavajući crvenom bojom. I dok je glagol *to curate* u prezentu podnošljiv za ograničeni računalni ukus, njegov je prošlosvršeni, pasivni oblik, neprihvatljiv i izvan norme. Pretpostavljam kako slični problemi postoje i u drugim jezicima. U svakom slučaju, u mom materinjem jeziku - u hrvatskom - ne postoji glagol koji bi jednoznačno pokrio sumnjivu i mistifikatorsku aktivnost kustosa.

Poznajem samo jednog kustosa koji za sebe kaže da nije kritičar ni teoretičar, nego isključivo praktičar, organizator izložbi. Većina, zapravo, želi biti percipirana kao složeni organizam u kojem se aktivno nadopunjuju teorijsko-praktične vrline. Posudimo sliku iz kazališta: kustos istodobno želi biti dramaturg, režiser, intendant, scenograf, kostimograf, glumac, tehničar, pa čak i šaptač.

Zapravo, problem je u tome što ne samo da je glagol, nego je i sam kustoski posao - posao izvan norme. Kustos posuđuje, preslikava, prerađuje, kiti se tuđim perjem, neautorizirano se koristi metodama i postignućima preuzetim iz drugih djelatnosti znatno starijeg datuma - diplomacije, razmjene, trgovine, prostitucije - a pritom ga nitko sudski ne goni. Štoviše, govori se o “kulturnoj moći kustosa”!

O kojoj bi, dakle, moći moglo biti riječi? I o kakvoj kulturi?

Dakako, o moći koju kustos povremeno i kratkotrajno crpi od drugih u hranidbenom umjetničkom lancu u kojem je njegova uloga u znatnoj mjeri parazitske prirode. U prvom redu, on se hrani na moći umjetnika - proizvođača - ali, također, od nemale su važnosti i moć korisnika, naručitelja, kupca; drugim riječima, moć tržišta. Jednako kao što tržište sudjeluje u oblikovanju umjetni-

● “The two strangers called themselves master weavers, saying that they had the power to weave the most beautiful material in the world. They talked about the colour and the pattern of this wonderful material, adding that if anyone who gazed upon it who was by nature a fool, he would not see it.”

H.C. Andersen

In the world of contemporary art a curator is a problematic figure, to say the least. That this is indeed an elementary disaster of a more recent date is borne out by the fact, that the phrase *curated by* still gets many computer programmes to bristle with indignation, condemningly underlining it in red as grammatically incorrect. And while the present tense of the verb *curate* is acceptable to the limited computer taste, its past perfect tense, or rather its passive form, is unacceptable and beyond the pale. I presume that similar problems exist in other languages - they certainly do in Croatian, my mother tongue - where no verb exists that would unambiguously cover the “dubious” and mystificatory activities of a curator.

I personally know only one curator who claims to be neither critic nor theoretician, but merely a practitioner, an organiser of exhibitions. The majority of them wish to their activities to be perceived as a complex organism within which theoretical and practical values actively complement one another. This is best described by the theatre set-up: a curator wants to be a dramaturge, director, manager, stage designer, costume designer, actor, technician and, yes, even a prompter.

The real problem lies in the fact that not only the verb denoting it, but also the task of a curator, both are outside accepted standards. The curator borrows, copies, reworks, rewrites, wears borrowed plumes, uses - without authorisation - methods and achievements taken from other activities from a much earlier date - such as diplomacy, barter, trade, prostitution - without being judicially pursued. Quite the contrary in fact, people speak of the “cultural power of a curator”!

What power are we talking about? And what culture?

It is, of course, the power that a curator occasionally and for brief periods of time



ka, ono istodobno ima važnu ulogu i u proizvodnji i profiliranju kustosa. Paradoksalno - što je veća moć umjetnika, to je slabija kustoska moć. Posve je neutemeljena česta tvrdnja kako iza velikih umjetnika stoje veliki kustosi. Naprotiv, iza velikih umjetnika stoji razgranati sustav kapitala i profita.

Pedesetih i šezdesetih godina, otkada otprilike datira pojava modernog kustosa, kustos se zadovoljava ulogom posrednika, medijatora, emisara ili predstavnika neke grupacije umjetnika ili pojedinca. Kustos kao glasnogovornik umjetnika.

