

INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF ART CRITICS
AICA WORLD CONGRESS

"IDENTITY AND DIVERSITY"

DEBATE PROGRAMME
WARSAW

May 31st - June 2nd 1999, ZAiKS hall

Third day **subject: FANATISM, AGGRESSION, TABOO**
Wednesday, June 2nd 1999

- 9.30 – 10.00 opening of debate
10.00 – 10.40 **Jacouba Konate** "Is there a culture of violence? Artistic
Proposals from Africa"
10.40 – 11.00 **Stephen CK Chan** "From Active Hybridity to Passive
Negotiation: Artistic Space and Public Culture in Hong
Kong Since 1997"
11.00 – 11.30 **Manuel Alvarez Lezama** "The X Generation vs
"Novisimos"
11.30 – 12.00 coffee break
12.00 – 13.00 **Sarah Wilson** "Michel Journiac: Performing the sacred
as gay taboo"
12.30 – 13.00 **Sandra Krizic Roban** "The Discrepancy between the
global and the national"
13.00 – 14.00 lunch

14.00 – 14.40 the Rev. **Stanisław Musiał**
14.40 – 15.00 **Neda Beros** "The Taming of the Dark"
15.00 – 15.30 coffee break
15.30 – 16.00 **Bożena Czubak** "Areas of Identity Negotiating"
16.00 – 16.30 **Leonida Kovac** "Desire in gaze from the picture"
16.30 – 17.30 discussion

Jacouba Konate

"Does the culture of violence exist?
Africa's artistic proposals.

"The man is neither an angel nor a beast, whereas misfortune lies in the fact that who wants to be an angel often becomes a beast". These words by Pascal we left in depths of our school copybooks, come back to us when fanaticism and integristism link our faith in ourselves. When love for ourselves becomes hatred towards the others, it means we are butcher's apprentices and the beast prevails over the angel.

How is stupidity in Africa doing and how is it doing all over the world?

Do modern shapes contemporary art provides it with resist the pressure of traditional code of violence and taboo?

suffering as a moral value in African cultures
initiation = suffering = maturity learning to bear
space of the sacred grove = space of the womb

Fredrik Baile Bouabe (?) drawing of genie with a 1000 eyes
science referring to the occult, charms, spells
modern medicine - med speak can also be seen as a charm
or incantation

Hutu & Tutsi fratricide
the ? of taboo comes into place, especially when it regards
suffering, the extremes of experience
the greater the suffering the greater...
investigators were told everything they learned could not be
used for entertainment, fiction
the imperative to show things the way they actually
happened.

Kevin Brown, S. African, white we must remember that Africans
one white & black alike -
installation, sculpt. 19 youths shot dead by apartheid regime -
resurrected in boxes

S. Africa/Angola border war endless war/war without heroes
mattress overturned: shelter during war (covering under mattress)
Fernando Alben (?) chair Cuban troops in Angola

in order to better read the drama unfolding in Africa we need to give it a face
Carlos... coa Cuban artist wall ptng: arm/sword
he did an install. allowing Cuban soldiers to tell stories.

S. African, ^{maimans} bicycles TV installat. in circle
rotating around the room

zebra install. (pun on zebra crossing) in flight
+ came drawing shadows re extinction

Willie Wissen S. African: bible
beast creature + machine/gun, tools of domination
lights, candles, recycled, an art of debris

Letashes - nails -
quitar which doubles as blood transfusion instrument
Africans cannot be nomads because Africans always need
residence permits

white female carved fig.
the images go beyond color
we need to come up with an aesthetic of our own

Stephen Ching-kiu Chan:

From active hybridity to passive negotiation: Artistic Space and Public Culture in Hong Kong since 1997

This paper deals with the question of identity representation by studying the specific articulation of artistic space and public culture in Hong Kong during the critical period before and after the 1997 handover of power (called the Return).

How have the citizens of Hong Kong been projected, received, and tolerated as a people as they witness their community being transformed into a post-colony? 'Identity' flows here, in the changing 'ethnoscape' and 'ideoscape' conditioned by the global economy today. Thus people and their ideas migrate freely and non-conventionally in and out of 'imagined communities,' with this or that manifestation of the ways in which *self* relates to, and recognises itself through relating to the *other*. As opposing versions of Hong Kong subjectivity are projected onto the cultural forms from which the subjects want to distinguish ourselves, different manifestations of otherness are registered, and often dissolved, in the mass-mediated spectacles or other forms of public culture.

