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mjesto: düsseldorf, umjetnici: iz hrvatske

location: düsseldorf, artists: croatian

▼ Francuski filozof Maurice Merleau-Ponty u predgovoru svoje *Fenomenologije percepcije* utvrđuje kako “fenomenološki svijet nije svijet čistog bitka”, već svoje jedinstvo postiže presijecanjem osobnih i tuđih iskustava stečenih kroz vrijeme. Autor razlikuje *geometrijski* prostor od *antropološkog* - “egzistencijalnog” prostora, tj. mjesta na kojem biće stupa u “odnos s nekom sredinom” i time doživljava vezu sa svijetom.¹

Tako definiran prostor, mjesto, nezaobilazan je društveni element koji utječe na čovjekovu sliku svijeta. Nemjerljiv objektivnim kriterijima, nemoguć za ispitivanje u kontroliranim uvjetima i nesvodljiv na brojke, utjecaj se može promatrati kroz pojedince i njihovo stvaranje.

U ovoj priči mjesto je Düsseldorf, grad u kojemu se od 18. stoljeća nalazi poznata Umjetnička akademija [*Kunstakademie*], čiji su studenti, a kasnije i profesori bili i Joseph Beuys, Jörg Immendorff, Gerhard Richter, Günther Uecker.

Današnji međunarodni karakter i interdisciplinarni i otvoreni pristup Akademije privlači mlade umjetnike iz raznih krajeva svijeta koji često, i nakon studija, ostaju živjeti u Düsseldorfu. Sveprisutnost umjetnosti, utemeljene na bogatoj tradiciji, ali praćene stalnim promjenama, stvara relevantnu i zanimljivu suvremenu umjetničku scenu. Iako je danas, u vremenu obilježenom velikim protokom informacija i isprepletenošću kultura, u doba kada *nemjesta*² postaju prostorima primarnog interesa, čovjekov identitet teško, ako uopće, moguće svesti na porijeklo, vjerujem da ono ipak, u nekoj mjeri, ostaje dio umjetničkog senzibiliteta.

Stoga sam odlučila upravo porijeklo (i to hrvatsko) odabrati za kriterij predstavljanja četvero umjetnika. Lina Franko, Vladimir Frelj, Igor Kirin i Nikola Ukić ne mogu se svesti na zajednički generacijski ili *stilski* nazivnik, ali su u određenom

● In the preface to his *Phenomenology of Perception*, French philosopher Maurice Merleau-Ponty has stated that the “phenomenological world attains not to pure being,” but rather achieves its unity in the overlapping of one’s own experiences and those of others, gathered over time. The author distinguishes *geometrical* and *anthropological* space - the latter amounting to an “existential” space, i.e. space in which a being enters into the “relationship with some environment” and thus experiences its connection with the world.¹

The space or the location thus defined is an indispensable social element, influencing man’s image of the world. Immeasurable by objective criteria, impossible to test in controllable conditions, and irreducible to numbers, this influence can be observed in individuals and their creative work.

In our story, the location is Düsseldorf, city with a famous Academy of Fine Arts [*Kunstakademie*] originating from the 18th century. Its students and later professors included Joseph Beuys, Jörg Immendorff, Gerhard Richter, and Günther Uecker.

Today, the Academy’s international character, as well as its interdisciplinary and open approach, attracts young artists from all over the world, who often remain in Düsseldorf even after the graduation. The omnipresence of art, based on a rich tradition, but accompanied by constant change, has created a relevant and interesting scene of contemporary art. In these times, characterized by an active flow of information and cultural networking, when *non-places*² have become spaces of primary interest, it is difficult, if not impossible, to reduce anyone’s identity to his or her origins; nevertheless, I believe that, to some extent, it will always remain a part of the artist’s sensibility.

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1 MAURICE MERLEAU-PONTY, *Fenomenologija percepcije*, Veselin Masleša - Svjetlost, Sarajevo, 1990., 19 i dalje.

2 MARC AUGÉ, *Nemjesta. Uvod u moguću antropologiju supermoderniteta*, Psefizma, Karlovac, 2001., 97.

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1 MAURICE MERLEAU-PONTY, *Phenomenology of Perception*, Routledge, New York and London, 2004.

