

**O ODNOSU
LAND ARTA I
FOTOGRAFIJE:
PRIMJER BORISA
DEMURA
I GRUPE GORGONA**



ANA
KUTLEŠA

**ON THE
RELATIONSHIP
BETWEEN
LAND ART AND
PHOTOGRAPHY:
THE CASES OF
BORIS DEMUR
AND GORGONA**



Suvremeni pregledi *land arta* i pregledi i pojmovnici suvremene umjetnosti ističu mnogostrukost pristupa unutar tog umjetničkog pravca.¹ Već i oznaka *land arta* kao umjetničkog pravca donekle je problematična, primjerice po Kastneru to nije „nikad pokret u pravom smislu riječi“.² Termin je ušao u upotrebu 1968. godine nakon izložbe „Earthworks“ u njujorškoj galeriji Dwan na kojoj su predstavljani radovi četrnaestorice umjetnika, i to uglavnom fotodokumentacijom, s obzirom da su izvedeni u otvorenom prostoru prirode ili parka, ili instalacijama od prirodnih materijala poput zemlje ili blata, svojevrsnim prirodnim *ready-madeovima*. Upotreba termina kasnije se uvriježila u kontekstu niza praksi koje se na neki način bave prirodom. S obzirom na činjenicu da se barem polovica od sudionika na izložbi „Earthworks“ nastavila baviti sličnim instalacijama i performansima u prirodi, u SAD-u je stvorena određena tradicija *land arta* na koju će se mnogi umjetnici, koji djeluju u anglo-američkom krugu, kasnije pozivati. Međutim, gledajući radove umjetnika iz raznih dijelova svijeta od kasnih 50-ih do danas, možemo zaključiti da se slične preokupacije, sadržaji i forme javljaju u nizu slučajeva, a (eksplicitno) se ne vežu uz termin *land art*, nego se često nalaze pod okriljem konceptualne umjetnosti, procesualne umjetnosti, *body arta*, minimalizma itd. Osim pitanja „geografskog porijekla“ tu je i pitanje forme: rani

američki radovi *land arta*, koji su postali referentne točke pojma, uglavnom se oslanjaju na skulptorske prakse, što otvara put generalizaciji da su svi radovi *land arta* takvi. Primjerice, u prvoj rečenici natuknice o *land artu* Miško Šuvaković kaže da je to naziv za „instalacije i ambijente koji se najčešće postavljaju u prirodnom prostoru“ (naglasila autorica), iako će već stranicu poslije kao primjer navesti i radove Waltera de Marie koji se „uspostavljaju kao mentalne vježbe“.³ Jedan od radova koji se najčešće veže uz *land art* – antologijska „Linija nastala hodanjem“ Richarda Longa, koji je i izlagao na prvim američkim izložbama *land arta*, zapravo je performativnog karaktera. Ako pojam zahvatimo sadržajno i definiramo ga kao umjetnost koja kao svoj sadržaj ili djelomični sadržaj ima prirodu, prirodne odnose i elemente, općenito slojevitost značenja koji pojam „priroda“ može nositi, onda ćemo unutar *land arta* primijetiti niz formi – od skulpturalnih i prostornih intervencija, performansa, radova koji postoje kao ideja, bilješka ili dijagram, do složenih kolaborativnih projekata itd. Ovaj tekst ocrtava neke segmente problematičnog i složenog odnosa fotografije i *land arta* uz primjere radova grupe Gorgona i Borisa Demura kao dva modela korištenja fotografske slike. Možemo ih označiti kao *land art* ako prihvatimo da se termin odnosi na prakse (nastale neovisno o anglo-američkom

Today's overviews of land art and lexicons of contemporary art often emphasize the multiplicity of approaches within that artistic movement.¹ Even the label “land art” appears somewhat problematic; according to Kastner, for example, it has “never [been] a movement in the traditional sense.”² The term came into use in 1968, after the *Earthworks* exhibition at Dwan Gallery in New York, where fourteen artists were represented mostly by photo-documentation, since their artworks were located in open air, in wilderness or parks, or in the form of installations made of natural materials such as earth or mud as a sort of natural ready-mades. Later on, the term came to be used for a variety of practices that dealt with nature in one way or another. Regarding the fact that at least half of the participants at the *Earthworks* exhibition continued producing similar installations or performances in nature, a tradition of land art was created in the US that many artists active in the Anglo-American setting would later refer to. However, when looking at the work of artists from various parts of the world from the late 1950s until today, we can observe similar interests, subjects, and forms in a variety of cases, often within the context of conceptual art, processual art, body art,

minimalism, etc., where they are not (explicitly) related to the term “land art”.