And when different processes of identification reveal for us divergent forms of geo-cultural ambivalence, attempts to remember or dismember the past often end up in the active, contentious inscription/ erasure of history. Artistic discourses reclaiming for Hong Kong her 'roots', her cultural tradition, or her heterogeneous cultural memory more often than not betray the hybridity of a *real* community.

On the other hand, seeing that the future of the unproblematic status quo (called 'reality') is being throw back against its received cultural *habitus* as the colonial project, the long-colonized subjects of culture all leap at the promise of a certain 'post'. Before turning a blind eye to the spectacle of Return, they resorted to what Pierre Bourdieu would call „systems of durable, transportable dispositions" acquired during all those years of being colonized, and ask questions, consequently, about the Western hegemony embedded in the current globalisation of values. It is in this context that I propose to study the role of art as the embodiment of cultural space, which is particularly suggestive as it tends to highlight, indeed dramatize, the specific difficulty for the negotiation of ideological differences rooted in radical sources of fanaticism, aggression and taboo.

The drama being represented is often know simply to its audience as „Hong Kong" - situated seductively at the end point of British colonial rule. The Chinese-Hong Kong viewers at issue, however, do not necessarily identify themselves as part of an integral community, whether taken as the once colonized, or as the newly de-colonized. Those adopting the hybrid perspective express themselves through a variety of artistic forms, such a installation, exhibition, happening, etc. At times, they take the stance of an eager patriot (or his/her critic) who would like to have some passionate say on what appears to be a significant part of their long neglected

cultural and historical heritage. Others look at 1997 with more ambivalent anticipation, nationalist pride and understandable anxiety. As they passively awaited Hong Kong's Return to national history, many would perhaps like to be treated with novel sorts of cultural signs and taboos brought home through the 'returnification' (sic) of Hong Kong as a Special Administrative Region to PRC.

Taboos are therefore inevitably created, ranging from historical discourses, media-sensitive spectacles, community-oriented public statements of art, to popular events, MTV, and filmic excursions in cultural imagination. With an analysis of selected examples in the spatial practice of art, I propose to suggest how different manifestations of taboo are registered and dissolved in full social visibility via mass-mediated and other forms of public culture.

Stephen Ching-kiu Chan: Educated at the University of Hong Kong (BA, MPhil) and University of California at San Diego (PhD), Associate Professor and Programme Director of Cultural Studies at the School of General Education, Lingnan College, Hong Kong. From 1988 to 1997, he taught English, comparative literature and cultural studies at the Chinese University of Hong Kong, where he was Graduate Coordinator for Literature Programmes for more than 5 years. In 1994-1997 he served concurrently as Director of the Programme for Hong Kong Cultural Studies at the Research Institute for the Humanities (CUHK), the first research programme of its kind in Hong Kong, coordinating a series of research, conference and publication projects funded by various external grants. He has been Chief Editor of the bilingual journal *Hong Kong Cultural Studies Bulletin* (1994-1998) as well as the book series *Hong Kong Cultural Studies* published jointly by CUHK and Oxford Univ. Press (China). Dr Chan is member of various editorial and advisory boards of journals in cultural studies. He has published internationally on comparative literature, Chinese literature and Hong Kong culture. Among his latest works is a co-authored book titled *Hong Kong Un-Imaged: History, Culture, and the Future* (Rye Field Pr., 1997) and a number of edited volumes on Hong Kong cultural imagination. His current research interests include Hong Kong literature, film and trauma, issues of public culture, culture and education, as well as narrative and identity. Dr Chan is a founding member of the AICA Hong Kong Chapter.

Manuel Alvarez Lezama

The X Generation vs 'Novísmos'

Puerto Rico has always been a colony - first a Spanish colony from 1493 until the end of the Spanish American War and then a United States colony from 1898 to the present - and its art has always been an act of resistance against assimilation and a means to national reaffirmation - asserting, constructing and revealing a national identity. From the 18th century to the present this resistance against assimilation and a purpose of national reaffirmation have manifested themselves in different manners. For painters such as José Campeche (18th century) and Francisco Oller (19th century) it was circumstantial and disguised. For the significant *Generación del 50* and the next generation, *Generación del relevo*, it has been militant and at times aggressive and chauvinistic. For the younger two generations it has been cleverly orchestrated within the spheres of postmodernism.

