

**LEBAN-KLEINDENST portfolio**

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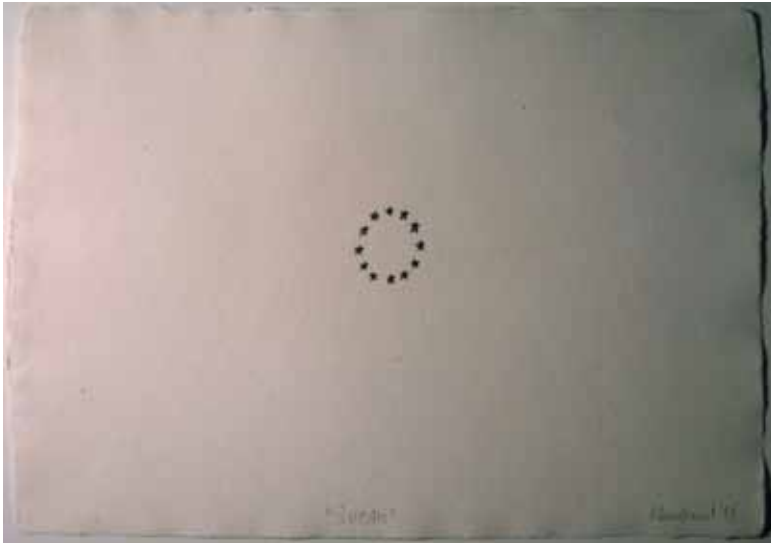
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INVITATION TO PAWNSHOP  
2011, mixed media



Staš Kleindienst: *Šupak*, drawing, 2011

The drawing *Šupak* can be seen as a comment on the crack between the old and the new. *Šupak*, Serbian word for excretory opening at the end of the alimentary canal, also used to describe a treacherous person, together with the resembling image (EU flag), suggests the demistification of a democratic symbol which stands between those who lead and those who follow.

The drawing, specifically created for the project Pawnshop Basel, also puts into question a singular statement as such when being placed inside a larger cultural/economic structure.

The work *A Pound of Flesh* exposes the extortionary logic of subprime loaning where a loan/pawn is offered at such an enormous interest rates that it makes virtually impossible for the borrower to return it. This strategy is applied on borrowers that normally pertain to the lower class and whose credit rating is null. The appropriation of the pound of flesh represents the ultimate necropolitical gesture, the traces of which can be found in European literature tradition (The Merchant of Venice) were the loaner/pawn broker, besides embracing the normal, as Marx would say, capitalist paradigm of being a vampire-like creature that sucks blood from the living, executes the act of sucking blood from the almost dead. Thus the logic of necropolitics conflates with biopower.

The pound of flesh does not just represent a gesture of criticality in relation to the usurious debt system of the subprime loans/pawns but it incorporates the very reality of all those forced to live at the margin of society whose only possibility to return the loan is to trade their own flesh/lives.

»Since I already know that I won't be able to return the loan, I am giving you my pound of flesh.«



Sebastjan Leban: *A Pound of Flesh*, object, 2011

exhibited in:  
ArtBasel (2011)

## NEWBORN

2010, political documentary

The political documentary *Newborn* deals with the contemporary reality of Kosovo after its official declaration of independence. This condition of almost pure subjugation in economical, political and cultural terms, shocks us with all its brutality, forcing us to think about the true purpose of the International role in keeping the stability. It is a journey through contemporary forms of colonialism and a disclosure of its repressive and ideological apparatuses at work.

Kosovo demonstrates the form of colonisation typical of the neoliberal logic of expansion, the contemporary colonisation strategy whose parallels are implemented in different parts of the world and to which different geopolitical plans and strategies are applied, thus conditioning all other segments of social dependency. This goes on simultaneously at three levels: firstly, it is established through the mediation of Western values conveyed by the system through visual inputs imposed on to the colonized; secondly, the system introduces the strategy of subjugation implemented through capital control, which means that capital investments, equities and privatisation are used as the means of controlling the economy and, consequentially, the social structure in a given country or geographical area; thirdly, the army is used in order to establish a state of exception, and through this, force the people into subjugation.



stills from documentary

screenings:

Kiberpipa (2010), Kino Udarnik Maribor (2011), Idrija Cinema Theater (2011)

## BUY YOUR OWN ART EXPERIENCE

2007-2010, interactive photoperformance, photography, video

One of the fundamental problems of the art world, the art market and last but not least art in general is their attachment to the original as some kind of fetish, which of course is properly evaluated as all the other society's fetishes installed into a specific hierarchical valorisation system through valorisation criteria. The project Buy Your Own Art Experience explores and exposes the issue of idealisation of art and the artist, the valorisation system of artworks and capital produced through the culture industry.