Besides the issue of “geographic origin”, there is also the question of form: early American land-art pieces, which have become the referential points for the term itself, mostly relied on sculptural practices, which paved the way for generalizing all land art as such. For example, in his first sentence of the lexicon item on land art, Miško Šuvaković wrote that it is a term denoting “installations and ambiances that are mostly put up in natural environment” (emphasis is mine), although only a page later he also included artworks by Walter de Maria, which are “set up as mental exercises.”³ Another artwork that is usually linked to land art is the legendary *Line Made by Walking* by Richard Long, who also participated in the first American exhibitions of land art, and it is actually a performance in its character. If we take the term's meaning and define land art as art that uses nature as its subject, exclusively or partially, as well as natural relations and elements, and taking into account the multilayered meaning that the word “nature” can have, we will observe plenty of different forms within land art: sculptural and spatial interventions, performances, artworks in the form

kulturnom krugu) koje se sadržajno bave prirodom iako se formalno realiziraju na različite načine, bliske drugim vidovima umjetnosti. Radi se o korištenju termina u proširenom smislu, koje (i)zaziva iznalaženje nekog novog termina. U tekstu naslovljenom „Performans, *land art* i fotografija“⁴ umjetnik i kritičar Francesco Gagliardi nudi kratku analizu korištenja fotografije kao medijatora *land arta* i performativnih praksi. Za početak ističe činjenicu da neki radovi *land arta* funkcioniraju isključivo preko foto- ili videodokumentacije, dok su neki već u startu i zamišljeni kao fotografski radovi. Kao dva osnovna problema fotografije koja prikazuje *land art* detektira prostornu i vremensku selektivnost, a one su zapravo dvije strane iste poteškoće: nemogućnosti adekvatnog prikazivanja fotografijom tjelesnog iskustva, koje se nužno odvija u prostoru i vremenu. Suvremeni teoretičari estetike okoliša,⁵ grane estetike koja se bavi estetskim doživljajem prirode, stavljaju u prvi plan upravo važnost multisenzorskog, prostornog i vremenskog iskustva subjekta u prirodi. Za razliku od njih, mislioci 18. stoljeća, koji su prvi sustavno počeli promišljati doživljaj prirode, naglasak su stavljali na vizualni doživljaj izdvojenog isječka prirode i njihova je estetika okoliša zapravo počivala na posredovanosti prirode umjetničkim djelima, napose pejzažnim slikarstvom. Zanimljivo je uočiti da suvremena kritika tih teorija nije izravno

povezana s promjenama u umjetnosti, ali su joj one zapravo analogne – kantovska estetika, utemeljena na bezinteresnom svidanju, rastjelovljenom subjektu estetskog iskustva i izdvojenom umjetničkom objektu, zajedno je s postulatima moderne umjetnosti dovedena u pitanje praksama koje u sadržaj umjetničkog djela uključuju trajanje, nastanak i nestanak, utjelovljeni subjekt promatranja, kritiku vlastitih uvjeta proizvodnje itd. Ovdje ubrajamo i *land art*, koji postaje polje na kojem se susreću suvremene teorije umjetnosti i estetike okoliša, s obzirom da velik dio radova počiva upravo na slojevitosti doživljaja prirode, trajanju i tjelesnosti tog iskustva. Pritom valja razlučiti odnos umjetnika prema prirodi i odnos publike prema radu *land arta*. U većini slučajeva publika doživljava radove *land arta* u galerijskom prostoru preko foto- i videodokumentacije te se njeno iskustvo svodi na vizualno percipiranje određenog, izdvojenog odlomka vremena i prostora, kako je to i Gagliardi naznačio. Za dio ranih američkih umjetnika *land arta* možemo reći da su njihovi radovi, iako su raskinuli s modernističkim načelima izdvojenosti umjetničkog objekta, u trenutku svoje prezentacije publici ostali poprilično klasični. I upravo su ti radovi, poznati po monumentalnim fotografijama, postali referentne točke termina *land art*. Umjetnici su samo dijelom za to odgovorni; čitav sustav zapadne

of ideas, notes, or diagrams, as well as complex collaborative projects.

The aim of this text is to outline some of the segments of this problematic and complex relationship between photography and land art on the example of Gorgona art group and Boris Demur as two different examples of using the photographic image. We can characterize them as land art if we accept the term as referring to those practices (which emerged independently from the Anglo-American cultural sphere) which have nature as their subject although they are formally produced in various ways, close to other forms of art. It means using the term in an extended sense, which invokes and provokes the invention of a new term. In his text on “Performance, Land Art and Photography,”⁴ artist and art critic Francesco Gagliardi has offered a brief analysis of using photography as an intermediary between land art and performative practices. In the beginning, he emphasizes the fact that some land-art pieces function exclusively through photo or video documentation, while others are envisioned as photographic art from the very outset. He identifies spatial and temporal selectivity as the two basic problems of photography showing land art, which are actually two facets of the same issue: the impossibility of adequately representing corporal experience through photography, since

that experience necessarily takes place in space and time. Contemporary theoreticians of environmental aesthetics,⁵ a branch of aesthetics that deals with the aesthetic experience of nature, accentuate precisely the importance of the subject's sensual, spatial, and temporal experience of nature. Contrary to them, the 18th-century thinkers, who were the first to reflect systematically on the experience of nature, emphasized the visual experience of a selected segment of nature, which is why their environmental aesthetics actually relied on the mediation of nature through artworks, particularly landscape painting.

