

ana  
bilankov

Kunstcoop<sup>©</sup>

#### PROLOG

Započet ću ovaj prilog osobno i od kraja, tj. tamo gdje sam stala prije tri godine u tekstu pod nazivom *Pledoaje za medijaciju umjetnosti u praznom prostoru* objavljenog u knjizi *Kunstcoop<sup>©</sup>*.<sup>1</sup> U njemu na dva primjera iz vlastitog rada kao mediatorica suvremene umjetnosti unutar istoimene grupe opisujem problematiku tog načina umjetničkog djelovanja u okviru jedne institucije, a na kraju teksta plediram za neku novu vrstu galerijske/muzejske arhitekture koja bi pored izložbenih prostorija uključivala i specijalne pred- ili međuprostore za medijaciju umjetnosti, svojevrsne "chill outs" u kojima bi mogli nastati neki novi refleksivni prostori za takvu vrstu umjetničke prakse. Kako suvremena muzejska arhitektura već dugo uključuje takve obrazovne "priključke", problem nije u realnoj gradnji, već u konstrukciji misaonog sklopa unutar samog umjetničkog sistema koji fenomene poput procesualnosti, dekonstrukcije, participacije ili aktivizma, premda već odavno legitimne oblike umjetničke prakse, još uvijek doživljava kao onečišćenja 'visoke' umjetnosti na zidu. U sljedećem ću pokušati objasniti djelovanje berlinske grupe *Kunstcoop<sup>©</sup>* u spomenutom kontekstu.

#### KUNSTCOOP<sup>©</sup>

*Kunstcoop<sup>©</sup>* je skupina koju sačinjava sedam umjetnica - Ana Bilankov, Susanne Bosch (od 2002.), Beate Jorek, María Linares (since 2001), Nanna Lüth, Bill Masuch, Carmen Mörsch and Ulrike Stutz. The group was founded in 1999 at a seminar managed by Carmen Mörsch within the postgraduate course of "Art in Context" at the Art University in Berlin, where most of the members had studied. Examining the role models from United Kingdom and mapping the terrain for possible action in some of the art establishments in Berlin, we wanted to use the most diverse forms of mediation/communication/education<sup>2</sup> of contemporary art for a predominantly non-artistic public.

Referirajući se na diskurs relativiziranja pojmljova koji je aktualan u suvremenoj umjetnosti umjetničko djelo-autor kao i dokidanja granice između umjetničke prakse i njezine medijacije, svoju smo inicijativu shvaćale kao vrstu interaktivne umjetničke

#### PROLOGUE

I will start this text personally and from the end, i.e. from where I stopped three years ago in a text called *A Plea for Mediation of Art in Empty Space*, published in the *Kunstcoop<sup>©</sup>* book.<sup>1</sup> In the text, I used two examples from my practice as a contemporary art mediator in that group to describe the issues of that method of artistic activity within an institution, concluding with the plea for a new kind of gallery/museum architecture, which would include not only the exhibition premises, but also special pre- or inter-spaces for the mediation of art, "chillouts" of sorts, which would contain new reflexive spaces for that kind of artistic practice. Since contemporary museum architecture has contained such educational "connections" for a long time, the problem is not the concrete building, but the mental structure within the art system itself, still seeing the phenomena of processing, deconstruction, participation or activism - established and legitimate forms of artistic practice - as soiling "high" art that hangs on the wall. In the following text, I will try to explain the activities of the Berlin group *Kunstcoop<sup>©</sup>* within that context.

#### KUNSTCOOP<sup>©</sup>

*Kunstcoop<sup>©</sup>* is a group of seven artists - Ana Bilankov, Susanne Bosch (since 2002), Beate Jorek, María Linares (since 2001), Nanna Lüth, Bill Masuch, Carmen Mörsch and Ulrike Stutz. The group was founded in 1999 at a seminar managed by Carmen Mörsch within the postgraduate course of "Art in Context" at the Art University in Berlin, where most of the members had studied. Examining the role models from United Kingdom and mapping the terrain for possible action in some of the art establishments in Berlin, we wanted to use the most diverse forms of mediation/communication/education<sup>2</sup> of contemporary art for a predominantly non-artistic public.

