

On the topic of Cosmos, by Boris Groys
8th Triennial of Contemporary Art in Slovenia - U3, Ljubljana, 2016

Radio Mapping the Independent Scene
Femkanje, 2015

The notion of the cosmos presents itself as a paradox. The events that are uncontrollable and even beyond the rational mind, potentially lay claim to any individual or collective human intent. This omnipotent agent of totality, besides being capable of sanctioning human will and existence, simultaneously offers us the furthest horizon of collective human knowledge and endeavor. A utopia, a god's domain and an actuality of material universalism.

It is rather frustrating to think of the cosmos in terms of paradox. However, it should not be overlooked that those very paradoxical findings of early 20th century science advanced our understanding of the world and gave birth to quantum mechanics and technology as we know it today. Niels Borh's principle of complementarity, which he postulated in 1928 and which he argued should be accepted as a universal principle in both intellectual and scientific domains, explains how an apparent paradox in observation is but a matter of aspect (apparatus) and timing of the analysis.

Femkanje is conceived to create (media) space and enable communication between authors and audience, speakers and listeners, with the intent of presenting and promoting contemporary independent creators from Serbia and the Balkans. Outside of the overly aestheticized visual media communication and institutional paradigms, we advocate gender equality and enable the unheard voices of cultural domain to be heard in all their complexities. In terms of aspects and timing when considering the notion of the cosmos, we could say that our perspective on the system at large is the one of chaos.

Being citizens of a country, that changed its name three times during the course of our lifetimes, went into a state of war twice and witnessed a coup d'état, the ever-shifting relation of order and chaos in culture and politics, feels exorbitantly eminent. Prolonged reconstruction of the National Museum of Art in Belgrade (closed since 2003) and the Contemporary Museum of Art in Belgrade (closed since 2008), pulverized national funds for culture and associations of cultural workers, nonexistent long-term planning of cultural politics and censored and monopolized media – partly by ruling political forces and/or capital entering the country in 'transition', leave us with nothing more than a feeling of abandonment.

Disunited from the previous YU utopia and on the threshold of the EU utopia, two decades after the Yugoslav wars, the south Balkan countries are diagnosed with the rise of nationalism on the one side and Yugo nostalgia (especially among younger generations) on the other. The sense that only artists (citizens) can help themselves and that the relief from their anxieties comes from gathering energies and opening up the (media) space, is the very reason why we engaged ourselves in Femkanje. Furthermore, the contemporary art and cultural scene in general are being all too easily fated with no value and significance to socio-political life, adding to the fact that Serbia is still in the midst of the so called 'brain

drain'. This devastated cultural landscape of the region gives us the perspective of the cosmos, or rather cosmic anxiety, not as an inability of managing the events beyond the globe, not even beyond the state, but singularly beyond an individual. We have heard it all too often just how much our guests are immersed in solving existential problems, managing their own corners of the universe, essentially being constrained to think larger.

Artists working in this culture-political atmosphere of perpetual crisis in Serbia, and to the certain extent in all ex Yugoslavian countries - are Schrodinger's black cats. Simultaneously both dead and alive, they have the power to change the world and no capability of securing health care, steady income, structural support or larger visibility for their continuous work. Accordingly, Schrodinger's thought experiment shows how the paradox of black cat being both dead and alive collapses in the moments of observation, conveying one of the two possible states. When we opened the box, we found the artists alive.

It seems quite paradoxical that these cultural workers are still finding the strength and constancy to work in the present conditions of highly unstable (cultural) politics. It is a fruitless investment in culture in collapse it seems, and at the same time the mode of self-preservation and preservation of utopia(s) that seem lost to so many. The perpetual confrontation with paradoxes and the resulting anxieties, are the prime impetus that enables these cultural actors to act, but disables them to identify with the scene of conditionally abandoned, independent artists. We are yet to find a person who has declined our invitation to guest.

Coming into terms with present ambiguities and ceaseless angst, we embraced the chaos and set to form an image of order in the cosmos of our contemporaries. In the installation *Radio Mapping the Independent Scene*, sixty-four shows of the first series and more than seventy interlocutors are played synchronously, thus allowing for these agents of totality to be heard in one voice. Today, in our second series and with new guests based in the Balkans and other EU countries, we are expanding our apparatus of observation and we will continue to do so.