It is interesting to observe that the contemporary critique of these theories is not directly linked to changes in art, yet these changes are nevertheless analogous to it – Kantian aesthetics, based on disinterested liking, a disembodied subject of aesthetic experience, and an isolated art object, has been questioned along with the postulates of modern art by practices that include duration, emergence and vanishing, an embodied subject of observation, the critique of its own conditions of production, etc. into the very substance of an artwork. Here we can also include land art, which becomes a field of encounter between the contemporary theories of art and environmental aesthetics, regarding the fact that a large

umjetnosti, koji traži nekakav objekt koji se može izložiti pa onda i prodati, podržava materijalni, trajni „parnjak“ umjetničkim djelima čiji se koncepti temelje zapravo na neponovljivom iskustvu u vremenu i prostoru. Osim toga, suvremeno je društvo ikoničko, preplavljeno slikom i posredstvom stvarnosti kroz sliku. To „društvo spektakla“ počiva na premoći vizualnog nad drugim osjetilnim iskustvima i ideji da je istina očigledna, da slika „govori tisuću riječi“ i da su fotografije odraz stvarnosti. Stoga nije neobično da je fotografija toliko omiljeni pratitelj praksi *land arta*. Namjerno izbjegavam riječ dokument, jer ona konotira objektivnost i neutralnost, a svaka je fotografija, već zbog spomenute prostorne i vremenske selektivnosti, manipulacija. Također, riječ dokument implicira da samo umjetničko djelo ostaje nevidljivo i neuhvatljivo, dok je ono što vidimo samo neka vrsta traga koji je taj „dokument“ ostavio. U nekim slučajevima tome je upravo tako, ali mnogi su primjeri zbunjujući i višeznačni. Jesu li fotografije „Spiralnog nasipa“ Roberta Smithsona s vremenom ipak postale umjetničko djelo, ili barem jedan njegov segment?

Ipak, fotografija nije jedino što trajno ostaje od praksi *land arta*. Upravo zbog opisane ljubavi prema slikama tekstovi Michaela Heizera, Roberta Smithsona ili Waltera de Marie često se zanemaruju pri medijaciji njihovih radova, iako mnogo bolje

prenose koncept, slojevitost i procesualnost njihovih radova u prirodi. Tekstovi i dijagrami, iako manje privlačni i teže čitljivi, posjeduju karakteristike kojima mogu bolje komunicirati koncept određenog rada *land arta*.

Radovi „Misli za travanj“ grupe Gorgona te „Analitičko elementarno kiparstvo = kruto – prašina – bez alata i s alatom (ovisno o funkciji u analizi)“ Borisa Demura primjeri su specifične upotrebe fotografije u kontekstu *land arta*, koja ne pristaje u gore naznačeni okvir fotografije kao manipulacije koja svodi određeni rad na vizualni doživljaj izdvojenog vremenskog i prostornog isječka.

Gorgonaš Josip Vaništa kaže: „Misaona uzdržljivost, pasivnost pa i indiferentnost bile su iznad golog, ironičnog poricanja svijeta u kojem smo živjeli. Djelu se nije pridavao značaj, aktivnosti su bile krajnje jednostavne: npr. zajedničke šetnje u okolicu grada, 'komisijski pregled početka proljeća' kako je u šali govorio Putar, obični razgovori u prirodi. Gorgona ponekad nije radila ništa, samo je živjela. I ja sam se kao i drugi u to vrijeme zanimao za prazninu zena, težio u ideologijom ispunjenom svijetu normalnom ponašanju, normalnom životu. Možda je Marijan Jevšovar bio najbliži istini kad je rekao da su se Gorgonaši ponašali kao da nisu živjeli u komunizmu.“⁶

Fotokolaž pod nazivom „Misli za travanj“ refleksija je doživljaja

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part of these artworks relies precisely on the multilayered experience of nature, as well as the duration and corporality of that experience.

Thereby one should distinguish between the attitude of artists towards nature and that of the public towards a piece of land art. In most cases, the audience experiences land art in galleries, through photo and video documentation, which reduces its experience to the visual perception of a particular, isolated segment of time and space, as Gagliardi has also observed. For some of the early American land artists we may say that their work, although they have abandoned the modernist principle of an isolated art object, has remained rather classical in the eyes of the audience at the moment of their presentation. And it is precisely these artworks, known to us from monumental photographs, which have become the points of reference for the term “land art”.