Referring to the discourse on the relativism of ideas, relevant in contemporary art (the work of art/artist relation), and of removing the boundary between artistic practice and its mediation, we saw our initiative as a kind of interactive artistic action with new and different dimensions, departing from the quite conservative museum pedagogic services in German art establish-

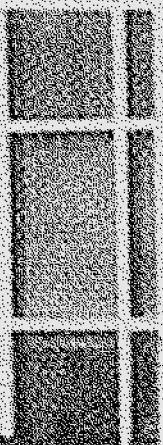
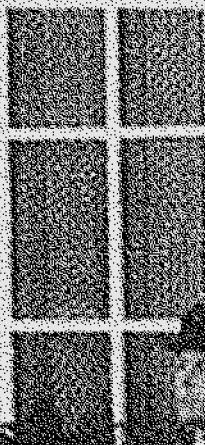
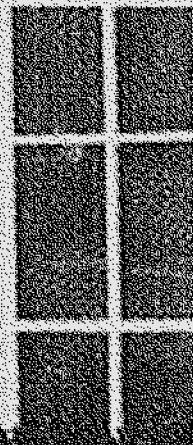
<sup>1</sup> Kunstcoop<sup>©</sup>, Izdavač: NGBK Berlin, 2002.

<sup>2</sup> Kada govorim o medijaciji umjetnosti mislim na njemački pojam *Kunstvermittlung* koji podrazumijeva elemente različitih praksi kao što je muzejsko-galerijska edukacija, „community“-umjetnost ili pak razni participativni i intervencionistički oblici. Na engleskom govornom području najčešće se koriste termini "art mediation" i "gallery education".

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<sup>1</sup> Kunstcoop<sup>©</sup>, Publisher: NGBK Berlin, 2002  
<sup>2</sup> When I talk about art mediation, I refer to the German notion of *Kunstvermittlung*, comprising elements from various fields such as the museum/gallery education, "community art" or various participative and interventionist forms. Its most frequent English counterparts are "art mediation" and "gallery education".



KLINT ECOOOPS



akcije s nekim novim i drugačijim dimenzijama, za razliku od još prilično konzervativne muzejsko-pedagoške službe unutar pojedinih njemačkih umjetničkih institucija. Našu je skupinu karakterizirala heterogenost pristupa i metoda, formalno pokrivajući paletu od teoretsko-praktičnih radionica i razgovora o umjetnosti, performativnih predavanja i interaktivnih igara do participativnih umjetničkih akcija u javnom prostoru.

#### KUNSTCOOP® U NGBK

Jedina institucija koja je pokazala interes za naš koncept bila je NGBK (Neue Gesellschaft für Bildende Kunst), a unique artistic association in Germany because of its fundamentally democratic structure. Once a year, groups of association members present their exhibition concepts with a mostly engaged sociopolitical content, going through a quite complicated process of deciding and selecting for their annual program, which is eventually defined in several voting sessions of association members. For two years in a row, Kunstcoop® was among top priority projects, which means that the association members consciously decided

ments. Our group was characterized by heterogeneous approaches and methods, formally ranging from theoretical/practical workshops and art talks, performance lectures and interactive games, to participative artistic actions in public space.

#### KUNSTCOOP® IN NGBK

The only institution interested in our concept was NGBK (Neue Gesellschaft für Bildende Kunst), a unique artistic association in Germany because of its fundamentally democratic structure. Once a year, groups of association members present their exhibition concepts with a mostly engaged sociopolitical content, going through a quite complicated process of deciding and selecting for their annual program, which is eventually defined in several voting sessions of association members. For two years in a row, Kunstcoop® was among top priority projects, which means that the association members consciously decided

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nira višestrukim glasanjem samih članova udruge. *Kunstcoop*<sup>©</sup> je dvije godine zaređom bio na samom vrhu prioritetnih projekata, što znači da su se članovi udruge svjesno odlučili za taj eksperimentalni pilot-projekt ni ne znajući točno što ih čeka. Narožane početnim entuzijazmom i skromnim proračunom koji nam je omogućavao relativnu autonomiju, tijekom 2001. i 2002. godine izradile smo četrdesetak projekata koji su se najčešće odnosili na aktualne izložbe i omogućavali širokoj publici pristup suvremenoj umjetnosti. Svoj smo rad shvaćale također kao obogaćenje područja umjetnosti kroz doprinose osoba iz najrazličitijih društvenih slojeva. Na taj smo način uspostavili dvosmjernu komunikaciju na van (iz) i na unutra (prema) umjetničkom sustavu, na čijim sjecištima može nastati neki novi društveni i komunikativni prostor.

