

sonja
briski
uzelac

mangelos na putu po europskoj mangelos on his european journey

MUSEU DE ARTE CONTEMPORÂNEA
DE SERRALVES, PORTO
svibanj - kolovoz 2003.

NEUE GALERIE AM LANDESMUSEUM
JOANNEUM, (KÜNSTLERHAUS), GRAZ
listopad - studeni, 2003.

FUNDACIÓ ANTONI TAPIES, BARCELONA
veljača - svibanj 2004.

KUNSTHALLE FRIDERICIANUM, KASSEL
svibanj - rujan, 2004.

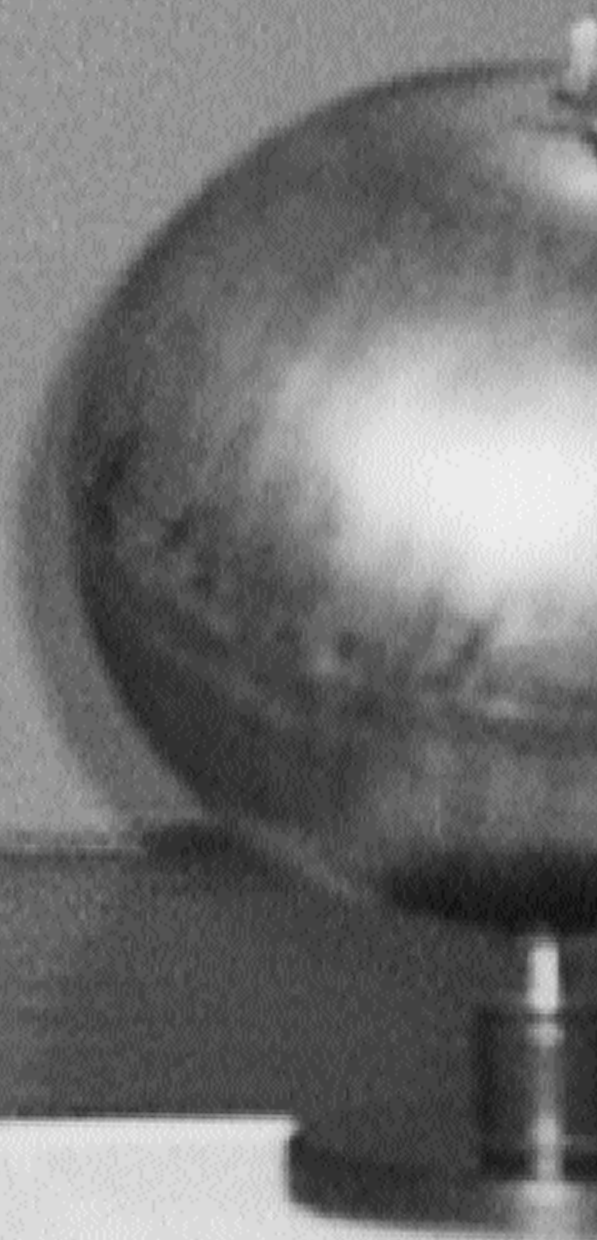
1. Izložba / Exhibition *Mangelos Nos 1-9 1/2*,
Fundació Antoni Tàpies, Barcelona

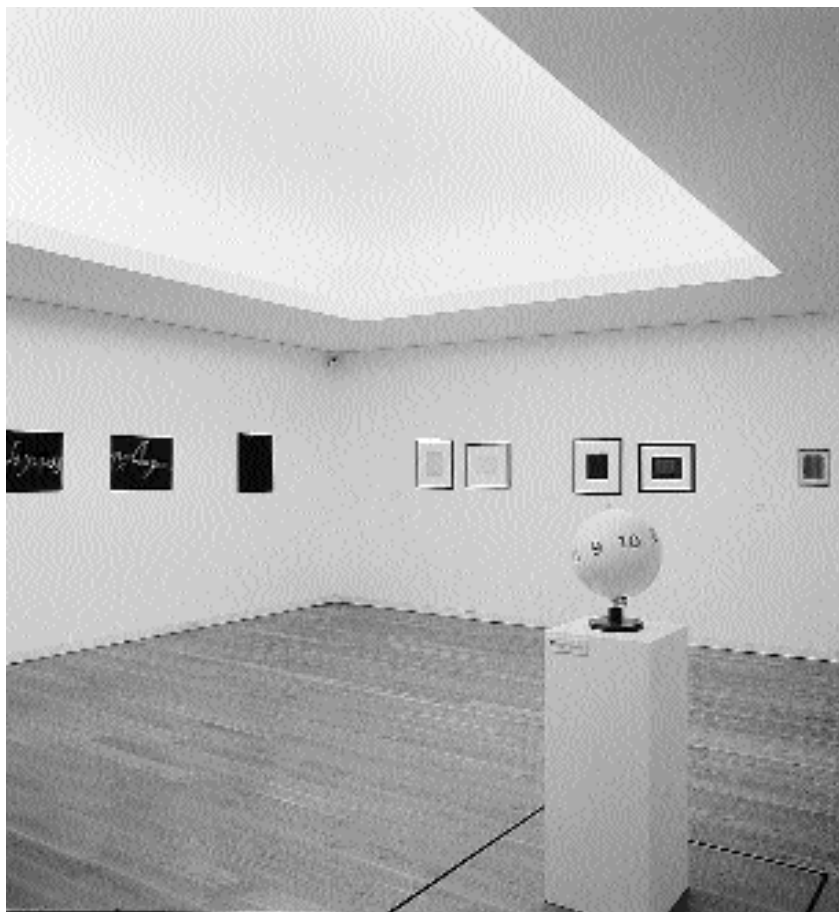
▼ Kronika otkrića i kritičkog tumačenja umjetnika koji se najprije skrivao pod pseudonimom Mangelos, neobičnim imenom srijemskog toposa iza kojega stoji prastara Francavilla, mistični trag rane Europe u nastanku, duga je i još uvijek puna iznenađenja. Ona je odraz, kako prirode samog umjetnika i oblika njegova djelovanja, tako i izmjena konteksta u samom umjetničkom svijetu, značajkama vremena u kojem se protekla slojevita profesionalna karijera i nadasve iznenađujući umjetnički opus Dimitrija Bašičevića Mangelosa. Ova konotacijama bogata i, sudeći po posljednjem izložbenom i izdavačkom događaju, još uvijek nedovršena kronika, kao da sažima u sebi ishod glavnih suprotstavljenih silnica epohalnog vremena, primarno otjelovljujući u sebi "drugu liniju" moderne umjetnosti. Danas posve čitljive posljedice modernog racionalnog autoriteta, koje su pokazale svoju frontalnu stranu u globalnoj uniformnosti tehnološkog poleta, ali i prvim avangardnim težnjama za univerzalnim umjetničkim jezikom, postepeno su razotkrivale i svoju drugu stranu. Pojam univerzalnosti linearnog razvoja i pitanje o njegovu cilju počeli su gubiti svoju jednoznačnost već onda kada su se u samu jezgru visoke moderne počele uvlačiti poratne egzistencijalne zebnje i egzistencijalističke sumnje. Međutim, tek kada se neoavangardna umjetnička praksa počela otvoreno nametati u svojoj mnogolikoj konceptualnoj, jezičnoj i medijskoj razuđenosti, sve do nepreglednosti, prevladala je mogućnost višeznačnosti te preplavila svjetsku umjetničku scenu. U toj je situaciji od kraja osamdesetih naglo poraslo zanimanje za otkrivanje "lokalnih" umjetničkih scena i njihovih posebno zanimljivih slučajeva. U ovom novom svjetlu promjene interesa izlagačke javnosti, prezentacija slučaja Mangelos izvrsno je, velikom izložbom i opsežnom kataloško-monografskom publikacijom *Mangelos nos. 1 to 9 1/2*, izvedena u kustoskoj režiji povjesničarke umjetnosti i samostalne kustosice Branke Stipančić.