The artists are only partly responsible for this; the entire system of Western art, which always searches for objects that can be exhibited and then sold, supports the idea of a material, durable “counterpart” to those artworks that are in their concept actually based on an unrepeatable experience in time and space. Besides, the contemporary society is iconic, dominated by images and mediating the reality through the image. That

“society of the spectacle” is based on the superiority of vision over other sensory experiences and the idea that the truth is evident, that the image “says more than a hundred words,” and that photographs reflect the reality. It is therefore not unusual that photography should become the preferred companion of land-art practices. I am consciously avoiding the term “document” here, since it connotes objectivity and neutrality, whereas all photographs are manipulation by the very fact of their spatial and temporal selectivity, which I have already mentioned. Moreover, the word “document” implies that the artwork itself remains invisible and evasive, and that what we see is only a sort of trace left by that “document”. In some cases it is so, but many other examples are confusing and ambiguous. Have the photographs of Robert Smithson’s *Spiral Jetty* become an artwork with time, or at least a segment of it? And yet, photographs are not all that remains of land-art practices. It is precisely owing to the just mentioned preference for images that texts by Michael Heizer, Robert Smithson, or Walter de Maria are often neglected in communicating their work, although they transmit far better the concept, the multilayered character, and the processuality of their work in nature. Texts and diagrams, although less attractive and more difficult to read, have features that enable them to communicate

prirode koji možemo iščitati između redaka Vaniština citata: „ideološki nezasićen prostor“⁷ sastavljen od cikličnih izmjena lišenih dubljeg smisla. Njihovo mirno promatranje i neafektivno bilježenje, kakvom svjedočimo u mislima za mjesec, uz redovite šetnje od kojih ostaje pokoja bilješka ili fotografija, ukazuje i na promišljanje zena koje pogađa u suštinu, bez formalnog imitiranja teorije praznine kakvo je, zapravo s ironijskim odmakom, prisutno kod, primjerice, Yvesa Kleina. Rad „Misli za travanj“ je vizualno-tekstualna bilješka. Na njoj je nađenom fotografijom i tekstom prikazan korak. Ako je kadar manipulacija, onda je dodatno kadriranje izrezivanjem figure u visini vrata naglašena namjerna i očita manipulacija koja samim time gubi svoj učinak. Sadržaj novinske fotografije ovdje se koristi svjesno kao element vizualnog jezika. Uz njega je pridružen tekst „marche à pied“, što na francuskom znači ‘pješačenje’: tekstualni i vizualni jezik ravnopravno tvore jednostavan sadržaj koji svoju slojevitost dobiva iz konteksta. Bilješka rukom u donjem lijevom kutu („misli za travanj“) dio je tog konteksta – hodanje prostorom praksa je Gorgonaša za taj mjesec. Imajući na umu umjetničku praksu Richarda Longa i niz drugih radova *land arta* koji afirmiraju hodanje kao način bivanja u prirodi, ovaj rad ne teži reprezentirati fotografijom taj proces, već o njemu govoriti u mediju vizualno-tekstualne bilješke.

Specifična estetika brzo napravljene, jednostavne bilješke, koja je isječak dužeg, periodičnog bilježenja, ne sugerira imitiranje ili ilustriranje bivanja u prirodi nego interpretaciju određenih načela cikličnosti i jednostavnosti unutar tekstualno-vizualnog medija. Radikalno preispitivanje osnovnih postupaka i prirode medija kiparstva prisutno u radovima Borisa Demura iz 70-ih godina kritičar Zdenko Rus označava kao „primarno, analitičko, elementarno, procesualno kiparstvo“,⁸ parafrazirajući zapravo autorove naslove i bilješke. Odnos prema prirodi pritom igra vrlo važnu ulogu, a manifestira se odnosom prema kiparskom materijalu i procesu kojim se taj materijal tretira, što je u fokusu Demurova interesa, dok ga gotov kiparski objekt uopće ne zanima. Njegov kiparski materijal je kamen. Bazičan i lako dostupan, u tradiciji zapadne umjetnosti postao je svojevrsni simbol medija koji konotira gotovo božansko umijeće umjetnika da iz bezlične prirodne mase stvori prepoznatljivu, na neki način pravilnu formu. Sadržaj rada „Analitičko elementarno kiparstvo = kruto – prašina – bez alata i s alatom (ovisno o funkciji u analizi)“ je transformacija kamenog bloka u prašinu, postignuta umjetnikovim radom. Performans je izveden u prirodnom ambijentu na otoku Hvaru, što nije nevažno. Demurov je izvorni poticaj, kako naznačuje Rus, „taktilno približavanje prirodi, stanje

GORGONA, *MISLI ZA TRAVANJ* (PREUZETO IZ: MARIJA GATTIN (UR.), *GORGONA*, ZAGREB, MUZEJ SUVREMENE UMJETNOSTI, 2002., STR. 49)

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GORGONA, *THOUGHTS FOR APRIL* (FROM THE BOOK: MARIJA GATTIN (ED.), *GORGONA*, ZAGREB, MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY ART, 2002, P. 49)

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much better the concept of a particular piece of land art. *Thoughts for April* by Gorgona art group and *Analytical Elementary Sculpture = hard – dust – with and without the tools (depending on the function in analysis)* by Boris Demur are examples of the specific use of photography in the context of land art, which does not fit into the abovementioned framework of photography as manipulation that reduces a particular artwork to the visual experience of an isolated temporal and spatial segment.