Njegov je ego ograničene uporabne vrijednosti i instrumentaliziran, u službi promocije i tumačenja drugoga, a manje advokativiranja i elaboracije vlastitih ideja. Činjenica kako je umjetnička scena bila znatno homogenija od današnje ne govori automatski u prilog raspodjeli snaga u korist "proizvođača". Radi se, naprosto, o tipu umjetničke prakse u kojem su se fizička aktivnost umjetnika, kao i njezine posljedice (akcijsko slikarstvo, gestualno slikarstvo, postslikarska apstrakcija, minimalizam), nametnule kao toliko snažne činjenice da su se misaone elaboracije doživljavale kao nepotrebno, strano tijelo.

Krajem šezdesetih i u sedamdesetim godinama, s pojavom konceptualne umjetnosti, kustoski posao postaje krajnje upitan. U novoj umjetničkoj praksi u kojoj je umjetnički "rad" neodvojiv od misaone elaboracije, kustos kao tumač umjetnikovih ideja postaje suvišan, redundantan. Umjetnik zapravo postaje kustos, neposredni tumač vlastitih ideja, a autoreferencijalnost postaje najvažnijom intelektualnom prtljagom tog desetljeća. Zanimljivo je da su mnogi umjetnici u stanju tumačiti i pozicije drugih umjetnika. U borbi protiv institucija umjetnici osnivaju neformalne prostore osvajajući moć protiv koje su se pobunili. Namnožile su se izložbe u "nezavisnim umjetničkim" prostorima koje "kuriraju" i selektiraju sami umjetnici koji stvari žele u potpunosti kontrolirati. Čitav sustav - od selektiranja i prezentiranja do interpretacije i valorizacije - daje im iluziju da gospodare svojom sudbinom, da izmiču manipulaciji kustosa, kritičara, galerista.

Nije dugo trebalo da umjetnik-kao-kustos stvori svoj komplementarni par, kustosa-kao-umjetnika. Mnogi su spremni tvrditi kako je proces tekao usporedno. Destabiliziranje granica između kustosa i

draws from the others in the artistic "feeding chain", in which his or her role is, to a great degree, of a parasitic nature. First and foremost, a curator feeds on the power of an artist - the producer, but of no lesser importance are the powers of a user, commissioner, buyer; in other words, the power of the market. For, just as the market participates in the profiling of an artist, so it also plays an important role in the production and profiling of curators. Paradoxically, the greater the power of artists, the weaker the power of curators. The so often repeated claim that great curators back great artists is totally unfounded. What does lend support to great artists is well-organised system of capital and profit.

In the fifties and sixties, when the phenomenon of the modern-day curator first appeared, he or she was satisfied with the role of a mediator, an emissary or a representative of a group of artists or individuals. In today's language, the curator was the spokesperson for artists. His or her ego was of a limited usage-value and was instrumentalised; it was more in the service of promoting and explaining the other and less given to advocating his or her own ideas and elaborations.

With the appearance of conceptual art, towards the end of the sixties and in the seventies, the curator's role became completely controversial. In the new artistic practice, where artistic "work" became inseparable from contemplative elaboration, the role of a curator as an interpreter of the artist's ideas became redundant. The artist him/herself, in fact, became curator, a direct interpreter of his or her own ideas, with self-referentiality becoming the most significant intellectual baggage of that decade. It is rather curious to note that many artists were also able to explain the positions of other artists. In their struggle against the institutions they established informal spaces, thus gaining the power against which they rebelled. The number of exhibitions in such "independent" artistic premises, curated and selected by artists themselves and who in fact want to control matters completely, grew. The entire system - from selection and presentation to interpretation and valorisation - gave them an illusion of being masters of their own destiny, of avoiding the manipulations of curators, critics, gallery-owners/operators.

It did not take long for the artist-cum-curator to create his or her complementary

umjetnika, zapravo, pokazuje koliko je marginaliziran i jedan i drugi posao. Umjesto ukrštanja oružja, pristupilo se kooperaciji. Rat do istrebljenja ionako ne bi imao nekog posebnog smisla.

Novi vjetrovi, duh sveopće demokratizacije posljednjeg desetljeća, neutralizirao je napetosti, pridonoseći *statusu quo* i u kustoskom poslu. Ne treba čuditi što riječi poput otvaranja, decentralizacije, komunikacije, transparentnosti, razmjene, posredovanja, koordinacije, zaposjedaju sva područja, a multipliciranje uloga i redistribucija moći postaju najpoželjnije solucije. Kulturna je paradigma, zapravo, kolonizirala politiku i gospodarstvo, tvrdi Fredric Jameson. Sve je kulturizirano, politika je kultura, ekonomija je kultura. Ali i kultura je postala veliki biznis.

