

**Sandra Križić Roban**

### **The discrepancy between the global and the national**

After World War II the repressive system in the former Yugoslavia soon adopted avant-garde artistic styles, having correctly understood that this will be a way for achieving the intended image of „socialism with a human shape“. The eruptive appearance of the group EXAT from Zagreb in 1951, as one of the examples of rebellion against the dogma of socialist realism, can be discussed in this context.

Contemporary regime in Croatia uses art in a completely different way. The fact that numerous monuments were destroyed during the last war has been used for augmenting the general level of knowledge about the 1000 years of Croatian culture. Among recent artistic events such an artistically uninformed public recognizes almost exclusively unproblematic motifs of pictures from *bourgeois salons*. Religious topics or those connected with historical events and which were made present during recent conflicts have had the loudest echoes.

Contemporary art is at the same time put under taboo: it is an artistic language which means little or almost nothing to the majority of the population; it is a parallel reality, which is brought forward only in the moments of global discussions. The Croatian art today has been given a primary goal to help the creation of national homogeneity. The right of the individual to express himself/herself artistically formally exists, but social reception of such work is rare, if it exists at all.

The process of tabooization of contemporary art is partially implemented by the artists themselves. They consciously remain outside the sphere of influence of powerful individuals who insist that the impressions of contemporary events be transformed in a typical artistic description. It has been shown that conceptual reductions are insufficient for the expression of reality which is favoured by the nation inclined to local cultural tradition.

**Sandra Križić Roban:** born in Zagreb, 1962. M. A. degree in Art History, University of Zagreb, 1997. Ph.D. candidate in art history at the same university. Research assistant at the Institute of Art History, Zagreb. Member of the Croatian Association of the Art Historians, Matrix Croatia and Croatian section of AICA. Member of several juries, AICA award, VJESNIK award, Youth Salon, ZGRAF - international triennial of graphic arts. Contributed with papers to AICA symposiums in Zagreb and Northern Ireland. Work as art critic since 1986; regularly publish art critics, reviews and scientific paper concerning contemporary art and architecture in various reviews and papers; collaborate regularly in TV and broadcast shows. Realize numerous exhibitions of contemporary art.