### TENIS

cena performansa: že od 170 EUR

cena fotografije: 5.000 EUR

avtor fotografije: Metod Blejec

Cena vključuje rezervacijo teniškega igrišča za 2 uri.  
Cena ne vključuje stroškov prevoza.

### TENNIS

price of performance: from 170 EUR

price of photograph: 5.000 EUR

author of photograph: Metod Blejec

The price includes booking of tennis court for 2 hours.  
The price does not include transportation fees.



installation view

exhibited in:  
 Gallery APT (2007), City Gallery Ljubljana (2007), Artout (2008-), AC Institute (2010)



stills from the video

exhibited in:

Art Space Media Lounge, Hilton; The Center for Book Arts; The Big Screen Project, Public Plaza (2011)

coming exhibitions: Delaware Center for the Contemporary Art (2011)

A PERMANENT STATE OF EXCEPTION: IDEOLOGIES  
2010, 3 channel videoinstallation

The project A Permanent State of Exception: Ideologies is the second part of the analysis started in Kosova in 2008. It focus on the role various Ideologies (Althusser) had and have in the formation of the contemporary world. The project is a testimony on how permanent state of exception introduced in various regions of the world have reshaped not just the geopolitical structure of the world but our reality in itself.



stills from 3 channel video

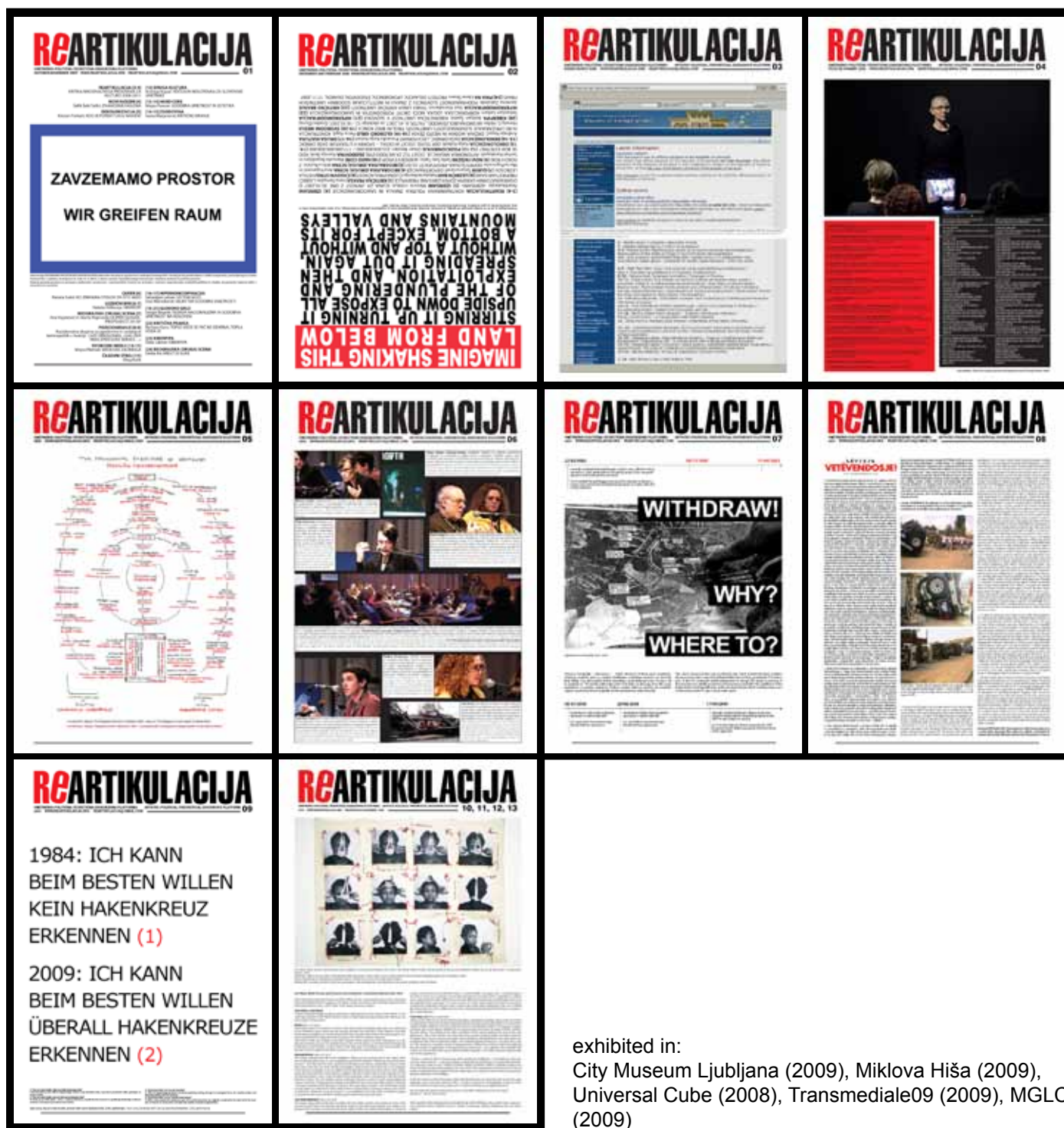


installation view

exhibited in:  
Gallery Kapsula (2010)

REARTIKULACIJA (www.reartikulacija.org)  
 urban public intervention, journal  
 (as group Reartikulacija)

Reartikulacija is an art project by the group Reartikulacija (Marina Grzinic, Stas Kleindienst, Sebastjan Leban and Tanja Passoni). It is based on a precise intervention logic; through contemporary theory, critic, art projects, activism and self-organization it aims to intervene in Slovene, Balkan and international space. The platform allows networking with other critical, activist, theoretical and art subjects in Slovenia, Europe and worldwide, who are interested in the possibility to create and maintain a dialogue with concrete social and political spaces. Until now 13 issues have been published.



journal covers

exhibited in:  
 City Museum Ljubljana (2009), Miklova Hiša (2009),  
 Universal Cube (2008), Transmediale09 (2009), MGLC  
 (2009)

workshops, conferences, symposiums:  
 Tanzquartier Wien (2008), Transmediale 09 (2009),  
 Performance Festival Dopust (2009), Magacin Bel-  
 grade (2009), ApexArt (2010)

## STATE OF EXCEPTION

2008, public intervention, print, dimensions variable



The protection of freedom and democracy bears a price, which is not being paid by the EU/First World citizens, but by all those who try to enter the EU/First World illegally. If we take the example of the EU external borders policy, we can conclude that behind the story of success and life there is a diametrically opposed reality about death, ruin and iron fences through which the European Union prevents the illicit crossing of borders.