2 MARC AUGÉ, *Non-places: Introduction to an anthropology of supermodernity*, Verso, London & New York, 1995.

razdoblju svoga života odlučili studij započeti/nastaviti na *Kunstakademie* u Düsseldorfu. U razgovoru koji smo vodili svi su naglasili kako se odluka o ostanku u tom gradu nakon studija nametnula kao logičan izbor.

Lina Franko (1977., Zagreb) odlučila je 1998. godine nastaviti studij u Düsseldorfu nakon što je dvije godine provela na zagrebačkoj Akademiji likovnih umjetnosti. U Düsseldorfu je 2004. godine završila postdiplomski studij u klasi profesorice Rissa. Na umjetnicu zamjetno utječe vizualni svijet, detalje kojeg lako pretvara u skulpture, najčešće izrađene od plastelina. Likovi kojima daje glavne uloge njoj su bliske osobe s kojima je povezana na privatnoj, intimnoj razini, ili koje prepoznaje kao relevantan dio *vanjskog* svijeta. Važan joj je izbor najprikladnijega trenutka prikaza osobe, čiji odlično ocrtan karakter autorica hvata u svoju emotivnu mrežu i postavlja u širu, univerzalnu sliku života.

Izazov nastaje u trenutku pretvorbe trodimenzionalnog u dvodimenzionalni medij. Skulptura u tom procesu postaje predložak, a sama masa figure istraživanjem, proučavanjem i odabirom mjesta u koje će ju autorica smjestiti rezultira slikama neobične atmosfere. U seriji *Gang Bang* odabire manje ili više poznate glazbenike s hip-hop scene, prikazane u karakterističnim pozama kojima želi naglasiti agresivnost kao jedan od elemenata subkulture. Postavljanjem u novi kontekst, koji na prvi pogled podsjeća na fantastično bilje džungle, a na drugi se razaznaje kao hiperdimenzionirane vlati trave ili cvijeća, omogućava se nova analiza značenja i subkulturne ikonografije.

Reljefi u boji svojevrsan su prijelaz između slike i skulpture. Miješanjem ugrijanog tekućeg plastelina umjetnica stvara tonove boje kojom gradi oblik, a sam motiv reducira na trenutak iz sjećanja, koji ovom gotovo slikarskom tehnikom potiče na izlazak u trodimenzionalni prostor.

Igor Kirin (1975., Zagreb) prije Düsseldorfa studirao je slikarstvo na zagrebačkoj Akademiji likovnih umjetnosti. Daleko od najavljenih prognoza o kraju slikarstva, Kirin istražuje granice koje postavlja platno, pa i sama tehnika, i zanima se za njih, a one su uvijek u interakciji s poigravanjem i propitkivanjem granica ljudske percepcije. Raznolikost njegovih radova rezultat je potrebe za promjenama i stalnim postavljanjem novih izazova, kako pred samoga sebe, tako i pred promatrača. Nakon bikromatskih figuracija manjih formata nastaju slike koje neodoljivo podsjećaju na obojena polja 60-ih, obojena isprugana polja velikog formata, a zbog jakih se autorskih intervencija udaljavaju od svojih uzora. Neke motive preuzima iz novih medija i *postavlja* ih u slikarski medij. Tako naslikana internetska stranica dobiva novu dimenziju

For this reason, I have decided in this text to choose the origins (Croatian) as the criterion for presenting four artists. Lina Franko, Vladimir Frelj, Igor Kirin, and Nikola Ukić cannot be reduced to a common denominator of generation or style; however, in a certain moment of their lives, they decided to begin or continue their studies at the *Kunstakademie* in Düsseldorf. During our interviews, all of them emphasized that their decision of staying in that city imposed itself after their graduation as a natural choice.

Lina Franko (Zagreb, 1977) decided in 1998 to continue her studies in Düsseldorf after she had spent two years at the Academy of Fine Arts in Zagreb. In 2004, she completed her post-graduate studies in Düsseldorf, in the class of Prof. Rissa. The young artist is manifestly influenced by the visual world and she finds it easy to transfer its details into sculptures, mostly made of modelling clay. Her main protagonists are made after individuals with whom she is in close contact on a personal, intimate level, or else recognizes them as a relevant part of the *outside* world. She finds it important to choose the most appropriate moment for presenting a person, whose exquisitely captured character she catches into her emotional net and sets into a wider, universal picture of life.