Josip Vaništa, a member of Gorgona, once said: “Mental detachment, passivity, and even indifference were above the bare ironical denial of the world we lived in. No importance was attached to production and our activities were utterly simple: we took walks in the city surroundings, played a “commission that examined Spring,” as Putar used to joke, we had commonplace conversations while being in nature. Gorgona sometimes did nothing, it just lived. Same as the others, I was interested at that time in the emptiness endorsed by Zen, striving towards ordinary behaviour and ordinary life in a world filled with ideology. Perhaps Marijan Jevšovar came closest to the truth when he said that Gorgona behaved as if we weren’t living in communism.”⁶

The photo-collage called *Thoughts for April* reflect an experience of nature that we can read between the lines of Vaništa’s statement: it is an “ideologically unsaturated space,”⁷ consisting of cyclic alterations void of all deeper meaning. The calm observation and unemotional documentation that we see in these “thoughts for months”, which resulted from regular walks in nature, preserved in some notes or a photograph, indicates a reflection on Zen that really hits the core, without formally emulating the theory of emptiness as, for example, Yves Klein does, albeit with an ironical detachment.

Thoughts for April are a visual and textual note. They show steps by using photography and text. If a frame is manipulation, then additional framing by cutting out the figure at the neck’s height is an accentuated, intentional, and manifest manipulation, which by that very fact loses its effect. The content of a newspaper photograph is here consciously used as an element of visual language. It is accompanied by text, which says “marche à pied” or “walking”: the textual and visual languages create content on an equal basis, which gains its multiple layers from the context. The handwritten note in the lower left corner (“thoughts for April”) is a part of that context – walking through space was Gorgona’s activity for that month. Keeping in mind



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potpune duševne, mentalne, perceptivne, fizičke pripijenosti s materijalnom okolinom“ u kojoj „umjetnik osvještava trag koji ostaje, otisak tog kontakta“.⁹ O radu svjedoče fotografije, njih tridesetak, koje bilježe faze procesa podsjećajući na logiku filmskog zapisa. Pomnijim pogledom međutim primjećujemo da kadriranje nije mišljeno s obzirom na fotografsku seriju i njenu unutarnju logiku i estetiku nego u odnosu na sam performans, njegove faze i elemente, prema čemu varira rakurs, orijentacija kadra i kompozicija. Sve nas to navodi da zaključimo da je fotografija ovdje upotrijebljena dokumentarno.

Prisjetimo li se ranije istaknutih poteškoća s poimanjem fotografije kao dokumenta praksi *land arta*, uočiti ćemo da se ovdje radi o pokušaju njihovih nadilaženja na način da se estetika i logika fotografije podređuje estetici rada te nadomještanjem prostorne i vremenske selektivnosti promjenama kadra i serijalnošću. Demur bilježi: „pomaci kadra daju prostor, a količina (snimaka, op. aut.) vrijeme“.¹⁰ Ta bilješka sugerira nešto mnogo važnije – činjenicu da je korištenje fotografije u ovom slučaju osviješteno i promišljeno.

Demurovi „Radni notesi“ mnogo govore o njegovu radu i često je teško razlučiti kad su bilješke misaona dopuna, a kad su zapravo sam rad. U kontekstu odnosa *land arta* i fotografije, ali i u kontekstu pitanja odnosa fotografije i konceptualnih i

performativnih praksi, zanimljivo je da Demur istovremeno s nastankom spomenutog i drugih srodnih radova bilježi: „Načinio sam od fotografija plohe, jer su mi trebali foto-dokumenti. Načinio sam od fotografija slike, jer su mi fotografije trebale kao dokumenti – dokument je predmet a ne predstava predmeta – ja sam baratao dokumentima, a ne fotografijama kao prikazima nečega.“¹¹ I dalje kaže: „možda izlazim iz medija slikarstva, ali sigurno ne izlazim iz medija slike. Iz medija slikarstva možda zato što ne upotrebljavam klasične slikarske tehnike, već fotografiju, mada nisam fotograf i njome se služim isključivo zbog pojednostavljenja u postupku da se nešto predoči u vidu jedne ili niza ‘objektivnih’ slika ili prikaza.“¹²

Na kraju spomenutog članka Gagliardi zaključuje kako zapravo nije protivnik fotodokumentacije kao točke pristupa *land artu*, nego naprotiv vjeruje „da su mnogi od nas razvili interes za performans i *land art* nakon dolaska u kontakt s moćnim, sugestivnim slikama radova koje nikad nećemo zapravo vidjeti i da sugestivna moć tih slika jednim dijelom proizlazi upravo iz sofisticiranih načina baratanja mediju inherentnom selektivnošću“.¹³ Kao djelomično rješenje poteškoća koje je iznio predlaže „formalnu i povijesnu analizu fotografskih artefakata: kako funkcioniraju kao fotografije (ili film i video), tko ih je naručio, planirao, izvršio i selektirao, s kojom su namjerom

the artistic practice of Richard Long and a number of other land artworks that affirmed walking as a way of being in nature, one can see that this work does not seek to represent the process in photography, but to speak about it in the medium of visual and textual notes. The specific aestheticism of a quick, simple note, which is a segment of some long-term, periodical documentation, does not suggest emulation or illustration of being in nature, but an interpretation of certain principles of cyclic movement and simplicity within the textual and visual medium.