Primjer mladih umjetnika, Svetlane Heger (1968) i Plamena Dejanova (1970), koji u svojoj praksi miješaju uloge kustosa, galerista, kolekcionara, kupoprodajnog agenta i marketinškog stručnjaka, paradigmatičan je za novu generaciju umjetnika koja je spremna potpisati faustovski pakt između suvremene umjetnosti i korporativnog novca. Spremni su, dakle, priznati kako je kultura veliki biznis i... profitirati od toga. Preuzimajući na sebe ulogu djeteta iz *Careva novog ruha* i nazivajući stvari pravim imenom, oni su proces proizvodnje i potrošnje umjetnosti učinili transparentnim i mjerljivim egzaktnim ekonomskim pokazateljima. Beuysovu tvrdnju "kreativnost je kapital", primijenili su doslovno, odnosno kapitalizirali.

Vrhunac njihove umjetničke strategije, ili, po mišljenju nekih, kap koja je prelila čašu, suradnja je s automobilskom korporacijom BMW na međunarodnoj izložbi *Dream City* u Münchenu u proljeće 1999. godine. Ta je izložba imala za cilj propitati socijalne aspekte kasnog kapitalizma, a generalni joj je sponzor bila druga velika njemačka korporacija - Siemens.

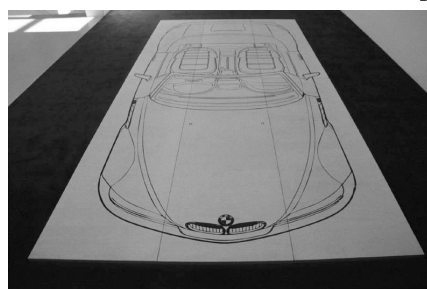
Heger&Dejanov, inače najmlađi sudionici te izložbe koja je uključila imena poput Josepha Beuyasa, Vita Acconcia i Felixa Gonzaleza-Torresa, iznajmili su svoj izložbeni prostor BMW-u, čije je sjedište u Münchenu, "gradu snova", kako je i glasilo naslov izložbe preuzet iz neke turističke brošure; dakako, ne bez ironije. Bogatstvo Münchena, drže umjetnici, u znatnoj mjeri počiva upravo na činjenici da je tu sjedište BMW-a. Nakon dugotrajnih pregovora s



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pair - a curator-cum-artist. Indeed, many claim that the process was simultaneous. In reality, destabilisation of borderlines between curator and artists demonstrates just how marginalized both roles have become. Instead of crossing swords, cooperation ensued. After all, a fight to the finish really would be pointless.

Further relaxation of tensions was brought about as a result of the fresh winds and spirit of overall democratisation that took place in the decade just gone by, which contributed to the status quo. One should not be surprised by the fact that words like "opening up", "decentralization", "communications", "transparency", "exchange", "mediation", "co-ordination", are taking over in all areas, while the multiplication of roles and redistribution of power become the most sought after solutions. According to Fredric Jameson, the cultural paradigm has in fact colonised both politics and economy. Everything has been "cultured"; politics is culture, economy is culture. Culture itself has become big business. The example of young artists Svetlana Heger(1968) and Plamen Dejanov (1970) who, by encompassing within themselves the roles of curator, gallerist, collector, sales agent and marketing expert, are paradigmatic for the new generation of artists which is prepared to sign a Faustian pact between contemporary art and corporate money, or rather to recognise that culture is big business and, ultimately, to profit from it. Taking upon themselves the role of a child in *The Emperor's New Clothes*,



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sl.2: S. Heger, P. Dejanov, korporacijska fotografija BMW-a u katalogu izložbe *Dream City* / corporate photo of the BMW in the catalogue of the exhibition *Dream City*, München / Munich, 1999.

sl.3: S. Heger, P. Dejanov, skica za novi model Z3 / sketch for the new Z3 model

sl.4: S. Heger, P. Dejanov, detalj kotača / detail of the wheel



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sl.5: S. Heger, P. Dejanov, *Still Life + Pale Red, Orange from Plenty Objects of Desire, Air de Paris, Paris, 1998.*

sl.6: S. Heger, P. Dejanov, *Three Wishes (Plenty Objects of Desire), Air de Paris, Paris, 1997.*

sl.7: S. Heger, P. Dejanov, *Where the Strange Things Are, Wiener Secession, Beč / Vienna, 1996.*