The challenge emerges at the moment of transformation from the three-dimensional into a two-dimensional medium. In this process, sculpture becomes a model, while the very mass of the figure that the artist is investigating, studying, and carefully setting in space, results in images of unusual atmosphere. In her series entitled *Gang Bang*, Lina Franko has chosen some more or less famous musicians from the hip-hop scene and shown them in characteristic postures, wishing to emphasize aggression as an element of subculture. By placing them in a different context, at first glance reminiscent of some fantastic jungle vegetation, but then revealing itself as a bunch of hyper-dimensioned leaves of grass or flowers, she has made it possible to analyse the meaning and iconography of subculture in a new way.

Her chromatic reliefs are at a point of transition between painting and sculpture. By mixing warm modelling clay in various colours, the artist creates hues that help her build up the form, whereas the motif as such is reduced to a moment from the memory, pushed by this specific technique, which comes close to painting, into the three-dimensional space.

Igor Kirin (Zagreb, 1975) studied painting at the Academy of Fine Arts in Zagreb and then decided to move to Düsseldorf. Far from acquiescing to the current hypotheses about the end of easel painting, Kirin has explored the limits



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blisku suvremeniku. U drugom slučaju, slikanjem *pixela* koji postaju vidljivi uvećavanjem digitalnih slika na zaslonu računala, autor ukazuje na nemogućnost beskonačnog uvećavanja digitalnog i naglašava beskonačne mogućnosti koje slika još uvijek ima. U novijim radovima koristi crtež čiju *skromnost* i jednostavnost uz pomoć medija slike dovodi do reprezentativnosti. Slika bojom koju u debelim slojevima nanosi na platno i djelomično prekriva jednobojnim ili višebojnim tankim slojem, negirajući time već naslikano i označavajući novi početak. Prenošenjem crteža na tako obrađenu pozadinu proces se nastavlja. Slučajnost, spontanost, slikanje iz sjećanja i boje koje se mijenjaju u međusobnoj interakciji proces je rada koji gradi sliku. Crtež je “preveden” u boju, nema svjetlosti i sjene, nema crnog i bijelog, predložak motiva ponekad nestaje u apstrakciji. Pokretačka energija, koja se čita iz platna, autorova je razigranost, bez korištenja oponašanja kao estetskog kriterija, jer, kako Kirin kaže, “oponašanje je iluzija, a umjetnost nas treba oslobađati od iluzija”.

Nikola Ukić (1974., Rijeka) nakon dvije godine studija likovnih umjetnosti na Filozofskom fakultetu u Rijeci i četiri godine slikarstva na zagrebačkoj Akademiji likovnih umjetnosti, primljen je 2000. godine na *Kunstakademie*. Diplomirao je u klasi profesora Georga Herolda, o čijem utjecaju kaže: “Za mene je bitan rad s Georgom Heroldom, umjetnikom iz kruga Kippenberger-Oehlen-Büttner... On ima izrazito individualni pristup i svojim me psihološkim seciranjem usmjeravao na ono najosobnije u meni, a u finalnom izrazu tražio je osvještavanje. Dio onoga što mi je prenio moglo bi se opisati Duchampovim shvaćanjem umjetničkog rada kao *objekta intelektualnog pettinga*”.

U radu Nikole Ukića primjećuje se kako se preispitivanje, *seciranje* i osvještavanje događa svakodnevno. Za rad ovog umjetnika značajno je promišljanje materijala, kojemu često omogućava da svojim svojstvima “sudjeluje” u stvaranju. On materiju postavlja u nove situacije, često obrnute od uobičajenih, istražujući odnose koji time nastaju. Zlatko Wurzburg, ističući kako “naša logika oka, ili ruke, i njezina težnja za obrascem doživljaja, ovdje ne nalaze oslonca u iskustvenom polju”,³ pokazuje kako se u ovom slučaju radi o igri s promatračevom percepcijom. U radu *Malo Morgen* (2007.), skulpturi od poliuretana i bakelitne ploče sa samoljepljivom folijom, već i naslovom izbjegava očekivanu ozbiljnost. Poliuretana je masa koja svoju primjenu nalazi u industrijskoj proizvodnji, a u umjetnosti se koristi uglavnom kao ispuna. Nikola Ukić tu zapravo bezvrijednu masu postavlja u prvi plan, oslobađa je oklopa, a svojstvo širenja poliuretanske pjene koristi kao onaj trenutak kad mate-