Radical questioning of the basic procedures and nature of sculpture as a medium, which can be observed in Boris Demur's art from the 1970s, has been described by art critic Zdenko Rus as “primary, analytical, elementary, processual sculpture”,⁸ which actually paraphrases the artist's titles and notes. The relationship with nature plays a very important role here, manifested in the attitude towards the sculpting material and the process in which that material is treated, which is in the focus of Demur's interest, unlike the ready sculptural object, which does not interest him at all. His sculpting material is stone. Basic and easily available, it has become a sort of symbolic medium in the tradition of Western art, associated with the almost godlike skill of the artist to transform the shapeless natural mass into a

recognizable form that possesses certain regularity.

The artwork *Analytical Elementary Sculpture = hard – dust – with and without the tools (depending on the function in analysis)* consisted of transforming a stone block into dust, which was accomplished by the artist's hand. The performance took place in a natural setting on the island of Hvar, which is not unimportant. Demur's original impulse, in Rus' words, was “to approach nature in a tactile way and to achieve a state of perfect spiritual, mental, perceptual, and physical intimacy with the material environment,” in which “the artist was drawing attention to the trace that was left, the imprint of that contact.”⁹ There are many photographs of the performance, around thirty of them, documenting the phases of the process in a way that is reminiscent of the logic of video recording. However, when looking more carefully, we will notice that the frames were not planned as a photographic series nor followed such inner logic and aesthetics, but related to the performance itself, its phases and elements, which defined the angle and the orientation of frames, as well as the composition. All that leads us to believe that photography was here used with a documentary purpose. Recalling the previously observed difficulties with the understanding of photographs as documents of land-art practices, we can see that this may be an attempt at surpassing



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BORIS DEMUR, ANALITIČKO ELEMENTARNO KIPARSTVO = KRUTO – PRAŠINA – BEZ ALATA I S ALATOM (OVISNO O FUNKCIJI U ANALIZI), 1977., SERIJA 36 C/B FOTOGRAFIJA, 18X24 CM, SNIMIO ANTUN MARAČIĆ (PREUZETO IZ: ZDENKO RUS, BORIS DEMUR: RETROSPEKTIVA I, ZAGREB, MODERNA GALERIJA, 2004., STR. 38–39)

BORIS DEMUR, ANALYTICAL ELEMENTARY SCULPTING = SOLID – DUST – WITH AND WITHOUT TOOLS (DEPENDING ON FUNCTION AND ANALYSIS), 1977, A SERIES OF 36 B/W PHOTOS, 18X24 CM, PHOTO BY ANTUN MARAČIĆ (PUBLISHED IN: ZDENKO RUS, BORIS DEMUR: RETROSPEKTIVA I, ZAGREB, MODERN GALLERY, 2004, PP. 38–39)

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them by subjecting the aesthetics and logic of photography to the aesthetics of the artwork itself, as well as by substituting spatial and temporal selectivity through changes in frames and composition of the series. Demur has noted down the following: “the shifts in frames give space, while the quantity [of shots] gives time.”¹⁰ This note suggests something quite important: the fact that the use of photography was in this case carefully planned and well reflected.

Demur’s *Working Notebooks* tell us a lot about his work and it is often difficult to discern when his notes are a supplement to his thoughts and when they are the work itself. In the context of the relationship between land art and photography, but also in that of the question about the relationship between photography on the one hand and conceptual or performative practices on the other, it is interesting that Demur noted down the following at the same time as he was working on this and similar artworks: “I made surfaces out of these photographs, because I needed photo-documents. I made images out of photographs, because I needed photographs as documents – document is an object, not a representation of that object – I dealt with the documents, not with photographs as representing something.”¹¹ Further on, he wrote: “I may be getting out of the medium of painting, but certainly not out of the medium of image. Perhaps I am getting

out of the medium of painting because I’m using photography rather than the classical painting techniques, although I am not a photographer and I use it exclusively in order to simplify the procedure of presenting something in the form of a single ‘objective’ image or representation, or a series of them.”¹² At the end of his article, Gagliardi has concluded that he is in fact not an enemy of photo-documentation as a way of approaching land art, quite on the contrary: he believes that “many of us who have developed a sustained interest in performance and land art have done so as a result of coming into contact with powerful, suggestive images of works that we will never actually see, and that the suggestive power of those images derives in part precisely by sophisticated ways of deploying the medium’s inherent selectivity.”¹³ As a partial solution to the difficulties that he has listed, he suggests “a formal analysis and history of those visual artifacts: how do they function as photographs (and films, and videos); who commissioned, planned, executed and selected them; to what purpose (archival, commercial) were they primarily produced; what degree of involvement did the artist have in their production.”¹⁴ It is precisely in the light of these suggestions that we are interpreting Demur’s notes, which indicate that he was aware of the traps of photography and the need to set directions at one level for the analysis that Gagliardi

(arhivskom, komercijalnom) primarno stvoreni, koji stupanj angažmana je umjetnik imao u njihovoj produkciji¹⁴. Upravo u tom svjetlu čitamo Demurove bilješke koje ukazuju na njegovu svijest o zamkama fotografije i potrebu da na jednoj razini postavi smjernice analizi koju Gagliardi spominje. Bilješke, rad i fotografije tri su elementa trokuta koja se istovremeno međusobno legitimiraju i opstruiraju.

