

Simpozij / Symposium

Iracionalnost bienala / The Irrational in a Biennial

From Biennial to Biennial

Books presentation

Nocturnal Singer (a selection of works by Argentine poet Alejandra Pizarnik (1936–1972))

Selected Poems, Jure Detela (1951–1992)

Wednesday, 28 November, at 6 pm

MGLC

Symposium

The Irrational in a Biennial

Thursday, 29 November, 10.00–18.00

Švicarija Creative Centre

Exhibition

Fair Game by Nathalie Du Pasquier, curated by Kate Sutton

Friday, 30 November, at 1 pm

From Biennial to Biennial is a 3-day event which is a postponed reflection on the *32nd Biennial of Graphic Arts: Birth as Criterion*. Composed of a presentation of the books of poetry, *Nocturnal Singer* by **Alejandra Pizarnik** and *Selected Poems* by **Jure Detela**, an international symposium that will discuss and challenge the traditional biennial structure, and a solo exhibition by **Nathalie Du Pasquier**, the event attempts to bring together diverse mediums of perception.

The starting point of the symposium is an experiment – the artist selection process of the *32nd Biennial of Graphic Arts: Birth as Criterion*. The withdrawal from the academism of the curatorial practices allowed for an embracement of the irrational, which was particularly visible in the list of participants established by coincidence. The symposium is imagined as an opportunity for reaching a broader understanding of contemporary art biennials as vehicles for experiment and meaningful change within the art world. When we think of "business as usual" – each biennial being entangled within the web of perpetuating precarious

conditions, its funding and supporting institutions, and satisfying the end result of a well-displayed exhibition – is such an aspiration doomed to fail?

How can biennials contribute to wider change if they do not step out of their own institutional frame? In other words, can biennials be critical from within? Would criticism be a way of avoiding reproducing their structure, which is so deeply compromised by capitalism?

The symposium therefore intends to tackle the problematic nature of the biennial structure and at the same time wishes to address particular cases of biennial editions, which have succeeded in going beyond established selection processes.

The symposium will derive from *32nd edition of the Biennial of Graphic Arts*, but at the same time it opens up discussion towards the 33rd edition curated by **Slavs and Tatars**. They look to satire as a particularly visual language, revisiting the 'graphic' heritage of the biennial through an expansive understanding of the term—as expressive, uninhibited, even lurid. By asking “Is each joke, as George Orwell maintained, a tiny revolution? Or does laughter and satire deflate the pressures and tension which could otherwise lead to political upheaval?” Slavs and Tatars look to humor as both strategy and content. The visual glut of our times has spawned new aesthetic languages whose messages and discourse we often find distasteful. Though each enjoys a distinct history, both the graphic arts and satire claim to speak *for* and *to* the people.

With contributions by Zasha Colah (Clark House Initiative, Bombay), Ana Dević (WHW – What, How and for Whom collective, Zagreb), Anselm Franke (Haus der Kulturen der Welt, Berlin), Gerardo Mosquera (independent curator and critic, Madrid), Christian Oxenius (freelance curator, author and researcher, Athens), Viktorija Rybakova (artist and architect), Slavs and Tatars (artists, appointed curators of the 33rd Biennial of Graphic Arts), Nevenka Šivavec (director, International Centre of Graphic Arts, Ljubljana), Vladimir Vidmar (curator, ŠKUC Gallery, Ljubljana) and ŠUM (art theory collective, Ljubljana).

Symposium timetable

10:00 Nevenka Šivavec: Longing for forms that can't be rationalized

10:25 Vladimir Vidmar: *Birth as Criterion: What is the Criterion?*

11:10 Gerardo Mosquera: *The biennial of the poor*

11:55 Break

12:10 Christian Oxenius: *A global symphony of contradictions*

12:55 Ana Dević/WHW: *On the shoulders of the fallen giants, articulating the past on the precipice*

13:40–14:40 Lunch

14:40 Anselm Franke: *Proposals for Universal Museums*

15:25 Zasha Colah: *Reading Ranil Daraniyagala as a text*

16:10 Viktorija Rybakova: *Oo*

16:55 Slavs and Tatars: *Humor as Harmor*