In my research/ paper I will analyse how the two younger generations of Puerto Rican artists - *Generation del 80* (or The X Generation) and the *Novísmos* - are paradoxically using installation art, and other globalized aesthetic discourses in order to create their own kind of resistance against new kinds of assimilation and in order to ingeniously reaffirm and secure a distinct national identity.

Sarah Wilson

Michael Journiac: Performing the sacred as gay taboo

Michael Journiac, who died of AIDS in 1996, trained in philosophy and theology before leaving his clerical calling to teach art and aesthetics at the Sorbonne. His performances extend from 'mass for a body', a sacred communion celebrated in the Galerie Daniel Templon in 1969 using a 'boundin' or sausage made from his own blood, to the most flamboyantly transexual experimental works such as *Hommage to Freud*, 1972, and '24 hours in the life of an ordinary women' (Galerie Stadtler, 1974), which recall the sociological critiques of New Wave cinema. Contemporary with the artist Gina Pane, whose performances also contained an important commentary upon Catholicism, the lives of female Saints, and self-martyrdom, Journiac's work must be placed in the contexts of the post-1968 FHAR Homosexual Liberation moment in Paris and writers from Jean Genet to Guy Hocquenghem and Michel Foucault. Despite Journiac's eclipse from current performance anthologies (he died during the *fémininmasculin* exhibition at the Centre Georges Pompidou), he must be seen as a crucial precursor of contemporary artists such as Janine Antoni, Morimura, etc., and a precursor for the new anthropologies of Paris currently articulated by figures such as Marc Augé or Adrian Rifkin. Journiac, however, worked at a time when censorship and taboo were cruelly and vitally operative. This is work in progress, with the presentation of Journiac's complete writings in the bilingual 'Revisions' series of Black Dog Publishing, London, as a goal.

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.

Nada Beroš

The Taming of the Dark

My paper will focus the issues of transition in Eastern Europe, ex-Yugoslavia and Croatia, respectively, both in political and aesthetical sense. In the autumn of 1991, the stormy social changes were given the bloody epitaph in the region - the war. Extreme nationalist movements started in Serbia and soon afterwards caused its counterparts in Croatia and Herzegovina. All kinds of national mythology figures emerged from hidden or erased parts of history of multiethnic and multiconfessional country. „Awakening of the past” was simply the last try of political elite to preserve position and power in the situation when it was obvious that communist regime had failed and that the country was going to fall apart.

Slavoj Zizek, the most prominent Slovene philosopher, argues that there is a cliché in accusing highly individual and free society of longing for „escape from freedom” into a rigid forms of national state and reign of strong authority figures. The modern society is highly regulated to secure as much freedom as possible, the rules designate everything, the place where we can smoke and the place for protestations... Ethnic identification, which happened in ex-Yugoslavia, also meant liberation from many rules. In the name of nation it was allowed to kill, to mutilate, to rape... And this possibility sometimes seems more attractive than sterile liberal-democratic rules of good behaviour, this is the other side of the story, claims Zizek. How did the artists react to this fanaticism and aggression?

The speech of hatred was for a long time obligatory speech of politicians and media. Most of the mediocre art turned into agitation and patriotic kitsch, too. Several Croatian artists, among them Sanja Ivekovic, Tomislav Gotovac, Vlasta Delimar, Mladen Stilinović and Dalibor Martinis, challenged the dictates of ideology and transformed their existential worries into powerful art works. They range from post-conceptual art to video and performance art. I will compare them with the works of several East-Europeans artist Tanja Ostojić. Absence of dogmatism in their word and non-obedience to ideological tendencies, break taboos of all kinds, from gender issues to problems of collective amnesia, showing very clearly that there are different answers and different volumes of answer to the very question. Could art find its truth in the dark?

Nada Beroš: (born in Zagreb, 1952), graduated from Faculty of Philosophy, Zagreb (Art History, Comparative Literature) in 1975. She is an art critic, editor and curator of the Museum of Contemporary Art, Zagreb. AICA Croatian section Secretary from 1994-1997. Published numerous reviews, essays and interviews in several newspapers, periodicals, art magazines in Croatia and abroad (Vijenac, Globus, Kontura, Kolo (Zagreb), M'ars, Likovne Besede/Art Words (Ljubljana), New Moment (Belgrade), Golemoto staklo (Skopje), artpress (Paris). Contributes to Croatian-Radio-Television show on visual arts (Triptych, Transfer). She was curator of several exhibitions and projects of Croatian and international artists in Zagreb and abroad. In charge of international symposiums and lectures in the Museum of Contemporary Art, Zagreb. ArtsLink grant in the U.S. in 1997. Participated at Aica Congress in Northern Ireland (1997) and Japan (1998). Lives in Zagreb. regime had failed

Bożena Czubak, born in 1960, studies within 1979-85 in the Art History Institute at the Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań, graduated with the master thesis entitled "Poetics of the modern picture. Art and Discussion about Art in second half of the 50s". The effects of further researches on Polish art of late 50s' critics were published in collective paper: "The thaw. Polish Art of 1956", the book that accompanied the exhibition in National Museum in Poznań, 1996.