Reakcije na naše aktivnosti bile su raznolike, od pozitivnog prihvaćanja i oduševljenja, najčešće od strane publike i sudionika projekata, do prepreka i predrasuda unutar vrlo kompleksne institucionalne strukture, što se često prelamalo preko naših "posredničkih" leda. Takav mediatorsko-komunikacijski "overkill" na sve strane, koji nismo mogle predvidjeti - unutar same skupine, unutar umjetničke udruge, u neprestanoj interakciji s kuratorskim grupama aktualnih izložbi, na van prema publici i potencijalnim sudionicima - a sve to uz podcijenjenu ekonomiju i neprestanu, gotovo "maničnu potrebu definiranja" vlastitog rada,<sup>3</sup> koja nam je bila nametnuta unutar sistema, rezultiralo je našom odlukom da, tako reći na vrhuncu 'slave', prestanemo s radom.

*Kunstcoop*<sup>©</sup> danas više ne postoji kao aktivna grupa već je zaštićena marka koja se nastavlja u obliku povremenih prezentacija, predavanja i daljnog individualnog praktičnog i teorijskog rada pojedinih članica. Već spomenuta knjiga "*Kunstcoop*<sup>©</sup>", koja osim tekstova teoretičara Eve Sturm i Pierangela Maseto sadrži i refleksije odbranih vlastitih projekata i problematika svake od članica skupine, kao i mrežna stranica [www.kunstcoop.de](http://www.kunstcoop.de) s dokumentacijom svih projekata, postali su u međuvremenu obavezna literatura za umjetnike/ce i teoretičare/ke koji se bave medijacijom i drugim oblicima kontekstualne suvremene umjetničke prakse.

#### PROJEKTI

Projekti su, kao i sama skupina, bili vrlo heterogeni i raznoliki u metodi i provedbi.

to help that experimental pilot project without knowing exactly what it would bring. Armed with the initial enthusiasm and the modest budget giving us relative autonomy, we made around forty projects in 2001 and 2002, mostly related to current exhibitions and enabling the wider public to access contemporary art. Moreover, we believed that our work enriched the artistic field through contributions of persons from all walks of life. In this way, we established a two-way communication outside (from) and inside (towards) the art system, its crossroads creating a possible new social and communicational space.

Reactions to our activities varied from acceptance and delight, mostly from the public and the project participants, to obstacles and prejudices within the very complex institutional structure, which often hit our "mediator" stomachs. Such an unforeseen mediation/communication overkill all over the place - within the group itself, within the art association, in constant interaction with the curator groups of current exhibitions, towards the external public and potential participants - combined with an undervalued economy and a constant, almost manic "need to define" our work,<sup>3</sup> which was imposed to us within the system, resulted in our decision to stop working in our finest hour, so to speak.

*Kunstcoop*<sup>©</sup> does not exist as an active group any more, but it is a protected trademark, continued in the form of occasional presentations, lectures and further practical and theoretic work of individual members. The book I mentioned, *Kunstcoop*<sup>©</sup>, which contains the texts of theorists Eva Sturm and Pierangelo Maseto and thoughts on our chosen projects and issues by each group member, as well as the web page [www.kunstcoop.de](http://www.kunstcoop.de) with the documentation of all projects, have become essential reading for artists and theorists engaging in mediation and other forms of contemporary contextual artistic practice.

#### PROJECTS

Like the group itself, the projects were very heterogeneous and varied in their methods and implementation. They were mostly conceived individually or in pairs, sometimes by all the members, and usually dealt with certain aspects of an exhibition or with their own autonomous themes and production. Concepts were worked out and participants were defined in agreement with the

▼  
3 SUSANNE BOSCH, Zwischen Brotscheibe und Belag, aus einer Email-Korrespondenz von *Kunstcoop*<sup>©</sup>, u: *Kunstcoop*<sup>©</sup>, 2002, 167

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3 SUSANNE BOSCH, Zwischen Brotscheibe und Belag, aus einer Email-Korrespondenz von *Kunstcoop*<sup>©</sup>, in: *Kunstcoop*<sup>©</sup>, 2002, 167.

1. *Kunstcoop*<sup>©</sup> /NGBK, "Für alle" project / projekt, Berlin, 2001.