The project State of Exception critically exposes the contemporary problematic of migration, especially it points out the state of exception that is established at the external borders of the EU/First World. The piece questions the western values such as freedom, democracy and equality and expose their collateral consequences, i.e. slavery, surveillance and death.



installation view

exhibited in:  
Manifesta d'artista Trieste (2008)

BARONS  
2008, multimedia installation



installation view

The project Barons - a fictionally constructed brand of drinking water – is based on global problem of water privatisation by three corporations, leaders in privatization of water resources and utilities Suez, Vivendi and Thames River. These corporations, labeled by the media as the Water Barons, have already expanded their operations into every region of the world and their aim to privatize water can be seen as parallel to the other well known segments of corporate exploitative strategies in underdeveloped countries.

In the project Barons we explore and expose the way in which a discourse based on exploitation can be naturalized through production of media images and the language of sustainable development. We critically analyze and intervene in the 2007 advertisement campaign of Suez company, where the spectator is faced with the latest perversion made possible by the media where dispossession, subjugation of life and violation of human rights are presented under the brand of global development. The slogan of the advertising campaign is Delivering the essentials of life. Through this slogan, the Suez company guarantees sustainable solution in energy, water and waste services to developing and developed nations worldwide. The advertisement also includes the neoliberal propaganda of a better future which is being mediated to viewers by the diction You're going to love the future. Actually, the question that arises is who will benefit from such a future and what will be the amount of deaths that will have to be produced for market (owner's) needs.

In the above mentioned case we are dealing with privatisation of an elementary necessity of life – water – that should be accessible to everyone! Unfortunately, this is not the case, since this logic is not included in the contemporary privatisation strategies aiming at privatising everything that has not yet been privatised. The strategy applied by Suez and similar multcorporations in order to obtain exclusive water contracts outside the first capitalist world is based on blackmailing, manifested in



video still

the roles of the World Bank or the IAMF which offer these countries loans provided that they agree with privatisation of their water utility.