BMW-ovim odjelom KulturKommunikation, umjetnicima je pošlo za rukom iznajmiti vlastiti izlagački prostor na izložbi *Dream City* tvrtki BMW, koja je na tom mjestu instalirala reklamno-prodajni štand. Također, kao dio ugovora, umjetnici su ustupili stranice u katalogu namijenjene njihovom radu za reklamiranje novog tipa sportskog dvosjeda Z3, koji je u vrijeme trajanja izložbe bio postavljen na parkiralištu ispred zgrade Kunstvereina. Kao naknadu za najam prostora umjetnici su dobili BMW-ov kabriolet, koji su zatim, kao vlastiti umjetnički rad, odnosno dio serije *Plenty Objects of Desire*, prodali bečkom Muzeju primijenjene umjetnosti (MAK) pod uvjetom da im Muzej ustupi automobil na korištenje kao "dio putujuće kolekcije MAK-a".

Swetlana Heger & Plamen Dejanov upravo su tim projektom izazvali brojne polemike i žestoke kritike u umjetničkom svijetu, a nekoliko je umjetnika u znak prosvjeda zbog "miješanja umjetnosti i trgovine" i "prekoračivanja granica privatnog sponzorstva" povuklo svoje radove s izložbe, dok se jedan od četvero kustosa izložbe ogradio od njihova rada pismenom izjavom koja je stajala pored BMW-ova prodajnog štanda na izložbi u Kunstvereinu. U izjavi je stajalo kako kustos smatra njihov rad agresivnim te kako "umjetnost treba biti odvojena od novca".

Nimalo ne čudi što je Christiane Zentgraf, direktorica KulturKommunikation BMW-a, objašnjavajući u jednom intervjuu zašto je slavna automobilska korporacija bila spremna surađivati s umjetnicima, kazala kako je BMW naučio mnogo od para

i.e. calling a spade a spade, they have made the process of production and consumption of art totally transparent and quantifiable through exact economic indicators. They have taken Beuys' claim that "creativity is capital" at face value, i.e. they capitalised it.

The pinnacle of their artistic strategy, or - as some believe - the straw that broke the camel's back, was their co-operation with the BMW automobile corporation at the international exhibition *Dream City* in Munich, which took place in the spring of 1999. The general sponsor of the exhibition, the aim of which was to investigate the social aspects of late capitalism, was another large German concern, Siemens.

Heger & Dejanov, who, incidentally, were the youngest of all the participants at the exhibition, which included names such as Joseph Beuys, Vito Acconci and Felix Gonzales-Torres, rented their exhibition space to BMW, whose seat is in Munich, the "Dream City" - which also happened to be the title of the exhibition and taken, not without a degree of irony, from some tourist brochure or other. The artists believe that Munich owes its wealth, to a great extent, to the fact that it is the seat of BMW. Following lengthy negotiations with the BMW KulturKommunikation department the artists succeeded in renting their own exhibition space at the *Dream City* exhibition to BMW, which the company then used to set up their advertising and sales stand. They also relinquished the pages in the exhibition catalogue, intended for the presentation of their work, to advertisements for the new type of BMW Z3 sports two-seater, which for the duration of the exhibition was parked on the parking lot in front of the *Kunstverein* building. In compensation for renting out their exhibition space, the artists received a new BMW Cabriolet, which they then sold to the Museum of Applied Arts in Vienna (MAK), as their own work of art, under the condition that the Museum relinquished the car to them to use as a "part of the MAK travelling collection".

With that project Swetlana Heger and Plamen Dejanov stirred up numerous controversies and attracted fierce criticism in the world of art, with some artists removing their exhibits from the exhibition in a protest over "mixing art and trade", and for transgressing the borderlines of private

Heger&Dejanov, istaknuvši kako su "brakovi iz računa" (Walter Grasskamp) između umjetnosti i trgovine jednako tako stari kao i moralne rezerve spram njih ("čistoća" partnera, novac).¹

Time je, vjerojatno nesvjesno, potvrdila tezu njemačkog teoretičara Borisa Groysa koji umjetnike općenito smatra avangardom marketinga. Umjetnost je po svojoj naravi prije svega istraživanje, a prate je sva ostala područja.² Umjetničko je tržište, drži Groys, avangarda modernog gospodarstva. Ekonomija treba učiti od umjetnika. Umjetnik je heroj marketinga. On stvara nešto za čim ne postoji potreba. To je ranije činio aristokrat, a njegovu je ulogu u tržišnoj privredi preuzeo umjetnik. Tako poduzetnik od umjetnika može naučiti kako prodati nešto za čim ne postoji potreba. Lako je, naime, prodavati donje rublje, kaže Groys, jer ga svi trebaju. Umjetnik, međutim, prodaje crne kvadrate, premda nitko ne treba crne kvadrate.