Dok Demurov primjer pokazuje mogućnost (samo)kritičkog korištenja fotografije kao dokumentacije, Gorgonin primjer upućuje na mogućnost interpretacije iskustvenog odnosa spram prirode u mediju tekstualno-fotografskog kolaža. Oba je rada potrebno promatrati u širem kontekstu, s obzirom na druge radove istih autora, a uzimajući u obzir i njihova svjedočanstva i bilješke. *Land art* se pritom između redaka naslućuje kao preokupacija koja izmiče granicama jednog umjetničkog rada i klizi u praksu specifičnog kontinuiranog bivanja u prirodi. Slučaj je to i s novosadskim umjetnikom Slobodanom Tišmom nakon raspada grupe KOD, koji kaže: „Od tog proljeća moja osnovna umjetnička aktivnost bila je svakodnevno odlazanje u jednu šumu pored Dunava.“¹⁵

Opravdano je preispitati pojam *land art* i njegovo korištenje, pogotovo kada govorimo o umjetnosti izvan anglo-američkog

kruga. Slučaj radova koji se bave prirodom unutar nove umjetničke prakse u Jugoslaviji otkriva niz složenosti: članci i dokumenti jasno govore o poznavanju, praćenju, a ponekad i izravnim kontaktima između lokalne scene i predstavnika *land arta* iz anglo-američkog kruga. Radovi iz druge faze grupe OHO ili radovi grupe KOD, nastali na izdanjima „Javnog časa umetnosti“ u Tjentištu, prepoznati su i označeni od njihovih autora, likovnih kritičara i kustosa kao *land art*. Niz radova se pak nije terminološki povezivao s *land artom*, iako u njihovu sadržaju, ponekad i vrlo eksplicitno, jest priroda.

Postavlja se pitanje koliko su u terminu *land art* snažne konotacije koje proizlaze iz američkog konteksta, obilježenog sasvim specifičnim doživljajem prirode kao goleme divljine, s jedne strane, i jakim umjetničkim tržištem od kojeg priroda predstavlja svojevrzni (lažni) bijeg, s druge, i koliko je on primjeren kontekstu Jugoslavije, koja ima sasvim drugačiju tradiciju poimanja i korištenja prirode s obzirom na geografske uvjete i povijesne okolnosti; i potpuno drugačije – izvantržišno i politički obojeno financiranje i funkcioniranje umjetnosti.¹⁶

¹ Edward Lucie Smith, *Movements in art since 1945*, Thames and Hudson, London, 2000.; Brian Wallis (ur.), *Land and environmental art*, Phaidon Press Limited, London, 1998.; Miško Šuvaković, *Pojmovnik suvremene umjetnosti*, Horetzky, Zagreb – Vlees & Beton, Ghent, 2005.

has mentioned. His notes, his artwork, and the photographs are three elements of a triangle that legitimate and obstruct each other at the same time.

While Demur's example shows the possibility of a (self-)critical use of photography as documentation, that of Gorgona indicates the possibility of interpreting the experiential relationship with nature in the medium of textual and photographic collage. Both need to be considered in a broader context, with regard to other artworks by the same authors and taking into account their personal testimonies and notes. Land art is thereby sensed between the lines as the preoccupation that blurs the borderlines of a single artwork and slides into the practice of specific and continued being in nature. Such is also the case with artist Slobodan Tišma from Novi Sad after the dissolution of his art group KOD, who once said: "From that Spring on, my basic artistic activity was going to a forest near the Danube, every day."¹⁵

It is justified to question the term "land art" and its use, especially when we speak of art beyond the Anglo-American world. The two cases of artworks that deal with nature within the new artistic practice in Yugoslavia have revealed a series of complexities: articles and documents clearly speak of an

exchange of information, and of occasional direct contacts between our local scene and the representatives of Anglo-American land art. Artworks from the second phase of OHO art group or those by KOD, created within the action called "Public Art Class," have been recognized and defined as land art by their authors, as well as by art critics and curators. On the other hand, there are a number of artworks that have never been terminologically related to land art, although nature does play a part in them, sometimes quite explicitly.