No, prije nego li se osvijetli ovaj opsežni izložbeno-izdavački projekt i njegovo značajno pojavljivanje na europskoj sceni, vrijedno je zabilježiti jedan izdavački događaj s domaće scene koji se upravo u ovom svjetlu pokazuje referentnim. Naime, skoro u isto vrijeme valjda se slučajno, no posve znakovito za našu sredinu, pojavio zakašnjeni prijevod utjecajne knjige američkog filozofa i estetičara Nelsona Goodman

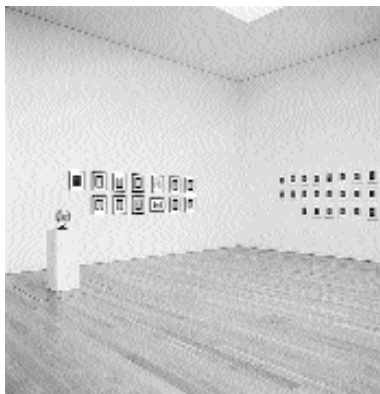
● The chronicle of discovery and critical interpretation of an artist that was at first hiding behind the pseudonym Mangelos, which is an unusual place-name in Vojvodina denoting the ancient Francavilla, a mystical trace of Europe from the days of its emergence, is long and continues to surprise. It is a reflection of the artist's nature and his forms of work, but also reveals changes of context in the world of art itself, signs of the times through which the multi-leveled professional career and the remarkably unpredictable artistic opus of Dimitrije Bašičević Mangelos extend. This chronicle, rich with connotations and, judging from the latest publication and exhibition, still unfinished, seems to comprise the outcome of the principal opposed trends of this outstanding epoch, primarily incorporating the so-called "second line" of modern art. The consequences of modern rational authority - today clearly discernible -, which showed their obverse in the global uniformity of technological boom, as well as in the early vanguard's strife towards a universal art language, gradually disclosed its reverse. The idea of the universality of linear development and the issue of its goal began to lose their distinctness as soon as the post-war existentialist anxieties and doubts began to penetrate in the very core of late modernism. However, it was only with the neo-vanguard artistic practice and its conceptual, linguistic, and media multiplicity which tended towards opacity, that the possibility of ambiguity overwhelmed and overflowed the world art scene. In this situation, in the late 80s, there was an increasing interest in the rediscovery of "local" art scenes and their particularly interesting cases. In this new light, after the shift in the interest of exhibition organisers, the presentation of Mangelos was done in a brilliant way under the direction of art historian and freelance curator Branka Stipančić, who organised a large exhibition and an extensive catalogue/monograph entitled *Mangelos nos. 1 to 9 1/2*.

However, before we set on illuminating this huge project of exhibition and publication and the significance of its appearance on the European scene, we would like to draw attention to another domestic publishing event, which appears relevant in this light. Namely, it was almost at the same time - which was perhaps a coincidence, but certainly a typical one for the Croatian scene, that a belated translation of an influ-





2

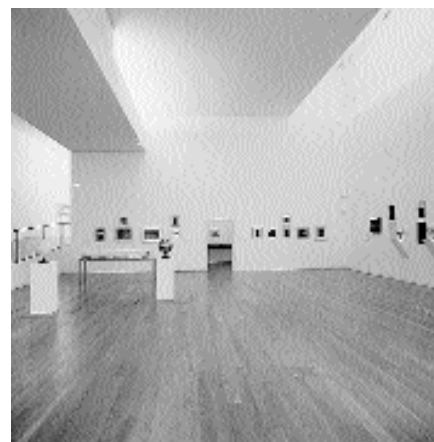


3

2-5. Izložba / Exhibition *Mangelos N^{os} 1-9^{1/2}*, Museu de Arte Contemporânea de Serralves, Porto

Ljubaznošću / Courtesy: Museu de Arte Contemporânea de Serralves, Porto

6. Izložba / Exhibition *Mangelos N^{os} 1-9^{1/2}*, Neue Galerie am Landesmuseum Joanneum, (Künstlerhaus), Graz



4

*Jezici umjetnosti. Pristup teoriji simbola.*¹

Kao što je poznato, povijest njegovih glasovitih predavanja seže u sada već daleke šezdesete godine,² dakle u vrijeme zrele moderne koja je već počela pokazivati i svoju drugu stranu. Prema riječima samog Goodmana iz uvoda knjige, njegovo proučavanje jezika umjetnosti "ide onkray umjetnosti", cilj mu je "pristup općoj teoriji simbola", pri čemu se 'simbol' "ovdje koristi kao vrlo općenit i bezbojan izraz. On pokriva slova, riječi, tekstove, slike, dijagrame, karte, modele i drugo, ne podrazumijevajući pritom ništa neizravno ili okultno". I dalje: "Strogo govoreći, 'jezike' iz mog naslova valjalo bi zamijeniti 'simboličkim sustavima'" .³ Goodmanova su rana teorijska propitivanja jezika umjetnosti pogadala upravo samu bit moderne umjetnosti, jer su pojašnjavala kako tradicionalna umjetnost nije imala svijest o sebi kao jeziku, niti o tome da "denotacija predstavlja srž reprezentacije i neovisna je o sličnosti". Tradicionalna je umjetnost svoju sposobnost stvaranja značenja i smisla tumačila kao aspekt

entual book saw the light of day: it was *Languages of Art: An Approach to the Theory of Symbols* by American philosopher and philosopher of aesthetics Nelson Goodman.¹ It is well known that the history of his famous lectures goes back to the now far-away 1960s,² that is, to the time of late modernism, which had by that time already begun to show its reverse. According to Goodman's words from the introduction, his research in the language of art "goes beyond art" and his aim is "an approach to the general theory of symbols," in which the term 'symbol' is "used as a very general and colourless expression. It covers letters, words, texts, images, diagrams, maps, models, and other things, not including anything indirect or occult". And further on: "Strictly speaking, the term 'languages' in my title should be substituted by 'symbolic systems'."³ Goodman's early theoretical investigations in the languages of art concerned the very essence of modern art, since they explained that the traditional art was aware neither of itself as a language, nor of the fact that "denotation is the core of representation and does not depend on similarity." Traditional art interpreted its ability to create meaning and sense as an aspect of visual presentation and formation in the service of expression and mediation of aesthetic, religious, ideological, and other notions. When we speak of the linguistic nature of art, we do not mean the general linguistic foundations (such as grammar, alphabet, etc.), but specific artificial languages or, in later discourses, "linguistic games," such as created semantic systems of naming, presenting, expressing, or communicating, which have been formed on the basis of arbitrarily (subjectively)