Dakako, aproprijacija i dekontekstualizacija nisu nepoznate ni nove umjetničke kategorije. Svetlana Heger i Plamen Dejanov učili su od svojih umjetničkih preteča, među ostalim od predstavnika povijesne avangarde, kao i od umjetnika-aktivista sedamdesetih i osamdesetih godina. *Ready-madei* djela tandema Heger i Dejanov, međutim, razlikuju se od svojih povijesnih preteča po tome što zadržavaju svoju funkcionalnost. Oni služe onome za što se predstavljaju. Prodajni štand BMW-a na izložbi *Dream City* nije bio ni simulacija ni dosjetka; to je uistinu bio prodajni štand sa svim originalnim elementima, reklamnim brošurama, posterima, čokoladicama u obliku BMW-a i stvarnim agentom koji obavlja kupoprodajnu transakciju.

Transakcije koje umjetnici izvode logične su elaboracije njihove radne strategije kojom istražuju međusobnu ovisnost tržišta rada, kapitala i kulturnog dobra. Ekonomija razmjene ne može biti odvojena od tržišta kulture.

Nema sumnje, rad Svetlane Heger i Plamena Dejanova izrazito je političan, premda se njihova političnost bitno razlikuje od aktivizma umjetnika sedamdesetih i osamdesetih godina, poput, primjerice, Hansa Haackea, Jenny Holzer ili Barbare Kruger. U njihovu "aktivizmu" zbuňuje to što su ideološke premise na prvi pogled nejasne i divergentne, miješajući istodobno različite jezike i kôdove, čas se preoblaćeci

sponsorship. One of the curators disassociated himself from their activities in a written statement, which was exhibited adjacent to the BMW stand at the exhibition in *Kunstverein*. In his statement the curator said that he regarded their activity as being aggressive, and that art should be divorced from money.

It is no wonder that Christiane Zentgraf, Director of the BMW KulturKommunikation, while explaining in an interview why the famous automobile corporation was prepared to co-operate with the artists, also said that BMW learned a great deal from the Heger & Dejanov duo. She pointed out that "mixed marriages" (Walter Grasskamp) between art and commerce are as old as the moral reservations that art has always talked about ("purity" of the partner, money)¹, thereby confirming, probably unconsciously, the thesis of Boris Groys who regards artists in general as the avant-garde of marketing. By nature, art is first and foremost a process of investigation, with all other areas following in their footsteps.² According to Groys, the art market is the avant-garde of modern economy. Economy should learn from artists. An artist is a hero of marketing. He is creating something for which there is no requirement. In earlier times it was the aristocrats who did it, and artists have assumed their role in the market economy. Thus, an entrepreneur can learn from an artist how to sell something that is not needed. It is easy to sell underwear, says Groys, everybody needs it. An artist, however, sells black squares, although nobody needs black squares.

Needless to say, appropriation and decontextualisation are neither unknown nor are they new categories. Svetlana Heger and Plamen Dejanov have been learning from their artistic predecessors, among them being the representatives of the historic avant-garde, as well as the artists-activists from the seventies and eighties. However, the *Ready-mades* of the Heger-Dejanov tandem differ from their historical predecessors in their retention of functionality. They serve the very thing they present themselves as. The BMW sales stand at the *Dream City* exhibition was neither a simulation nor a trade quip, it was a real sales stand with all the original elements: advertising brochures, posters, tiny BMW-shaped chocolates, and a very real agent performing sales transactions.



¹ Wolf-Günter Thiel & Milena Nikolova: u intervjuu s Plamenom Dejanovim, Svetlanom Heger i Christiane Zentgraf, direktoricom BMW KulturKommunikation, *Flash Art International*, svibanj/lipanj 1999., str. 84-87.

² U intervjuu s Hannom Rauterberg, *Die Zeit*, br. 49, 2. prosinca 1999.