One may ask to what extent the term "land art" has been defined by connotations that originate from the Anglo-American context, which is characterized by a very specific experience of nature as huge wilderness on the one hand and a powerful art market for which nature represents a sort of (false) escape on the other, and to what extent that term is still adequate when it comes to the Yugoslav context, with its entirely different tradition of understanding and using nature as a result of geographical and historical circumstances, as well as the entirely different way of financing art and its functioning, unconditioned by the art market and determined by politics.¹⁶

¹ Edward Lucie Smith, *Movements in Art since 1945* (London: Thames and Hudson, 2000); Brian Wallis (ed.), *Land and Environmental Art* (London:

- ² Kastner, Jeffrey, „Preface“, u: Brian Wallis (ur.), *Land and environmental art*, Phaidon Press Limited, London, 1998.
- ³ Miško Šuvaković, *Pojmovnik suvremene umjetnosti*, Horetzky, Zagreb – Vlees & Beton, Ghent, 2005., 341–342.
- ⁴ Francesco Gagliardi, *Performance, Land Art and Photography*, u: MAP, br. 23 (2010.), izvor: <http://mapmagazine.co.uk/map-23/feature/performance-land-art-and-photography/> (1. 10. 2011.)
- ⁵ Allen Carlson, *Aesthetics and the environment: the appreciation of nature, art and architecture*, Routledge, London, 2000.
- ⁶ Marija Gattin (ur.), *Gorgona*, Muzej suvremene umjetnosti, Zagreb, 2002., 157.
- ⁷ Ivana Bago i Antonia Majača, „Pljuni istini u oči (a zatim brzo zatvori oči pred istinom)“, *Život umjetnosti*, 83 (2008.), 111–114.
- ⁸ Zdenko Rus, *Boris Demur: retrospektiva I*, Moderna galerija, Zagreb, 2004., 34.
- ⁹ Ibidem.
- ¹⁰ Radni notes, XII/1975., 11, preuzeto iz: Zdenko Rus, *Boris Demur: retrospektiva I*, Moderna galerija, Zagreb, 2004., 34.
- ¹¹ Ibidem.
- ¹² Ibidem.
- ¹³ Francesco Gagliardi, *Performance, Land Art and Photography*, u: MAP, br. 23 (2010.), izvor: <http://mapmagazine.co.uk/map-23/feature/performance-land-art-and-photography/> (1. 10. 2011.)
- ¹⁴ Radni notes, XII/1975., 11, preuzeto iz: Zdenko Rus, *Boris Demur: retrospektiva I*, Moderna galerija, Zagreb, 2004., 34.
- ¹⁵ Mirko Radojičić, „Aktivnost grupe KOD“, u: Marijan Susovski (ur.), *Nova umjetnička praksa 1966–1978*, Galerija suvremene umjetnosti, Zagreb, 1978., 43.
- ¹⁶ Ovim pitanjima bavila sam se u okviru pripreme diplomskog rada „Land art u jugoslavenskoj konceptualnoj umjetnosti: recepcija, kritika, interpretacije“, koji je obranjen 2010. godine na Odsjeku za povijest umjetnosti Filozofskog fakulteta Sveučilišta u Zagrebu (mentorica dr. sc. Jasna Galjer).

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Phaidon Press Limited, 1998); Miško Šuvaković, *Pojmovnik suvremene umjetnosti* [Lexicon of contemporary art] (Zagreb: Horetzky and Ghent: Vlees & Beton, 2005).

² Jeffrey Kastner, “Preface”, in: Brian Wallis (ed.), *Land and Environmental Art*, as in n. 1.

³ Miško Šuvaković, *Pojmovnik suvremene umjetnosti* (as in n. 1), pp. 341–342.

⁴ Francesco Gagliardi, “Performance, Land Art and Photography,” *MAP* 23 (2010), source: <http://mapmagazine.co.uk/map-23/feature/performance-land-art-and-photography/> (last accessed on 1 October 2011).

⁵ Allen Carlson, *Aesthetics and the Environment: The Appreciation of Nature, Art and Architecture* (London: Routledge, 2000).

⁶ Marija Gattin (ed.), *Gorgona* (Zagreb: Museum of Contemporary Art, 2002), p. 157.

⁷ Ivana Bago and Antonia Majača, “Pljuni istini u oči (a zatim brzo zatvori oči pred istinom)” [Spit into the truth’s eyes (and then quickly close your eyes before the truth)], *Život umjetnosti* 83 (2008), pp. 111–114.

⁸ Zdenko Rus, *Boris Demur: retrospektiva I* (Zagreb: Gallery of Modern Art, 2004), p. 34.

⁹ Ibidem.

¹⁰ Working notes XII/1975, p. 11, quoted from: Zdenko Rus, *Boris Demur: retrospektiva I* (as in n. 8), p. 34.

¹¹ Ibidem.

¹² Ibidem.

¹³ Francesco Gagliardi, *Performance, Land Art and Photography* (as in n. 4).

¹⁴ Working notes XII/1975, p. 11, quoted from: Zdenko Rus, *Boris Demur: retrospektiva I* (as in n. 8), p. 34.

¹⁵ Mirko Radojičić, “Aktivnost grupe KOD,” in: *Nova umjetnička praksa 1966–1978* [New artistic practice 1966–1978], ed. by Marijan Susovski (Zagreb: Gallery of Contemporary Art, 1978), p. 43.

¹⁶ I dealt with these issues while writing my MA thesis on “Land art u jugoslavenskoj konceptualnoj umjetnosti: recepcija, kritika, interpretacije” [Land art in Yugoslav conceptual art: reception, criticism, interpretations], which I defended in 2010 at the Department of Art History, Faculty of Philosophy, University of Zagreb (supervisor: Jasna Galjer).