5

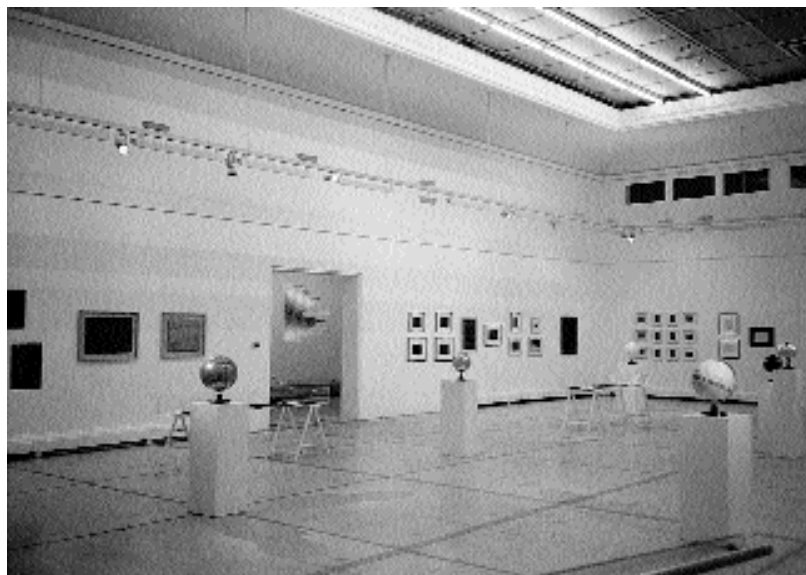
likovnog prikazivanja i oblikovanja u službi izražavanja i posredovanja estetskih, religioznih, ideoloških i drugih zamisli. Razjašnjavanjem jezične prirode umjetnosti, pod čim se ne podrazumijeva opća lingvistička zasnovanost (gramatika, pismo itd.), nego specifični umjetni jezici ili, u kasnijim diskursima, “jezične igre” kao kreirani znakovni sustavi imenovanja, prikazivanja, izražavanja ili općenja koji se formiraju na proizvoljno (subjektivno) odabranim, kombiniranim i konstruiranim pravilima. Ovo teorijsko opravdanje moderne umjetnosti, koje je zapravo crpilo snagu iz avangardnog otkrića da je umjetnost struktura izgrađena analogno općoj zamisli jezika (primjerice Maljevičev sustav suprematizma i njegova teorija dodanog elementa), bitno je utjecalo na neoavangardne pokrete. U njihovoj praksi jezične igre potom postaju modelom realizacije umjetničkog djela, posebno na prijelazu iz šezdesetih u sedamdesete, kada su one u konceptualnoj umjetnosti ključna metoda preobražaja umjetničkog rada.

Goodmanova je teorija prepoznata u širim razmjerima sedamdesetih godina, istih onih godina, dakako neovisno od Goodmana, kada je i samozatajan umjetnički rad pod pseudonimom “Mangelos” prepoznat unutar djelovanja grupe Gorgona koja je, po riječima Branke Stipančić iz uvodnog ogleada, tada “bila oaza u kojoj se moglo nesmetano raditi, ali jednako tako i geto iz čije se izolacije nisu širili utjecaji na druge umjetnike sve do njihove izložbe u Galeriji suvremene umjetnosti (danas Muzej suvremene umjetnosti) 1977. godine, otkad su mnogim umjetnicima postali uzor, između ostalog i zbog strogosti svojih estetičkih isključivanja”.⁴ No, situacija vremena nije bila razlogom dugo

selected, combined, and construed rules. This theoretical justification of modern art, which in fact draws upon the vanguard’s discovery that art is a structure, analogous to the general conception of language (for example, Malevich’s system of suprematism and his theory of the additional element), had a crucial influence on vanguard movements. From that moment onwards, the linguistic games that formed part of their practice turned into a model for the realisation of a piece of art, especially at the turn of the 60s and 70s when, in conceptual art, they became a key method for the transformation of artistic work.

Goodman’s theory was widely recognised in the 70s, precisely at the time when - independently from Goodman, of course - the self-effacing artistic work whose author was known under the pseudonym “Mangelos” was recognised within the framework of the Gorgona group, which was at that time, as Branka Stipančić states in her introductory essay, “an oasis in which one could work undisturbed, but also a ghetto from whose isolation no influences spread towards other artists until the exhibition in 1977, at the Gallery of Contemporary Art (today Museum of Contemporary Art) in Zagreb - from that moment onwards, they became role-models for a number of artists, among other things, because of the austerity of their aesthetic exclusiveness.”⁴ But the time and the situation were not the reason that the existence of artist Mangelos remained concealed for such a long time;

6



▼

- ¹ NELSON GOODMAN, Jezici umjetnosti. Pristup teoriji simbola, Zagreb, 2002., u prijevodu Vande Božičević prema izdanju iz 1988.
- ² Prvo izdanje: Languages of Art: An Approach to a Theory of Symbols, Indianapolis, 1969., drugo izdanje 1976.
- ³ NELSON GOODMAN (bilj. 1), 1.
- ⁴ BRANKA STIPANČIĆ, Mangelos from 1 to 9 1/2. No-art, u: *Mangelos nos. 1 to 9 1/2*, Museu de Arte Contemporânea de Serralves, Porto, 2003., 23.

●

- ¹ NELSON GOODMAN, Jezici umjetnosti. Pristup teoriji simbola Zagreb, 2002, transl. by Vanda Božičević according to the 1988 edition.
- ² 1st edition: Languages of Art: An Approach to a Theory of Symbols Indianapolis, 1969; 2nd ed. 1976.
- ³ NELSON GOODMAN, (n. 1), 1.
- ⁴ BRANKA STIPANČIĆ, Mangelos from 1 to 9 1/2. No-art, in: *Mangelos nos. 1 to 9 1/2*, Museu de Arte Contemporânea de Serralves, Porto, 2003, 23.



7



8

7.-8. Izložba / Exhibition
Mangelos N^{os} 1-9^{1/2},
 Fundació Antoni Tapies,
 Barcelona

skrivena egzistencije Mangelosa umjetnika; jedinstvena umjetnička vokacija, kojoj je teško naći formalne paralele u svijetu umjetnosti, bila je samo druga strana iznimne intelektualne osobnosti koja je bila prisutna u javnosti pod imenom Dimitrija Miće Bašičevića (Šid 1921. - Zagreb 1987.), doktora povijesti umjetnosti, kustosa i likovnog kritičara, sudionika u sukobima i strepnjama vlastitog vremena i prostora. Poput Goodman, no mnogo ranije i u radikalnijim okolnostima iza željezne zavjese, Bašičević se početkom pedesetih godina oštrim teorijsko-kritičkim perom zalaže za one umjetničke strategije koje pripadaju duhu modernizma i njegovim "jezičnim sustavima". Usred žestoke problemske i ideološki obojene rasprave te bitke za demokratizaciju kulturnog života, 1953. godine objavljuje tekst pod naslovom *Jezik apstraktne umjetnosti*,⁵ a povodom izložbe

his unique artistic vocation, which can hardly be formally paralleled to anything in the world of art, was only the reverse of an exceptional intellectual personality, which was present in public as Dimitrije Mića Bašičević (born in Šid, 1921 - died in Zagreb, 1987), Ph.D. in art history, curator and art critic, who participated fully in the controversies and anxieties of his time and space. Just like Goodman, only much earlier and in the circumstances behind the iron curtain - in the early 50s - Bašičević employed his sharp pen of theory and criticism in order to back those artistic strategies which belonged to the spirit of modernism and its "linguistic systems." In 1953, in the midst of a fierce debate coloured by ideology and by the strife for democratisation in cultural life, he published a text entitled "The Language of abstract art,"⁵ occasioned by an exhibition of four EXAT artists.