¹ Wolf-Günter Thiel and Milena Nikolova: An Interview with Plamen Dejanov, Svetlana Heger and Christiane Zentgraf, Director of BMW KulturKommunikation, *Flash Art International*, May/June 1999, pp. 84-87

² In an interview with Hanno Rauterberg, *Die Zeit*, no. 49, 2 Dec. 1999



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sl.8: S. Heger, P. Dejanov, *Three Wishes (Plenty Objects of Desire)*, Air de Paris, Pariz, 1997.



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u nevinu ruho konzumentizma i masovne kulture, čas u ruho socijalnog angažmana ili pak elitističke indiferentnosti. Sve u svemu, odašiljući poruke kojima je teško odrediti metu.

Da bismo detektirali izvore njihove poetike, potrebno je vratiti se nekoliko godina unazad. Heger, porijeklom iz Češke, diplomirala je u Beču na Akademiji primijenjene umjetnosti, a Dejanov, porijeklom Bugarin, diplomirao je na bečkoj Likovnoj akademiji. Kao stipendisti MAK-a prvi su se put pojavili na međunarodnoj likovnoj sceni 1996. godine na skupnoj izložbi *The Garage Project*, u MAK Centre for Art and Architecture u Los Angelesu, besplatno iznajmivši izložbeni prostor namijenjen predstavljanju njihova rada mladim kalifornijskim umjetnicima kao dio reklamne kampanje novootvorenog prostora za umjetnost. U sljedećim projektima početno polazište njihove umjetničke strategije - komunikacije s lokalnom sredinom - poprima posve određene ekonomske odrednice kao što su najam, kupnja, razmjena, investiranje, profit... kategorije koje su oduvijek bile prisutne u funkcioniranju umjetničkog sustava, ali su uglavnom ostajale u drugom planu, skrivene od pogleda publike kao nešto što ne dolikuje "bezinteresnom svijetu lijepog".

Propitujući proizvodne odnose u kulturi, mlade umjetnike u prvom redu zanima vlastita pozicija u sustavu tržišta rada, odnosno utvrđivanje vrijednosti umjetničkog rada u društvu. Ubrzo nakon diplomiranja, uviđaju da se nigdje ne traže umjetnici, dok su zanimanja poput liječnika ili

Transactions performed by artists are logical elaborations of their work strategy, deployed to investigate the mutual dependency of the markets of labour, capital and cultural assets. They believe that economy of exchange cannot be separated from the market of culture.

There is no doubt that the work of Svetlana Heger and Plamen Dejanov is explicitly political, although their "politicalness" is fundamentally different from the activism of the artists from the seventies and eighties, as, for instance, Hans Haacke, Jenny Holzer or Barbara Kruger. There is, however, a confusing aspect to their "activism" inasmuch as their ideological premises are, at first glance, obscure and divergent. They mix different languages and codes all at the same time; one moment they don the innocent guise of consumerism and mass culture, the next moment it is the vestment of social commitment, or even of elitist indifference - all in all, they emit messages the target of which is difficult to define.

In order to detect the source of their poeticism one has to go back a few years. Heger, originally hailing from the Czech Republic, graduated from the Academy of Applied Arts in Vienna, and Dejanov, of Bulgarian stock, graduated from the Academy of Fine Arts, also in Vienna. As MAK scholarship holders they made their first appearance on the international art stage in 1966 in the *MAK Centre for Art and Architecture* in Los Angeles, in the group exhibition entitled *The Garage Project*. They leased exhibition space reserved for the presentation of their work, free of charge, to young Californian artists as a part of an advertising campaign for a newly-opened art premises. In the projects that followed, the starting point of their artistic strategy - communication with the local community - began to acquire quite specific economic determinants, such as hire, purchase, exchange, investment, profits... categories which, although ever present categories in the functioning of the art system, have mostly remained in the background, hidden from public view as being something unbecoming the "interest-free world of beauty".

In their investigation of production relations in culture, the young artists are primarily interested in their own position within the labour market system, that is to

sl.9: P. Dejanov, *Three Wishes (Plenty Objects of Desire)*, Plamen radi za *Virginie Monroe* / Plamen working for *Virginie Monroe*, Pariz, 1997.

odvjetnika visoko na listi potraživanja u novinskim oglasima...

Problematičnost rada, pa tako i umjetničkog rada, odnosno njegova vrednovanja, osobito dolazi do izražaja u visokorazvijenom društvu. Ono u načelu lako apsorbira vlastite kritičare, koliko god žestoka ta kritika bila. Upravo kao što ni snažnoj obitelji ne može naškoditi nedolično ponašanje vlastite djece, tako ni snažnom društvu ne prijete opasnost od "zločestih umjetnika". Heger&Dejanov odlučuju se radije za tip kritike koji bismo mogli nazvati "ponašanjem uzornog djeteta", svjesno riskirajući izgon iz "društva zločestih umjetnika".