In 1998 she was a selection editor of texts and bibliographies concerning art critics in Poland of 90s. in terms of Central Europe project, coordinated by Soros Center for Contemporary Art, Zagreb.

In 1989-1994 lectured art history of XX century, till 1992 at the Fine Arts Academy in Poznań, then in Gdańsk.

In 1987-89 curated author OBRAZ gallery in Poznań, presenting young generation creators, entering artistic stage in the decade of 80s.

In 1997-98 curator of the International Contemporary Art Centre in Poznań, since 1998 curator of the Contemporary Art Centre Łaźnia in Gdańsk.

Realises projects as an independent curator, i.e. Polish-German project interdisciplinary presentations "Drinnen und Draußen", Zakopane – Berlin 1996-97; "Implants" by Grzegorz Kłaman exhibition, Zachęta Contemporary Art gallery, Warsaw 1998; curators competition's award given project of exhibition on contemporary Polish painting planned for realisation in 1999, Bielsko Biala.

Works as an art critic, taking up thematics of contemporary art. culture and its functioning in terms of social and political relations, co-operator of journals *Magazyn Sztuki* and *Pismo Artystyczne FORMAT*.

Published widely in catalogues and papers on contemporary art i.e. *Le vrai bonheur c'est d'avoir pour se métier sa passion*, in the catalogue Roman Cieśliewicz, Contemporary Art Gallery Zachęta, Warsaw 1995; *Site and Memory Reclamation*, in Grzegorz Kłaman's catalogue *Pneuma*, Main City Council, Gdańsk 1996; *Olimpia's Identity*, in Katarzyna Kozyra's catalogue, polnische Institut, Leipzig, International Art Centre, Poznań, Contemporary Art Centre Łaźnia, Gdańsk 1998; *In Art Space in: New Art Space*, Biała Gallery, Lublin 1998. Catalogue editor Grzegorz Kłaman, Contemporary Art Centre Łaźnia, Gdańsk 1998.

Participant of numerous sessions and conferences i.e. "The Turn Time Culture" International Congress, Poznań 1994; "The Changes in Art at the End of Millennium".

Leonida Kovač

DESIRE IN A GAZE FROM THE PICTURE

The paper is concerned with works by Central European women artists from the beginning and from the end of 20th century, i.e. from the period of early modernism and from the age when becomes perfectly clear that the modernist paradigm doesn't function any more.

The modernist ways of representation of women's body are juxtaposed to examples of self-portraits made by women artists in which we may perceive the active gaze from the picture. The main issue problematized by this paper is discussion on the Lacanian concept of desire. According to Lacan woman can be only the object of desire, but not the desiring subject. Reading the contexts (that are above all social) in which certain self-portrait appears, and exploring the function of the active gaze from the picture I am arguing the opposite. Also, the way on which the self-portraits by women artists relate to modernist rhetoric will be discussed (for example „Olympia“ by Katarzyna Kozyra).

The starting point is the opinion that identity is not something undivided, a stable unity of „consciousness“, but the term of shifting series of ideological positions. The works that will be discussed confirm the fact that the category of identity is changeable social construction. What they have in common is procedure of deconstruction of neutralising concept of art., and pointing out ideological charge of modernist fundamental notion of vision.

Leonida Kovač:

1962 - born in Split, Croatia

1986 - graduated in Art History and Archaeology at Faculty of Philosophy at Zagreb University.

1991 - M.A. degree at the same University

1987 to 1993 - employed as conservator in Institute for protection of cultural monuments in Zagreb.

- since 1993 curator of Museum of Contemporary art in Zagreb.

- since 1997 General Secretary of Croatian section AICA

- since 1990 participated with papers at 9 international symposiums, conferences and congresses on art and aesthetics

- curated 11 exhibitions

- published book „Konteksti“, 1997, and more than 100 texts concerned with contemporary art and art theory.