Bašičević not only saw the approaching "signs which determine civilization" and a universal "language of the new times" in the work of EXAT group, but also sought to crush completely the negative aura ("decorativeness", "formalism", "inhumanity", "perversion", etc.) around the so-called abstraction, developing a hypothesis about its non-mimetic (non-topical) and linguistic nature in the context of modern art. Therefore, he did not start the discussion because of having doubts regarding the legitimacy of the historical status of abstract art; on the contrary, his aim was to raise the theoretical level of contemporary debate. Although he believed that the "development of abstract art is not yet concluded," he based himself, in terms of theory, upon the principles of historical vanguards (notably in neoplasticism) and their articulation of an awareness that art was a special, "purely" visual structure of balance, a "composition of plastic relationship between colours and forms"; thus, as Bašičević concluded in his *Language of Abstract Art*, "instead of the present picture, which has come into existence through composition of natural forms, the composition itself has become a picture." His conclusions that abstract art "brings forth the novelty of plastic expression: plastic metaphor and plastic analogy, instead of a summary that has been definitely removed from the canvas" and that the "language of abstract art presupposes knowledge of a very subtle, but in fact very

četiriju slikara EXAT-a (Kristl, Picelj, Rašica, Srnec).

U djelima "exatovaca" ne samo da vidi nadolazeće "znakove koji određuju civilizaciju", univerzalni "jezik novog vremena", nego nastoji posve razbiti negativnu auru ("dekorativnost", "formalizam", "nehumanost", "zastranjenje" itd.) oko tzv. apstrakcije, razvijajući tezu o njenoj nemimetičkoj (nepredmetnoj) i jezičnoj prirodi u uvjetima moderne umjetnosti. Raspravu, dakle, ne pokreće radi sumnje u legitimnost povijesnog statusa apstraktne umjetnosti, nego naprotiv, radi podizanja teorijske razine suvremene rasprave. Premda je smatrao da "razvojni put apstraktne umjetnosti još nije završen", teorijsku je podlogu našao u zasadama povijesnih avangardi, naročito u neoplasticizmu, u njihovoj artikulaciji svijesti o umjetnosti kao posebnoj, "čisto" vizualnoj strukturi ravnoteže, "kompoziciji plastičkih odnosa boja i oblika". Tako je, zaključuje Bašičević u *Jeziku apstraktne umjetnosti*, "umjesto dosadašnje slike nastale kompozicijom prirodnih oblika, sama kompozicija postala slikom". Taj se njegov zaključak, da apstraktna umjetnost "donosi novost plastičkog izraza: plastičke metafore, plastičke analogije, umjesto sižea koji se definitivno uklanja s platna" te da "jezik apstraktne umjetnosti pretpostavlja poznavanje jedne veoma suptilne, iako u suštini jednostavne gramatike", posve prirodno ulijeva u šira teorijska promišljanja o nepodražavalačkoj naravi umjetnosti, koja je preko desetljeća kasnije tako utjecajno formulirao Goodman tvrdnjom da "sličnost nije nužna za referenciju". Podsjetimo se u cjelini ove njegove do danas vrlo često citirane tvrdnje: "Jednostavna je činjenica to da slika, da bi reprezentirala neki predmet, mora biti njegov simbol, mora stajati za njega, referirati na njega, te da bilo koji stupanj sličnosti nije dovoljan da se ustanovi taj neophodan odnos referencije. Sličnost osim toga nije ni nužna za referenciju; tako reći bilo što može stajati za bilo što drugo. Slika koja reprezentira - kao i ulomak teksta koji opisuje neki predmet referira na njega, točnije rečeno, denotira taj predmet. Denotacija predstavlja srž reprezentacije i neovisna je o sličnosti."⁶ Vratimo se, dakle, opet Bašičeviću: ovom kontekstualizacijom postaje posve razvidnim da je on svojedobno u svojoj, tada ideološki zatvorenoj i skoro izoliranoj "lokalnoj" sredini, također otvorio teorijsku raspravu o denotativnoj naravi umjetnosti. Međutim, svoju tvrdnju

simple grammar" fitted rather naturally into his broader theoretical reflections on the non-imitational nature of art, which Goodman then reformulated more than a decade later and with a great impact in his statement that "similarity is not indispensable for reference." Let us recall this much quoted statement in its entirety: "It is a simple fact that a picture, in order to represent an object, must necessarily be its symbol, must stand for it, refer to it, and no degree of similarity is sufficient to establish this necessary relationship of reference. Moreover, similarity is not even necessary for reference; almost anything can stand for anything else. A picture that represents - just as a passage in the text that describes - an object, refers to it as well: more precisely, it denotes that object. Denotation is the core of representation and does not depend on similarity."⁶ Let us now turn back to Bašičević: the present contextualisation makes it evident that, in his own times and in his ideologically closed and almost isolated "local" circumstances, he opened up a theoretical debate on the denotative nature of art; however, he conceptually reasserted his statement that "by opening the windows into nature, we have just started the process of separation from that very nature" in his own artistic work, which he signed as Mangelos and which had a far-reaching influence, the evidence of which is this presentation of his opus on the international scene.

However, this point of contact with the world of theory brings out the difference as well. Truly, Nelson Goodman, a theoretician of modernist aestheticism who foresaw its scope, also experienced himself as a "philosopher who firmly remains in the Socratic tradition of his own ignorance."⁷ Dimitrije Bašičević was among the first Yugoslav theoreticians of modern art who equally endorsed autonomy of art, sharing at the same time the sensibility of contemporary theory and its doubt in the positivist ideal and rationalist authority regarding knowledge about art. However, Bašičević deeply experienced the crisis of this approach to modern art and articulated his experience as Mangelos the artist, down to the utmost loyalty to the original artistic gesture and the primordial force of the artistic vocation as such. It is precisely this side of Dimitrije Bašičević, which denied in artistic practice even the authority of the modernist notion of art, from metaphysical

▼

⁵ (DIMITRIJE) MIĆA BAŠIČEVIĆ, Jezik apstraktne umjetnosti, u: *Krugovi*, 4 (1953.), 365.-371.; također u: *Quorum*, 1 (1989.).

⁶ NELSON GOODMAN (bilj. 1), 9.

●

⁵ (DIMITRIJE) MIĆA BAŠIČEVIĆ, Jezik apstraktne umjetnosti [The language of abstract art], in: *Krugovi*, 4 (1953), 365-371; also in: *Quorum* 1 (1989).

⁶ NELSON GOODMAN (n. 1), 9.

⁷ NELSON GOODMAN (n. 1), Preface, V.



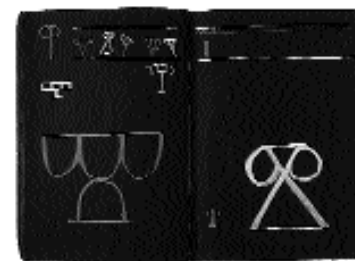
9

9. *Mangelos nos. 1 to 9 1/2*, uredila / editor Branka Stipančić, Museu de Arte Contemporânea de Serralves, Porto, 2003. (na engleskom jeziku te dodaci na portugalskom, njemačkom i španjolskom / text in English and supplements in Portugese, German and Spanish)

10. *Mangelos, Alphabet (gl.)*, 1952.