Uzmimo za primjer njihov rad na izložbi *Enter: Audience/Artist/Institution* u Kunstmuseumu u Lucerneu 1997.³ Heger i Dejanov kao dio svojeg umjetničkog projekta u vrijeme trajanja te izložbe odlučuju raditi "na crno" kao perači suđa, odnosno konobari u restoranu i u hotelu u Lucerneu u Švicarskoj, u zemlji u kojoj je manualni rad bolje plaćen nego stručni rad u mnogim susjednim zemljama. Podmirivši životne troškove, ostatkom zarađenog novca financiraju kupnju umjetničkih djela i predmeta poznatih dizajnera, koje potom izlažu na posebnim platformama kao ciklus vlastitih radova pod nazivom *Plenty Objects of Desire*. Drugim riječima, *viškom vrijednosti* financiraju vlastiti umjetnički rad. Načelo davanja u najam, kupnje i stvaranje zbirke istodobno su i metoda i sadržaj.

Paralelno s iznajmljivanjem svojega rada, umjetnici iznajmljuju izlagački prostor namijenjen njihovim radovima različitim zainteresiranim stranama, od poznatih tvrtki do anonimnih pojedinaca, a zaradu također investiraju u kupnju umjetničkih djela i dizajnerskih predmeta, odnosno kolekciju *Plenty Objects of Desire*. Ovoga puta zaradu im donosi status, a ne rad. Ono što ostaje vidljivo na platformi su lijepi, blještavi, šareni predmeti, koji iz izložbe u izložbu mijenjaju raspored, sastav i cijenu, postajući neka vrst *super-collectables*.

Izlažući umjetnička djela drugih umjetnika i dizajnera kao vlastiti umjetnički rad, umjetnici su poljuljali pojam autorstva umjetničkog djela, a time i cijeli umjetnički sustav.

Stvarati "korporativnu umjetnost", kako je s pejorativnim prizvukom nazivaju neki, za austrijski tandem ne znači odreći se kritike. Naprotiv, više od otvorene kritike društva privlači ih tiha subverzija umjet-

say, in establishing the value that artistic work holds in society. Soon after graduation they realised that artists are not sought after anywhere, while the professions, such as doctors and lawyers, rank high on the demand list in newspaper advertisements.

The problems related to work, artistic work included, or rather its valorisation, are particularly prominent in a highly developed society which, in principle, easily absorbs its own critics, even if it were a sharp-witted criticism by an artist. Just as a strong family cannot be unduly harmed by the unseemly behaviour of its own children, so "naughty artists" do not threaten a strong society. As for Heger & Dejanov, they opted for the type of criticism one could describe as the "behaviour of an exemplary child", consciously risking expulsion from the "society of naughty artists".

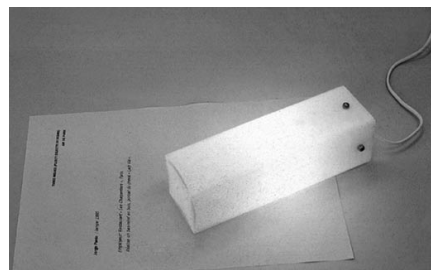
Let us take, as an example, their work at the exhibition *Enter: Audience/Artist/Institution* which took place in the *Kunstmuseum* in Lucerne, in 1997.³ As a part of their artistic project during the exhibition, Heger and Dejanov decided to work illegally as dish-washers and waiters in a restaurant and at a hotel in Lucerne, Switzerland - a country where manual labour is better paid than are professional activities in many neighbouring countries. Having paid for their living expenses, the artists used the rest of the money they had earned to buy works of art and designer articles, which they then exhibited on special platforms as a cycle of their own works under the title *Plenty Objects of Desire*. In other words, with the *surplus value* they financed their own artistic work. The principle of renting out, purchase and creation of a collection are both a method and content.

Concurrently with renting out their work, the artists rent out the exhibition space allocated to their own work to various interested parties, from famous companies to anonymous individuals. Resulting earnings are invested in purchase of works of art and designer articles, or rather, the *Plenty Objects of Desire* collection. This time their earnings stemmed from their artistic status, not from their work. What remains visible on the platform are beautiful, glittering, colourful objects whose arrangement, composition and price change from exhibition to exhibition, thus becoming a form of super-collectables.



