

LEBAN-KLEINDENST portfolio

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Staš Kleindienst

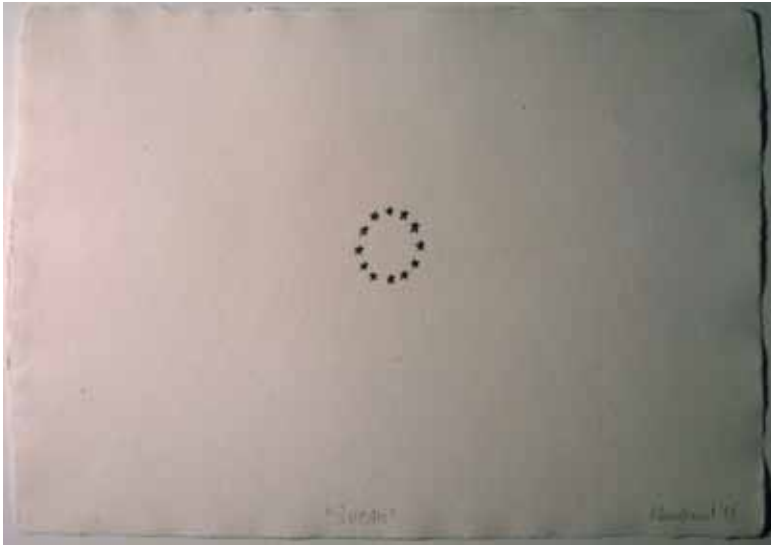
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INVITATION TO PAWNSHOP
2011, mixed media



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)

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)

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)