11. *Mangelos, Les paysages de tabula rasa*, 1953.

12. *Mangelos, Manifest o jednom bivšem coeuku / Manifesto on an Ex-Man*, c. 1977-1978.



10



11

da je "otvaranjem prozora u prirodu upravo otpočeo proces odvajanja od te iste prirode" neprestano je konceptualno dokazivao u vlastitom umjetničkom djelovanju koje je potpisivao kao Mangelos, a čije dalekosežno značenje, uostalom, potvrđuje i ova prezentacija njegova opusa na međunarodnoj sceni.

No, ova dodirna točka s teorijskim svijetom ističe i razliku. Doduše, i Nelson Goodman je, kao estetičar modernizma, sluteći njegove dosege, ipak sebe doživljavao "kao filozofa koji čvrsto stoji u sokratovskoj tradiciji vlastita neznanja."⁷ Dimitrije Bašičević jedan je od prvih teoretičara moderne umjetnosti u domaćoj sredini koji se također zalagao za autonomiju umjetnosti, ali je dijelio i suvremeni teoretičarski senzibilitet i njegovu sumnju u pozitivistički ideal i racionalistički autoritet znanja o umjetnosti. Međutim, on je krizu pristupa modernoj umjetnosti duboko i osobno življavao te ju je i artikulirao na način Mangelosa umjetnika, do potpune odanosti izvornoj umjetničkoj gesti i iskonskoj snazi umjetničkog poziva samog. Upravo je tu stranu Dimitrija Bašičevića, koja u umjetničkoj praksi negira čak i autoritet modernističkog pojma umjetnosti, od njenih metafizičkih do formalnih i medijskih određenja, obradila Branka Stipančić u svom pothvatu retrospektivne izložbe te prateće monografske publikacije. Time je na scenu svjetske umjetnosti izvukla i učinila vidljivim gorgonaški neoavangardni duh "meta-

to formal and media determinations, that represents the focal point of Branka Stipančić and her project, which comprises a retrospective exhibition and an accompanying monograph. She has thus drawn out and shown to the world art scene the Gorgonic, neo-vanguard spirit of "meta-physical irony" and "existential nihilism", of provocation and subversion within the contemplative focus of Mangelos's frantic designation. In the solitude of artistic gesture, he persistently visualised the "no-image-no-text" with his distinctive and indivisible fusion of iconic and verbal *signa*, like a "walk into nothingness" that would later be more precisely conceptualised as the neo-vanguard procedure of tautology. At the same time, he wrote almost prophetically: "Recently, some new possibilities have opened up for relating towards the artistic product". At first, within his "symbolic system", Mangelos designated these new possibilities as the "private programme" of *no-art* and, as he himself explained, "in this sense, the attitude of privacy implied years of non-public position."⁸ No wonder then that this entirely personal, even introverted system of anti-art from the late twentieth century was eventually recognised within the wider context of European neo-vanguard strategies as the criticism of institutional art systems. The framework of this strategy was defined by Mangelos himself: "Culture has overcome the dilemma between art and no-art regardless of the

fizičke ironije” i “egzistencijalističkog nihilizma”, provokacije i subverzije. Dakako, sve to u kontemplativnoj usredotočenosti Mangelosova bjesomučnog označavanja. On je u osami umjetničke geste svojom samosvojom i nerazlučivom spregom ikoničkog i verbalnog znaka uporno vizualizirao “ni-slike-ni-tekst”, poput “hoda ka ništavilu”, što će kasnije biti preciznije konceptualizirano kao neoavangardni postupak tautologije. Istodobno je gotovo proročkim riječima ispisivao sljedeće: “U posljednje vreme otvorene su neke nove mogućnosti odnosa prema umjetničkom produktu.” Mangelos je unutar svog “simboličkog sustava” te nove mogućnosti najprije nazvao “privatnim programom” *no-arta* i, kako je sam objasnio, “u tom je smislu stav privatnosti implicirao višegodišnji stav nejavnosti”.⁸ Stoga ne iznenađuje činjenica da je taj posve osobni, čak introvertni sustav anti-umjetnosti iz druge polovice 20. stoljeća na njegovu kraju prepoznat unutar šireg konteksta europskih neoavangardnih strategija kao kritika institucionalnih sustava umjetnosti. Okvire te strategije definirao je već sam Mangelos: “Kultura je prevladala dilemu između arta i no-arta, bez obzira na ponašanje i shvaćanje pojedinaca i institucija. Sto pedeset godina posle Hegela nije potrebno igrati se proroka.”⁹

O tome kako je svojim intuicijama i kritičkim tumačenjima te autentičnim vrlinama kreativne i subverzivne imaginacije sudjelovao u inauguriranju duha neoavangarde govori nam jezgrovit i jasan tekst kustosice ovog projekta. Njezin tekst teče lagano, sigurno i razložno, obuhvaćajući sav začudno nabujali kreativni život Bašičevića/Mangelosa: od njegove opsjednutosti smislom i krajnjim granicama postojanja, do ostavljanja tragova vlastite egzistencije u *no-artu*. Autorica možda stoga započinje svoj tekst već legendarnom Mangelosovom podjelom vlastita života na razdoblja od 1 do 9 1/2 (*shid-manifest*, 1978., gdje je točno predvidio godinu svoje smrti), a koja se kasnije uglavnom poklapaju i s njegovim kreativnim ciklusima: “Mangelos no. 1 bio je seosko dijete u Šidu; Mangelos no. 2 učenik osnovne škole i gimnazije; Mangelos no. 3 ispisivao je u dačkim bilježnicama svoje pjesme i crnim kvadratima bilježio sjećanja na prijatelje poginule u ratu koje kasnije naziva *paysages de la mort* i *paysages de la guerre*; Mangelos no. 4 ispisuje u precrnjenim knjigama prve *abecede* i studira povijest umjetnosti; Mangelos i no.

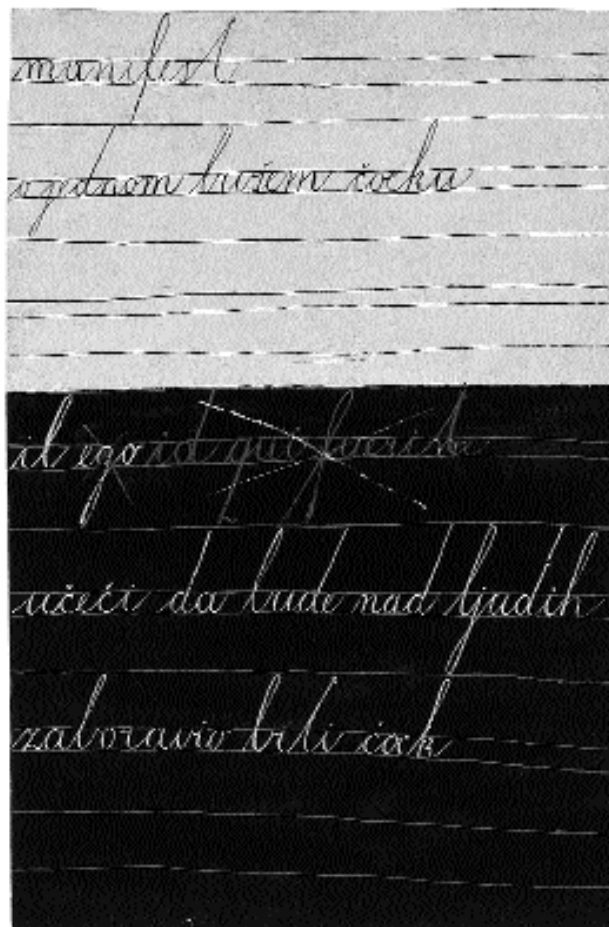
conduct and understanding of individuals and institutions; 150 years after Hegel there is no need to play a prophet.”⁹