Uglavnom su bili koncipirani individualno ili udvoje, ponekad od strane svih članica, a tematski su se najčešće odnosili na određene vidove pojedine izložbe ili su se pak autonomizirali i razvili vlastitu tematiku i produkciju. Razrada koncepta, kao i definiranje sudionika, odvijalo se u suglasnosti s kuratorskom grupom aktualne izložbe. Budući da bi opis samo nekolicine projekata već prelazio okvire ovog teksta, a i bio bi prigodniji u obliku predavanja s vizualnim materijalom u pozadini, koncentrirat ću se samo na jedan zajednički projekt iz 2001. godine.

*Für alle!* je nastao kao popratna akcija predstavljanja NGBK na umjetničkom sajmu ArtForum koji se odvija svake jeseni, a namijenjen je promociji prvenstveno bolje stojećih komercijalnih galerija i "visoke" umjetnosti. NGBK kao institucija sasvim drugačijeg habitusa, smještena u živoj berlinskoj četvrti Kreuzberg s velikim brojem imigranata, odlučila je na sajmu predstaviti svoje prve susjede, Ustanovu za slijepu, u kojoj se manufakturno proizvode različita kućanska pomagala. Tako je prezentacija NGBK na ArtForumu pod motom "Susjedi pomažu susjedima" uz mnoštvo metlica, partviša, četki i košara izgledala poput nekog vašarskog štanda. Istovremeno se u galeriji NGBK odvijala izložba "Hybrid Video Tracks" posvećena političkoj povijesti videa. Taj višestruki jaz realnosti i naizgled nepomirljivih suprotnosti - "visoka" i "niska", komercijalna i nekomercijalna, *l'art pour l'art* i angažirana umjetnost, različiti profil posjetitelja, kao i teritorijalna udaljenost od umjetničkog sajma u urednom, gradanskem zapadnom dijelu grada do kaučićnog i živahnog Kreuzberga na krajnjem istoku nekadašnjeg zapadnog Berlina - trebala je premostiti Kunstcoop<sup>©</sup>ova limuzina. Pod motom "Za sve!" ona je nudila besplatni i udoban prijevoz za sve zainteresirane od ArtForuma do NGBK i njihovih susjeda i natrag. Tijekom vožnje sudionici su uz sokove i šampanjac mogli slušati Kunstcoop<sup>©</sup>ov audio vodič s referencama na ArtForum, NGBK, Ustanovu za slijepu kao i tematsku pripremu za aktualnu izložbu. Stigavši u Kreuzberg, pred galerijom su ih dočekale članice Kunstcoop<sup>©</sup>a intervjuirajući ih o utiscima vožnje kroz grad, a ubrzo su ih okružili i ostali slučajni prolaznici i stanovnici četvrti misleći da se radi o nekim uvaženim ličnostima ili o snimanju filmske scene. Sudionici su potom mogli razgledati Ustanovu za slijepu koja se nalazi u blizini i

curator group for the relevant exhibition. Since the descriptions of a few projects would exceed the limits of this text and be more appropriate as a lecture using visual material, I will focus on a single joint project from 2001.

*Für alle!* was created as an additional action presenting NGBK at ArtForum, the art fair organized each autumn and primarily intended to promote affluent commercial galleries and "high" art. NGBK, as an institution with a completely different profile, working in the lively and immigrant-packed Berlin quarter of Kreuzberg, decided to participate in the fair by presenting its closest neighbors, the Institution for the Blind, where various household items are manufactured. The NGBK presentation at ArtForum, under the motto "Neighbors Help Neighbors" and with a plethora of brooms, sweeps, brushes and baskets, looked like a bazaar stand. At the same time, the NGBK gallery hosted the "Hybrid Video Tracks" exhibition, dedicated to the political history of video. Such a multiple gap between realities and seemingly irreconcilable opposites - "high" and "low", commercial and non-commercial, *l'art pour l'art* and engaged art, different visitor profiles, as well as the geographic distance between the art fair in the orderly, bourgeois western part of the town and the chaotic and lively Kreuzberg at the easternmost part of the former West Berlin, was bridged by the Kunstcoop<sup>©</sup> limousine. Under the motto "For All!", the limo took all the interested people on a free and cozy ride from ArtForum to NGBK and its neighbors, and back. During the ride, the participants were offered juice and champagne and the Kunstcoop<sup>©</sup> audio guide with references to ArtForum, NGBK, the Institution for the Blind and the thematic preparation for the exhibition itself. On their arrival to Kreuzberg, they were met in front of the gallery by Kunstcoop<sup>©</sup> members, interviewing them about their impressions from the ride, and they were soon joined by passers-by and locals who mistook them for celebrities or a movie shoot. Then the participants could visit the nearby Institution for the Blind and the NGBK exhibition. With the help of Kunstcoop<sup>©</sup>, they could make their own video and audio interviews with the exhibition curators, who informed them of video and activism. As it could be expected, the action participants were not the standard visitors of art fairs, but mostly single young or middle-aged visitors,