set by the canvas and the technique, which also meant permanent interaction, playing, and questioning the limits of human perception. The variety of his art is a result of his need for change and for always finding new challenges, both for himself and for the observer. After several bichromatic figures of minor formats, he began producing paintings that were irresistibly reminiscent of the chromatic fields of the 60s, those large chromatic stripes, but detached themselves from their models owing to the powerful interventions of their author. Lately, he has borrowed certain motifs from the modern media and *transferred* them into the medium of painting: in this way, for example, a painted webpage has gained a new dimension, familiar to the contemporary observer. In another case, he has drawn pixels, which can be enlarged in a digital image on the computer screen, thus indicating the impossibility of enlarging a digital image infinitely and the still endless possibilities of painting. In his most recent pieces, he has employed the drawing technique, rendering its *modesty* and simplicity representative through the medium of painting. He has applied thick layers of paint onto the canvas and partly covered them with a thinner layer, monochrome or polychrome, thus negating the painted and marking a new beginning. By transferring the drawing onto the background thus treated, he has continued the process. Accidentality, spontaneity, painting from the memory, applying colours that are modified in interaction - all that belongs to the working process in which the artist is building up his piece. The drawing is “translated” into colour; there is no light or shade, black or white, while the motif sometimes vanishes in abstraction. The *spiritus movens* that can be read from the canvas - that is the author’s playfulness. Kirin does not use emulation as his aesthetic criterion, claiming that “emulation is illusion and art should liberate us from all illusions.”

Nikola Ukić (Rijeka, 1974) was admitted to the *Kunstakademie* in 2000, after two years of studying visual arts at the Faculty of Philosophy in Rijeka and four years of studying painting at the Academy of Fine Arts in Zagreb. He graduated in the class of Prof. Georg Herold, on whose impact he has said the following: “For me, working with Georg Herold, who belongs to the Kippenberger-Oehlen-Büttner circle, has been very important... He has an outspokenly individualist approach and has employed psychological vivisection in order to direct me towards what’s most intimate in me, while in the final expression he demanded awareness. A part of what he has given me could be described with the help of Duchamp’s understanding of the work of art as an *object of intellectual petting*.”

1. Lina Franko, *Gang Bang*, 2005.

2. Lina Franko, *Outdoors*, 2002.

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3 ZLATKO WURZBERG, predgovor u katalogu Nikola Ukić - Skulpture, Gliptoteka HAZU, Zagreb, 2004.

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3 ZLATKO WURZBERG, preface to: Nikola Ukić - Skulpture [N.U. - Sculptures] Gliptoteka HAZU, Zagreb, 2004.

3. Igor Kirin, *Bez naziva*, 2004. / No Title, 2004
4. Igor Kirin, *Disputa*, 2005. / A Dispute, 2005
5. Igor Kirin, *Mond*, 2006.

rija sama “odlučuje” u stvaralačkom procesu. Njezino izlaženje u prostor nije bezgranično, nego ga umjetnik usmjerava ili zaustavlja kalupima. Ta interakcija na primarnom materijalu ostavlja trag i karakteristike drugog materijala. Dodavanjem pigmenta u pjenu i slaganjem jednog oblika na drugi on doslovno stvara mase boja. Bakelit, jedan od najstarijih plastičnih materijala, koristio se za izradu raznih funkcionalnih predmeta, ali i za one ukrasne, kao što je nakit. Ovdje je bakelit podloga za prozirnou foliju, čija je ljepljiva strana okrenuta prema van i u stalnoj interakciji s okolinom bilježi karakteristike prostora u kojima se nalazi (ili će se tek nalaziti). Boja nanosena na foliju postaje ljepljiva. Proces i umjetnička intervencija rezultiraju novim doživljajem materijala i stalnim propitkivanjem naših vizualnih, ali i taktilnih percepcija.

Vladimir Frelih (1967., Osijek) ne izdvaja se samo generacijski od navedenih autora, već je on jedini koji je od početka studirao na *Kunstakademie*. Video i filmska klasa privukla ga je pristupom kojim se potiču individualna istraživanja studenata o razlozima i načinima realizacije vlastitih ideja, dok je zanatski dio u drugom planu. No, jedna od karakteristika radova Vladimira Freliha jest raznolikost u odabiru medija kojima se koristi. Uz video, izlaže i interaktivne kompjutorske instalacije koje se bave “procesima oblikovanja slika digitalnim alatima”,⁴ a u svojim *dvodimenzionalnim* radovima kombinira medije fotografije i pokretnih slika, koji su često polazna točka, te ih digitalno obrađuje, reducira, stvarajući višeslojne kombinacije promjenjiva značenja.