The way in which Mangelos took part in the inauguration of the vanguard’s spirit with his intuitions, critical interpretations, and authentic values of creative and subversive imagination, has been described in the concise and lucid text of the project curator. Her words flow easily, confidently, and sensibly, encompassing the entire, wondrously creative life of Bašičević/Mangelos: from his obsession with meaning and with the final limits of existence to the traces that his very existence left in *no-art*. That is perhaps why the author begins with the Mangelos’s meanwhile legendary division of his own life into periods marked from 1 to 9 1/2 (taken over from the *shid-manifest*, 1978, in which he precisely predicted the year of his death), which mainly overlap with his creative cycles: “Mangelos no. 1 was a country boy in Šid; Mangelos

▼

- ⁷ NELSON GOODMAN, (bilj.1), Predgovor, V.
⁸ DIMITRIJE BAŠIČEVIĆ MANGELOS, Uvod u no-art, 1979., objavljeno u: *Quorum*, 1 (1989.), 188.
⁹ DIMITRIJE BAŠIČEVIĆ MANGELOS (bilj. 8), 190. Napominjem da je Mangelos sve pisao malim slovima.
-
- ⁸ DIMITRIJE BAŠIČEVIĆ MANGELOS, Uvod u no-art, 1979, [Introducing No-Art], in: *Quorum*, 1 (1989), 188.
⁹ DIMITRIJE BAŠIČEVIĆ MANGELOS (n. 8), 190. Mangelos wrote everything in minuscule script.

12

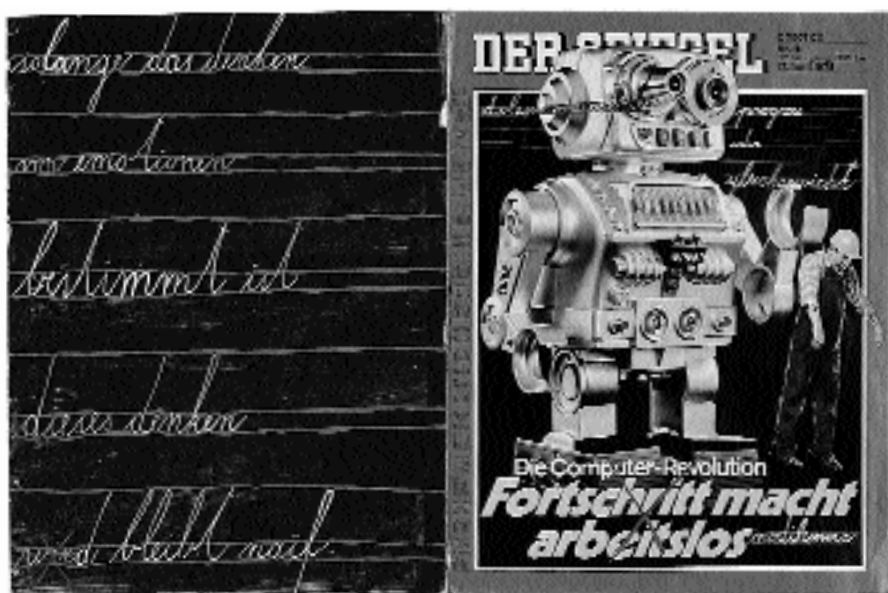


5 i no. 6 već su duboko u sferi umjetnosti, slikaju *tabulae rase, paysages, anti-peinture, pythagore, nostories* itd. Uz to sudjeluju u radu avangardne grupe Gorgona, čiji radikalni projekti nastaju na pozicijama anti-umjetnosti. Mangelosi no. 7, no. 8, no. 9 i no. 9 i pol formiraju teorije o umjetnosti, kulturi i civilizaciji u bilježnicama, na tablama i globusima.”¹⁰ No sve “faze” i strane Mangelosa, gotovo od ranog životnog razdoblja pa do zrelih umjetničkih godina, dodatno obavijene koprenom provokativne privatnosti čak i u postupku datiranja, teško se mogu razumijevati razdvojeno; sve su one još pod znakom hegelovske sumnje koliko je umjetnost kao forma i dalje adekvatna izraziti istinu egzistencije. No, kako su odmicali njegovi životni i kreativni ciklusi, Mangelosu je Hegel, sa svojom tvrdnjom da “imamo umjetnost da ne bi propali zbog istine”, bio sve bliži, a i njegova je posvećenost umjetnosti bila sve veća, čak i uz rizik mučnine zbog javnog izlaganja, koje je, doduše, posljednjeg desetljeća njegova života, bivalo sve učestalije.

No, poput Goodmana koji je, doduše, u hladnom diskursu modernizma konstatirao da za umjetničku djelatnost “istinitost nije dovoljna; ona je u najboljem slučaju nužan uvjet”,¹¹ tako je i Mangelos, više intuitivno i instiktivno, priznavao da samo spoznajno iskustvo nije cilj, nego nas ono kao simptom estetskog “oprema za preživljavanje”. Za Mangelosa umjetnika, zapravo, simptomatična djelatnost simbolizacije nije tek “univerzalna čovjekova težnja”, nego

no. 2 attended primary and secondary schools; Mangelos no. 3 filled his study books with poems and black squares, with which he commemorated friends that fell during the war and which he later named *paysages de la mort* and *paysages de la guerre*; Mangelos no. 4 noted down his first *alphabets* in blackened books and studied art history; Mangelos no. 5 and no. 6, deeply immersed into the sphere of art, painted *tabulae rasae, paysages, anti-peinture, pythagore, nostories*, etc., and participated in the activities of the vanguard group Gorgona, whose radical projects were based on the positions of anti-art. Mangelos no. 7, no. 8, no. 9, and no. 9 and half formed hypotheses on art, culture, and civilisation in notebooks, on writing tablets and globes.”¹⁰ But all these “phases” and sides of Mangelos, beginning almost from his childhood to his mature artist’s years, were additionally enveloped in the veil of provoking privacy, which has affected even the dating procedure, and can hardly be understood in isolation; they are all marked by the Hegelian doubt about the adequacy of art as a form for expressing the truth of existence. As his life and creative cycles went on, Mangelos came even closer to Hegel in his claim that “we have art lest we should perish for truth” and his dedication to art became stronger, even with the fits of illness when he had to exhibit in public, which increased during the last decade of his life.