³ *Enter: Audience/Artist/Institution*, Kunstmuseum, Lucerne 1997, kustosica Barbara Steiner

³ *Enter: Audience/Artist/Institution*, Kunstmuseum, Lucerne, 1997, curated by Barbara Steiner



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sl.10: S. Heger, P. Dejanov, *Plenty Objects of Desire*, *Vistosijeva svjetiljka / Lamp by Vistosi, Le Consortium, Dijon, 1998.*

sl.10: S. Heger, P. Dejanov, *Where the Strange Things Are*, R. Tiravanija, Ch. Long, J. Deller, *Wiener Secession, Beč / Vienna, 1996.*



Swetlana Heger & Plamen Dejanov

ON HOLIDAY


















3.8. - 10.8.2000



ničkog sustava. Ne čudi stoga što se upravo među stručnjacima - kustosima, kritičarima, urednicima, galeristima - mogu naći najžešći osporavatelji njihova rada. Suradujući s umjetnicima na njihovu projektu *On Holiday* u ljeto 2000., kojeg su u cijelosti sponzorirali privatni sponzori, premda je iniciran u instituciji na "državnom proračunu", u Muzeju suvremene umjetnosti u Zagrebu, mogla sam se iz prve ruke uvjeriti kako su marketinški stručnjaci odmah znali prepoznati "poruku", dok su ljudi iz kulture, medija, pa i iz samog Muzeja, uglavnom bili iritirani *easygoing* pristupom umjetnika.

Otvoreno mogu reći kako sam radeći s umjetničkim parom Heger-Dejanov naučila ponešto i o "kulturnoj moći kustosa". Zaključak bi bilo moguće svesti u jednu rečenicu: kulturna moć kustosa proporcionalna je količini novca koja stoji iza njega. Stoga bih rado svoju fiktivnu "kulturnu moć" iznajmila zainteresiranim sponzorima za milijun dolara. ▼

Napomena: Tekst je prvi put pročitao na Svjetskom kongresu likovnih kritičara AICA, u sekciji *Cultural Power of the Curator (Kulturna moć kustosa)*, 16. 9. 2000. u Londonu, u Tate Modern.

Is that criticism?

If anybody is to be criticised, then it is the artists who usurp and sign other people's works as their own!

By exhibiting the works of art of other artists and designers as their own artistic work, the artists have rocked the concept of authorship of a work of art, and through it the entire artistic system. Creation of "corporate art" - as some have rather pejoratively, dubbed it - for the Austrian tandem does not constitute abandoning criticism. Indeed, they are more interested in a silent subversion of the artistic system than they are in the open criticism of society. It therefore comes as no surprise that the very experts in the profession - curators, critics, editors, gallerists, most fiercely dispute their work. Having had the opportunity to cooperate with Svetlana Heger and Plamen Dejanov at the *On Holiday* project they staged this year - and which constituted their real holiday in Dubrovnik - which, although initiated by the Museum of Contemporary Art in Zagreb, was fully sponsored by private sponsors, I had the opportunity to see how highly the marketing experts value the work method of the two artists. At the same time, people from the fields of culture, media, and the Museum itself, found their *easygoing*, lay back approach irritating.

I can now genuinely say that the said co-operation taught me a thing or two about the "cultural power of a curator". To be more precise, I have learned how to exchange curator power for goods, services and money of a sponsor, without being ashamed for professional begging. A conclusion that imposes itself is this: the cultural power of a curator is proportionate to the amount of money backing him or her. I would therefore gladly hire out my "cultural power" for a million dollars to any interested sponsors. ●

Note: This text was first read at the World Congress of Art Critics (AICA), at the session entitled *Cultural Power of the Curator*, September 16, 2000 at the Tate Modern, London.

prijevod / translation: Anthony Dawe, Volga Vukelja-Dawe

sl.12: S. Heger, P. Dejanov, *On Holiday*, Zagreb - Dubrovnik, Muzej suvremene umjetnosti / Museum of Contemporary Art, Zagreb, 2000., foto / photo: Mara Bratoš

→ Nada Beroš - povjesničarka umjetnosti i likovna kritičarka. Kustosica u Muzeju suvremene umjetnosti u Zagrebu. Nada Beroš - art historian and critic. Curator at Museum of Contemporary Art, Zagreb.