The analysis in the project Barons brings us directly to the principle of necroeconomy and the discourse on contemporary colonialism which is maintained through mechanisms of political, economic and cultural control. Developing countries are in such a way constantly in the position of being over-exploited.



installation view

exhibited in:  
Center and Gallery P74 (2008), Universal Cube (2008), Transmediale09 (2009), Gallery Marino Cettina (2009)

FROM THE SERIES SYSTEMS OF POWER:  
SYMBOLIC POWER AT WORK  
2007, urban public intervention, print, 200x150 cm

The project deals with the systems of power behind contemporary art scene in Slovenia. The main focus of the project is the problematic nature of an exhibition Every Man is a Curator, organised in summer 2007 by Museum of Modern Art in Ljubljana. The project is using the language of exhibition ads, typically to be seen in major art magazines, such as Artforum. The inner structure of the project is however exposing the problem of maintaining the symbolic supremacy of the institution.



exhibited in:  
Streets in Ljubljana (2007), Gallery Velenje (2007)

## GRAND TOUR 2007

2007, videoinstallation, performance  
(with Metod Blejec)

Grand Tour is a dialogue between the four initiatives: 52. Venice Biennale, 38. Art Basel, Sculpture Projekte Münster 2007 and Documenta 12, Kassel. This new partnership in joint promotion has been formed based on a corporation model, which takes the conventional formula of economic progress and is applied to generate a stronger and more dominant entertainer in art economy of the 21st century in Europe and perhaps worldwide. Effectively Grand Tour campaign acts as a reflection of the consumer world and seems to be an attempt to chair this division's monetary power. This economic phenomenon has flooded many areas of the consumer art world and is now offering yet another unforgettable experience to the consumer art tourist. One of their last invention is the attempt of (re)building the old route used by the Bourgeois in the 19. century: the so called Grand Tour. They are using or else abusing the word Contemporary art in terms that it has become just a facade used to cover the money machine hidden behind art dealers, art owners, art renters, museums, galleries, etc. These institutions have basically become the Ryan Air of Art (providing the customer with a complete service). In their interest to accumulate the real and the symbolic power, they are forgetting about the most important thing: The question of the CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT! The Grand Tour is not about art but rather it is about the ideology of power hiding in the very concept of their strategy. Through such an event the consumer of contemporary art is also presented with a chance of taking over a whole new lifestyle of art-traveler or arttourist, which includes different activities that uniform the consumer's way of thinking with that of institutionalised art system. Merging art with tourism and commodity logic means isolating it into its own privileged place, away from its politics and ideological backgrounds.



installation view

exhibited in:  
Pavelhaus (2007)

## MIXED MEDIA

2005/06, urban public intervention, multimedia installation  
(with Metod Blejec)

Trie's project MIXED MEDIA started at the 51st Venice Biennale. It consists of a series of actions performed by Trie members in the exhibition spaces in the Arsenale, Giardini and throughout the city of Venice. The project refers to the issue of the biennial's exhibition setting and its actual relevance in contemporary art production; through a series of interventions it explores new ways of articulation within the Biennale's specific context. The project Mixed Media was concluded with the exhibition at P74 Center and Gallery in Ljubljana, where all art pieces made in Venice were shown together with the publication of an artist book (in edition of six) that faithfully reproduces the graphic layout of the official catalogue of the Venice Biennale; along with the documentation of the actions it includes texts written by Dr. Marina Gržinić and us, the authors.



Mixed Media Catalogue





Peggy's Pups

exhibited in:

Center and Gallery P74 (2008), Month of Photography Bratislava (2006), Gallery Herman Pečarič (2007), Galerijafotografija (2007), Gallery Pilon (2007), Cairo Biennial (2006)

DO DEAD ARTISTS MAKE ART?  
2005, audiovisual installation

This is an audio-visual installation which takes the form of a graveyard, where tombstones bear the names of the dead artists who contributed to the writing of the 20th century art history. The title itself poses a question to the viewer: Do dead artists make art? The work is based on the influence dead artists continue to exercise on the living ones, and especially points to the capital that is being created by various retrospectives, publications etc. of the deceased artists. To the setting of the graveyard, which is in itself a contemplative place, sound has been added, a speech with a deep, resounding voice uttering the names of the deceased and date of their birth and death.



installation view

exhibited in:  
Academy for Music Ljubljana (2005)