But just like Goodman, who has stated - though within the cold modernist discourse - that “truthfulness does not suffice... it is at most a necessary condition” for a work of art,¹¹ thus Mangelos, although more intuitively and instinctively, admitted that cognitive experience was not an aim in itself, but “equips us for survival” as a symptom of the aesthetical. In fact, Mangelos as artist did not perceive the symptomatic activity of symbolisation as the “universal human tendency”, but rather as strong, particular compulsion from within. Today, when his opus has been completed and presented, it has become evident how elementary was the power of his visual conceptualisation; it connected like a spiral all those scattered fragments and segments of his work with an inner energy of the paradoxical idea of *no-art*, which he himself summed up in the series of *Manifestoes* from 1978 (which have been likewise included in the monograph, next to the ear-



jaka pojedinačna unutarnja prinuda. Kada je danas njegov opus dovršen, ali i prezentiran, postaje jasnim koliko je elementarna bila njegova snaga vizualne konceptualizacije. Ona je spiralno povezivala sve raspršene fragmente i raznolike segmente njegova cjelokupnog rada unutarnjom energijom paradoksalnog pojma *no-arta*, koji on sam u seriji *manifesta* iz 1978. godine (koji su također uvršteni u knjigu, pored ranijih *nostories* i *teza*) zaokružuje tautološkim objašnjenjem: "*najfilozofskije / i najteoretskije / objašnjenje noarta / glasi / noart.*" Upravo je takav redukcionizam ugrađen u temelje Mangelosova pristupa umjetnosti, neprestanog "vraćanja na početke". Njega pokreću sumnja i pitanja, nepristajanje i preispitivanje, demonstrirajući to na različite načine u rasponu između života i umjetnosti. Taj je napon vidljiv već od prvih crnih mrlja i polja u njegovim školskim bilježnicama u spomen na nestale u vihoru rata, čije crnilo Mangelos potom izvlači, uvećava i prenosi na drugu podlogu (uglavnom već printani papir, drvo ili ready-made kao što su dačke crne tablice, globusi itd.). On kombinira veoma reducirane kolorističke odnose (crno, bijelo, crveno) i osnovne geometrijske elemente i likove (crte, kvadrat, trokut, pravokutnik) s verbalnim znacima (slovo, riječi različitih jezika pisane različitim pismima, odnosno simboličkim sustavima - grčkim, latiničnim, ćiriličnim, glagoljičkim itd.), a čini to u maniri početničkog učenja umijeća krasnopisa, čije je sjećanje i fascinaciju ponio iz najranije škole. Semantički niz koji slijedi je slovo-znak-pismo-slika, ali bez linearne interpretacije, s elementarnim čitanjem znanja iz poruke (*paysage de la mort*). Uz to uvijek iznova uranja samo naizgled "nevin pogled" u filozofiju i druga područja znanja (koji odvodi teoretičara Bašičevića iz područja racionalnog u subjektivno, imaginarno, iracionalno, osjetilno... u umjetničko) ili se, pak, igra s pretjerivanjem, značenjskim izvrtanjem i negiranjem sentenci, ustaljenih pojmova (*najlepše je ne biti prisutan, nostory, non credo, anti-peinture, nemo*). Tako označitelj prodire u označeno u manifestnim, zagonetnim, proizvoljnim, apsurdnim, parodijskim ili jednostavno zaigranim juktaponiranjima različitih tragova slova, riječi, zapisa, slika, materijala "na dohvat ruke", misli...

Jednom riječju, Mangelos je unedogled otvorao ne samo obzor izrazito osobne duhovnosti i kreativnosti, nego je obnavljao intelektualnu i umjetničku snagu avangard-

lier *nostories* and *theses*) with a tautological explanation: "*the most philosophical / and most theoretical / explanation of noart / is / noart.*" This reductionism was built into the very foundations of Mangelos's approach to art, resulting in his incessant "return to the beginnings", incited by doubts and questions, disagreement and reinvestigation, and made evident in various ways within the span of his life and art. This vigour was perceptible from the first black stains and squares in his school notebooks, which commemorated those that vanished in the winds of war. Later on, Mangelos drew out the blackness, enlarged it, and transferred it to other surfaces (mainly printed paper, wood, or ready-mades such as pupils' writing tablets, globes, etc.), using highly reduced chromatic combinations (black, white, red) and basic geometrical elements and figures (lines, triangles, squares) with verbal signs (letters, words from various scripts and languages or symbolic systems - Greek, Latin, Cyrillic, Glagolitic, etc.) in the manner of a beginner's exercise in calligraphy, which he remembered with fascination from his early school years; as well as the semantic series letter-sign-script-image, but without linear interpretation, with an elementary reading of knowledge from the message (*paysage de la mort*), and the immersion of an apparently "innocent gaze" into philosophy and other domains of knowledge (which led Bašičević as theoretician away from the field of rational and into the subjective, imaginary, irrational, sensual... into the artistic); or, again, using exaggeration, perversion of meaning, and negation of sentences or common expressions (*the most beautiful thing is not to be present, nostory, non credo, anti-peinture, nemo*). In this way, the signifier penetrated the signified in manifest, enigmatic, arbitrary, absurd, parody-like, or simply playful juxtapositions of various traces of letters, inscriptions, words, images, "ready at hand" materials, and thoughts...

Briefly, Mangelos not only opened up an endless horizon of exceptionally personal spirituality and creativity, but also renewed the intellectual and artistic forces of the vanguard approach in a sort of "re-evaluation of all values" - of course, without "the sound and the fury" of historical vanguards. The silent gesture of an incessant search for the lost "zero point" of history and culture, which he articulated in a most



¹⁰ BRANKA STIPANČIĆ (bilj. 4), 13.

¹¹ NELSON GOODMAN (bilj. 1), 218.



¹⁰ BRANKA STIPANČIĆ (n. 4), 13.

¹¹ NELSON GOODMAN (n. 1), 218.

13. *Mangelos, Dilemma - manifest, 1978.*

nog pristupa u “prevrednovanju svih vrijednosti”, dakako bez “krika i bijesa” povijesnih avangardi. Tiha gesta neprestanog traženja izgubljene “nulte točke” povijesti i kulture, ikonički najsazetije izražena njegovom omiljenom “metaforom ništavila” - nevješto ispisanom sintagmom *tabula rasa* u kadru crne plohe pučkoškolske tablice, svaki put iznova priziva energiju duha avangardne obnove iz duha negiranja, pa i ništavila, iz čije bi dubine i praznine katkad bljesnula jasnoća slova (*alfabet* ili *az*) ili elementarnih geometrijskih likova (*pythagora*) kao metafora, po Mangelosu, novog početka i “sređivanja svijeta”. Čini se da otuda njegov neoavangardni koncept *no-arta* izaziva danas toliku pozornost i izvan sredine u kojoj je nastao, doduše, s povijesnim zakašnjenjem (gotovo iste duljine obrnutog putovanja Goodmanove knjige iz “središta” ka “periferiji”). Kad se Mangelos jednom našao u crnom meditativnom polju praznine i početka te se prepustio dijalektici arta i no-arta, postavio je posve konceptualan projekt: *umjesto slike svijeta - model svijeta*. U tom je duhu bila ostvarena i njegova posljednja izložba *No. 1-9 retrospektiva* 1981. godine, a koja se sastojala od samo jedne školske tablice na kojoj je pisalo *noart*.