izložbu u NGBK, a nakon toga, uz pomoć Kunstcoop<sup>®</sup>a, sami aktivno snimati video i audio intervjuje s kustosima izložbe koji su im davali informacije o videu i aktivizmu. Kao što se moglo i pretpostaviti, sudionici akcije nisu bili tipična publika umjetničkog sajma, već uglavnom individualni posjetitelji mlađih i srednjih godina, uključujući i jednu grupu radoznalih mlađih pankera. Kako bi se zatvorio komunikacijski krug, video dokumentacija tog procesa ispred i u galeriji instalirana je još istog dana kao nemontirani materijal na monitoru sajamskog štanda NGBK.

#### NEMOGUĆI KRAJ

Medijacija umjetnosti kao luksuz? I, imaju li smisla ovakve i slične dekonstrukcije uvriježenih normi i pomicanje uobičajenih parametara unutar tog simboličnog prostora umjetnosti u kojem nisu moguće revolucionarne promjene, ali možda jesu mogući neki mali, individualni pomaci u poimanju i percepciji, koji se mogu reflektirati i na širi društveno-politički sustav? Mislim da su ovakvi oblici umjetničke prakse u svakom slučaju prilog nekim novim društvenim konstrukcijama i novim putevima preuzimanja odgovornosti unutar umjetničkog sistema i izvan njega.

I naposljetku, parafrazirajući Derridu iz druge ruke,<sup>4</sup> zadatak medijatora/ica umjetnosti je da, ukoliko žele provoditi "dekonstrukciju", izmisle ono što je nemoguće. "Učiniti mogućim da principijelno svi sudionici procesa to mogu činiti, to je mediatorski posao."

(U stanci, između prvog i ostalih činova, galerijski eksponati privremeno se uklanjuju, a unutrašnji i vanjski prostor bijele kocke biva ispunjen publikom. Zastor se diže. Možete početi. Kraj je nemoguć.) ▼

including a group of curious young punks. In order to close the communication loop, the video documentation of the process in front of and inside the gallery was installed at the screen of the NGBK fair stand as raw material on the same day.

#### IMPOSSIBLE ENDING

Art mediation as a luxury? Is there any sense in such deconstructions of traditional norms and displacement of traditional parameters within the symbolic art space where there can be no revolutionary changes, but maybe there can be small individual steps in understanding and perceiving, which could reflect on the wider sociopolitical system? I believe such forms of artistic practice certainly contribute to some new social constructions and new ways of assuming responsibility in the art system and beyond it.

Finally, to make a second-hand paraphrase of Derrida,<sup>4</sup> the task of art mediators, if they want to apply "deconstruction", is to invent the impossible. "To make it possible that all those participating in the process are able to do this in principle, is the purpose of art-mec."

(In the intermission, between the first act and the rest, gallery exhibits are temporarily removed and the internal and external space of the white cube is filled with audience. The curtain rises. You can start. The end is impossible.) ●

prijevod / translation: Marko Maras



<sup>4</sup> EVA STURM, Kunstvermittlung als Dekonstruktion, in: *Kunstcoop<sup>®</sup>*, 32: „Möglich zu machen, dass alle am Prozess Beteiligten dies prinzipiell tun können, ist die vermittelnde Arbeit.“ (To make it possible that all those participating in the process are able to do this in principle, is the purpose of art-mec\* / \*art-mediation/education/communication/.)

→ Ana Bilankov (Berlin/Zagreb), umjetnica, povjesničarka umjetnosti i jedna od osnivačica grupe Kunstcoop<sup>®</sup>.

Ana Bilankov (Berlin/Zagreb), artist, art historian, one of the founders of the Kunstcoop<sup>®</sup> group.