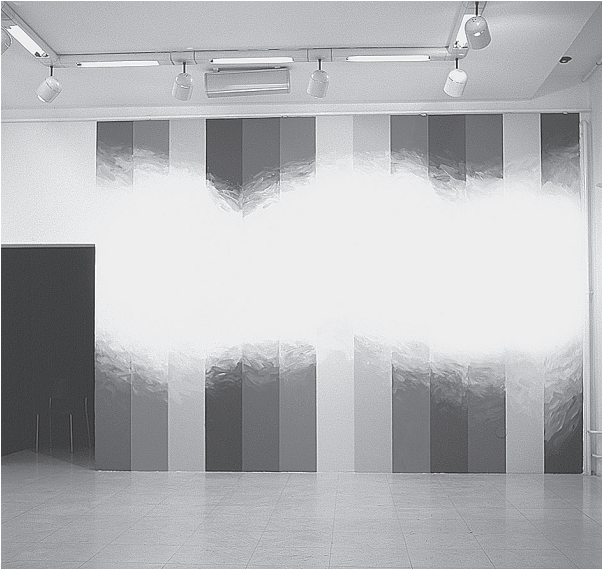
Upravo svestranost koju zamjećujemo kod Vladimira Freliha poveznica je u ovom pokušaju analize radova *naših* umjetnika iz Düsseldorfa. Istraživački pristup vođen individualnim karakteristikama autora nalazimo kod svakoga od njih. Znanje i vještine koje su stekli školovanjem nisu usmjerene k traženju neke opće formule kojom bi zadovoljili neke vanjske kriterije. Duboka zaokupljenost vlastitim svjetovima stalno se konfrontira s novim, vanjskim izazovima. Oni ne teže uljuljavanju u konstantu, već se pitanjima, traženjima i samonametnutim izazovima približavaju odgovorima na neka česta umjetnička pitanja. ▽

In the art of Nikola Ukić, one can observe all that questioning, *vivisection*, and awareness as an everyday process. In his work, he is characteristically reflecting upon the material and often gives it an opportunity to “participate” in the creative process with its features. Thus, he throws the matter into new situations, often quite contrary to the usual state of things, and investigates the emerging relationships. Zlatko Wurzburg has emphasized that “the logic of our eye or hand, its inclination towards perceptive patterns, finds no backing here, in the field of experience,”³ by which he has implied playing with the perception of the observer. In a piece entitled *No Way [Malo Morgen]* (2007), a sculpture made of polyurethane with a bakelite board covered with self-adhesive foil, Ukić has avoided all seriousness, beginning with the title. Polyurethane is a type of material used in industrial production, while in art it is mostly used for fillings. Nikola Ukić has now brought that practically worthless material into the focus of attention, liberating it from its armour and using its expansion potential as the moment in which the material will “decide by itself” in the creative process. Its extension into space is not endless; it is directed by the artist or contained by moulds. That activity of the primary material influences the characteristics of other materials. By adding pigment to polyurethane foam and by placing one form onto another, Ukić literally creates masses of colour. Bakelite, one of the oldest types of plastic, was originally used in the production of various functional objects, but also decoration such as jewellery. Here, Bakelite serves as a basis for transparent foil, with its gluey side turned outwards, thus documenting the characteristics of spaces it is set in (or will be set in) in constant interaction with its environment. Colour applied to the foil turns gluey. The process and the artistic intervention result in a new experience of the material and in a constant questioning of our visual and tactile perception.

Vladimir Frelih (Osijek, 1967) not only belongs to a different generation than the rest of the authors, but is also the only one who studied at the *Kunstakademie* from the first. He was attracted to the video and film class because of its approach, which encouraged students to do individual research and find new ways of realizing their ideas, the craft as such being of secondary importance. However, what is typical for the art of Vladimir Frelih is the variety of media he is using. Besides video, he exhibits interactive computer installations, dedicated to the “processes of image formation by using digital tools,”⁴ while in his *two-dimensional* pieces he combines the media of photography and moving images, often taking them as a starting point for digital process-

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⁴ Nova osječka likovna scena, HDLU Osijek, Osijek, 2005.