Avantura no-arta zaintrigirala je svijet umjetnosti s europske scene već ranih devedesetih (1993., Gent, *Opus Operandi: Mangelos Books*) i zanimanje je u uskom krugu znalaca sve više raslo. No, kada je Branka Stipančić postavila izložbu Mangelosovih radova u Berlinu (1997., *Galerie Reiner Borgemeister: a b c*), ono je naglo poraslo, naročito kad je Vicente Todoli, tadašnji direktor *Museu de Serralves*, a današnji direktor londonske *Tate Modern*, došao u Zagreb i osobno pregledao Mangelosov rad te zatim odlučio naručiti projekt retrospektivne izložbe i monografije, u koji su se potom uključili i drugi. Njenu su muzejsko-galerijsku prezentaciju podržali, osim portugalskog *Museu de Arte Contemporânea de Serralves* kao generalnog organizatora i koordinatora, još i *Neue Galerie am Landesmuseum Joanneum*, Graz (2003.), zatim *Fundacio Antoni Tapies*, Barcelona (2004.) i *Kunsthalle Fridericianum*, Kassel (2004.). Vodeći ljudi ovih institucija, poput René Blocka, stali su iza projekta, a pojedine aspekte Mangelosova no-arta u neoavangardnom su kontekstu problematizirali i aktualizirali svojim priložima Laura Hoptman (*Notime like the pre-*

iconic and concise way with his favourite “metaphor of nothingness” - a clumsily written syntagm *tabula rasa* on the black surface of a school tablet - retrieved again and again the spiritual energy of the vanguard renewal from the spirit of negation, even nothingness, from whose depths and emptiness clarity of letters (*alfabet* or *az*), or elementary geometrical forms (*pythagora*) as a metaphor of new beginning and of “arranging the world” according to Mangelos, would occasionally glitter. Apparently, that is the reason why his neo-vanguard concept of *no-art* attracts so much attention today, even beyond the borders of the region in which it was formed, though with a temporal delay (of an almost equal length as the reverse journey of Goodman’s book from the “centre” to the “periphery”). The moment Mangelos found himself in the black meditative field of emptiness and beginning, abandoning himself to the dialectics of art and no-art, he set up an entirely conceptual project: *instead of the image of the world / - a model of the world*. His last exhibition was done in the same spirit: it was the *No. 1-9 retrospective*, which consisted of a single school tablet, on which it was written *noart*.

The adventure of *no-art* intrigued the world of art on the European scene as early as the beginning of the 1990s (1993, Gond, *Opus Operandi: Mangelos Books*) and there was an increasing interest within the narrow circle of experts. But when Branka Stipančić organised an exhibition of Mangelos’s works in Berlin (1997, *Galerie Reiner Borgemeister: a b c*), this interest rapidly grew, especially after Vicente Todoli (at that time the director of the *Museu de Serralves* and today of the *Tate Modern* Gallery in London), came to Zagreb and personally scrutinised the work of Mangelos, which resulted in his decision to commission a retrospective exhibition and a monograph, which were followed by other, similar projects. The sponsors of the museum-gallery presentation of Branka Stipančić have been, besides the *Museu de Arte Contemporânea de Serralves* in Portugal, which was the general organiser and coordinator, *Neue Galerie am Landesmuseum Joanneum*, Graz (2003), *Fundacio Antoni Tapies*, Barcelona (2004), and *Kunsthalle Fridericianum*, Kassel (2004). The leading figures of those institutions, such as René Block, have supported the project and some aspects of Mangelos’s *no-art* have

sent: *Mangelos's noart then and now*) i Bernard Marcadé (*Mangelos, or: Painting-writing after the disaster*). Tako se Mangelosovo duhovno naslijeđe no-arta, sa svim svojim egzistencijalnim i eksperimentalnim nemirima, uplelo u europsko kulturno naslijeđe u rasponu od sartreovskog egzistencijalističkog osjećaja "bačenosti u svijet", preko adornoanske kritičke upitanosti "kako je moguća umjetnost nakon Auschwitz", do pada Berlinskog zida kao simbolične najave kraja europske podijeljenosti na središta i periferiju. Time je također jedno dugogodišnje istraživanje kompliciranog i veoma slojevitog umjetničkog opusa zakruženo projektom kritičke valorizacije unutar šireg europskog konteksta. Tiskana je i knjiga koja prati izložbu, poput knjigakataloga velikih europskih izložbenih projekata, koja predstavlja posve paralelan urednički proizvod kustosice čiji sadržaj (od uvodnih tekstova, preko dokumentacije Mangelosovih radova i tekstova, do bio-bibliografskih podataka i pomaka u povijesnumjetničkoj temi datiranja radova, *Mangelos - Dating the work as an projekt*, B. S.), tumači i dokumentira ovu stranu rada i djelovanja Dimitrija Bašičevića Mangelosa koja je u svojoj sredini otvarala fluxusovsko i gorgonaško pitanje što sve može biti umjetnost. Mangelosovo je djelovanje u njoj, paradoksalno, upravo krajnjim estetičkim redukcionizmom unutar zatečenih vrijednosti i na njima zasnovanih hijerarhija, doprinosilo proširivanju pojma i granica umjetnosti, i to one umjetnosti, prema riječima iz uvodnog teksta, "koja neće rezultirati predmetom, već ponuditi koncept i pružiti iskustvo"; jednom riječju, ponuditi umjetnost kao modus postojanja u kulturalnom prožimanju. Za tu umjetničku paradigmu nije presudno, kao što je pokazao projekt *Mangelos nos. 1 to 9 1/2*, odakle je ona potekla, nego koliko inklinira novoj kulturalnoj re-konfiguraciji koja je sveprisutna u suvremenom umjetničkom djelovanju. ▼

been debated and brought into the focus of attention by Laura Hoptman (*Notime like the present: Mangelos's noart then and now*) and Bernard Marcadé (*Mangelos, or: Painting-writing after the disaster*). In this way, Mangelos's spiritual heritage of *no-art*, with its existentialist and experimental restlessness, has been incorporated into the European cultural heritage, beginning with the Sartrean existentialist feeling of being "thrown into the world", through Adorno's critical investigation of "how art was possible after Auschwitz", to the fall of the Berlin wall as the symbolic enunciation of the end of Europe as divided in centres and peripheries. The exhibition has also marked the end of many years of research on this complex and multileveled artistic opus, which has been brought to conclusion in a project of critical evaluation within a broader European context. The book that accompanies the exhibition, like all books-catalogues of great European exhibition projects, is a parallel editorial product of the curator, which interprets (from the introductory texts through the documentation of Mangelos's works and texts, to the bio-bibliographical data and the overview of shifts in the art-historical dating of particular pieces, *Mangelos - Dating the work as a projekt*, B. S.) the aspect of work and activity of Dimitrije Bašičević Mangelos which posited in Yugoslav circumstances the Fluxus- and Gorgona-like question about all that art could be. Paradoxically, Mangelos's activity in those circumstances contributed, with its aesthetical reductionism of the given values and hierarchies based on these values, to the expansion of notions and limits or art that would, according to the introductory essay, "not result in an object, but offer a concept and furnish experience"; briefly, it would be art as a modus of existence in cultural permeation. The project *Mangelos nos. 1 to 9 1/2* has shown that such an artistic paradigm does not depend on its origins, but rather on its inclination towards cultural reconfiguration, which is omnipresent in contemporary artistic activity. ●

prijevod / translation: Marina Miladinov



14



15

14. Mangelos, Škica za manifest o kiču / Sketch for manifesto about kitsch, c. 1977-1978.

15. Mangelos, Hegel globus / Hegel Globe, c. 1977-1978.

→ Sonja Briski Uzelac - akademska slikarica i teoretičarka umjetnosti. Profesorica na Fakultetu likovnih umetnosti u Beogradu i vanjska suradnica Instituta za povijest umjetnosti u Zagrebu. Živi u Zagrebu.

Sonja Briski Uzelac - academic painter and art. Professor at Faculty of Fine Arts in Belgrade and associate of Institute of Art History in Zagreb. Lives in Zagreb.