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⁴ Nova osječka likovna scena [The new art scene of Osijek], HDLU Osijek, Osijek, 2005.



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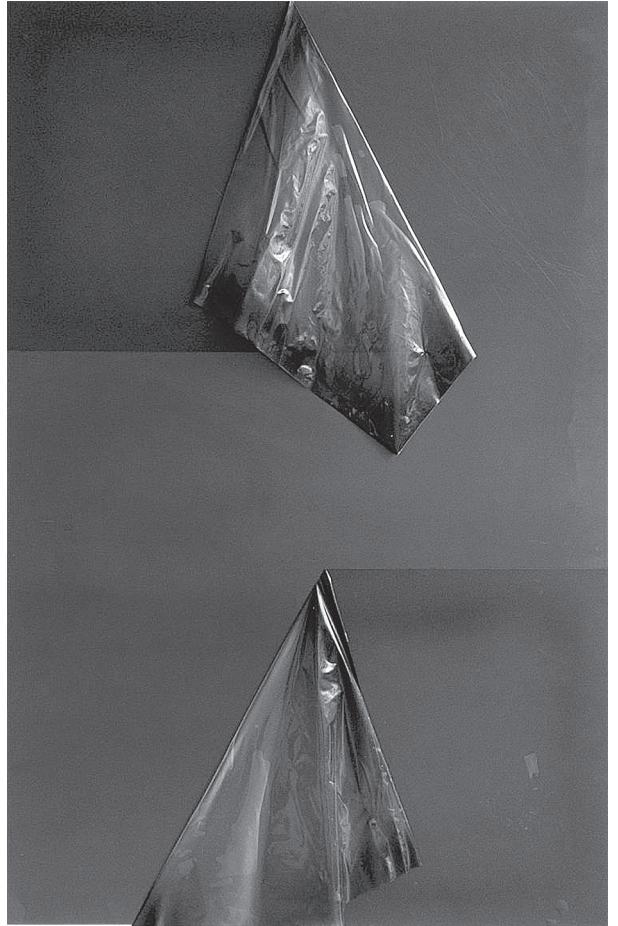
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6. Nikola Ukić, *Malo Morgen*, 2007. *Ljubaznošću Galerije B.O.P. / No Way [Malo Morgen]*, 2007. Courtesy of B.O.P. Gallery. Foto / photo: Tomislav Marić.

7. Nikola Ukić, *Bez naziva (Tumnus)*, 2006. / *No Title (Tumnus)*, 2006

8. Vladimir Frelj, *Mali uvijek gledaju gore*, 2004. *Ljubaznošću Galerije B.O.P. / Small People Always Gaze Upwards*, 2004. Courtesy of B.O.P. Gallery. Foto / photo: Tomislav Marić.

ing, reducing them and creating multilevel combinations of changeable meaning.

Precisely this versatility, which can be observed in Vladimir Frelj, may be taken as the main point of reference in our analysis of Croatian artists from Düsseldorf. All of them reveal an inquisitive approach, guided by their specific, individual characteristics. They do not apply the knowledge and skills that they acquired during their studies in order to find a general formula that may satisfy some external criteria. Rather, their profound immersion in their own worlds is permanently confronted with new challenges presented to them by their surrounding. Instead of lulling themselves into constancy, they search for answers to the common problems in art by permanently questioning, investigating, and self-imposing challenges. ○

— Marta Kiš, apsolventica povijesti umjetnosti i slavistike na Filozofskom fakultetu u Zagrebu. Od 2004. sudjeluje u organizaciji likovnog programa Studentskog centra, a 2005., kao jedna od članica Katapulta 6, vodila je foto-galeriju Kic u Zagrebu. Trenutno radi kao stručni suradnik u galeriji B.O.P.

— Marta Kiš, soon to graduate art history and Slavic studies from the Faculty of Philosophy in Zagreb. Since 2004, she has actively participated in the organisation of art programme at the Students' Centre. In 2005, as a member of Katapult 6, she was working as a curator at the Kic photo-gallery in Zagreb. Currently working as a research assistant at the B.O.P. gallery.

