

Aldo Milohnić
Ready-Name
(Over-identification through Over-multiplication)



Janez Janša, Janez Janša,
Janez Janša
Signature – Lojze Peterle 3,
Ljubljana, 2007
Action
Digital photography,
4368 x 2912 px
Photo: Miha Fras
Courtesy: artists



Janez Janša, Janez Janša,
Janez Janša
Signature – Lojze Peterle 2,
Ljubljana, 2007
Action
Black marker on photograph,
20 x 30 cm
Photo: Borut Kranjc
Courtesy: artists



Janez Janša, Janez Janša,
Janez Janša
Signature – Lojze Peterle,
Prežganje, 2007
Action
Black marker on photograph,
13 x 18 cm
Courtesy: artists

In the 5th Book of Moses (Deuteronomy) of the Holy Bible there are God's Ten Commandments and one of them

relates to the name of God which should simply not be mentioned without a good reason:

“Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain: for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.”

In other words, despite of the fact that you should always think on your God, that you are supposed to love him with all of your heart and soul, you are nevertheless not allowed to pronounce the Lord's name, except in appropriate circumstances. It seems that this commandment follows the same logic of discursive economy as the first commandment that introduces monotheism by saying that you should not have any other God except the Lord, your God. In other words, less is more; having only one God, you will not split your “theistic” sentiments on different objects of your love, and by mentioning his name only in special situations, you will show even more love and respect to your beloved God than by calling his name every time in every situation.

If we are to look back at theological discourse from the perspective of the philosophy of language, we must uncover what kind of God we are talking about. In “classical” proposition proper names are denotative and general names are connotative, so if the name God is used by a monotheist, it will be a proper name and in

that case it will denote only one, specific, and particular God, for instance the Christian God. On the other hand, as we know, people from different cultures, different continents, can believe in different gods, and in that case, the name God will be a general name and will be connotative. This means that there is a class of spiritual phenomena which are all called God. As explained by John Stuart Mill in his study *System of Logic*

– later on discussed (and criticized) many times by his successors¹ in the philosophy of language – there is a third kind of name that is individual but still connotative, one that consists of connotative attributes.²

In common parlance, additional descriptions (attributes) are not necessarily attached to a proper name. However, there are examples of cases when proper names function as homonyms, and the most recent example

in Slovenia is the decision of the three artists – formerly known as Žiga Kariž, Emil Hrvatin and Davide Grassi – to officially change their names to Janez Janša (a name which we, in Slovenia, automatically associate with the present Prime Minister Janez Janša). Because of that homonymic effect, they are presented in the media as Janez Janša, the director of the Maska Institute; or visual

¹ Cf. for instance the article by John R. Searle “Proper Names” (1958), Saul Kripke's book *Naming and Necessity* (1972) etc.

² A well known example is Mill's syntagm “the present Prime Minister of England”. He explains the situation as follows: “‘Prime Minister of England’ is a general name; the attributes which it connotes may be possessed by an indefinite number of persons, in succession, however, not simultaneously, since the meaning of the name itself imports (among other things) that there can be only one such person at time. This being the case, and the application of the name being afterward limited, by the article and the word *present*, to such individuals as possess the attributes at one indivisible point in time, it becomes applicable only to one individual.” Quoted from: A. P. Martinich (ed.). 1996. *The Philosophy of Language*. New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, p. 247.

artist Janez Janša; or Janez Janša, formerly known as Davide Grassi, etc.

The first impression on the multiplication of the name Janez Janša is that it is a collective pseudonym of the artists, Žiga Kariž, Emil Hrvatin, and Davide Grassi. Pseudonyms are quite a usual phenomenon in the art world, especially in the field of literary production, art criticism, or rather, writing. Substituting one's own name with a pseudonym is a method of securing anonymity in an otherwise public domain. There are different types of pseudonyms; usually, one pseudonym is used by only one person but there are well known examples of a single pseudonym being shared by many people, as was the case in the 1980s "Neoism" art movement. Collective pseudonyms are also called "multiple names". Oliver Marchart, author of a book on Neoism,³ explains what a

³ Oliver Marchart. 2001. *Neoismus: Avantgarde und Selbsthistorisierung*. Klagenfurt and Wien: Edition Selene.

⁴ Oliver Marchart. 2002. "Political Strategies as Artistic Strategies: the Use of Multiple Names". In: *Strategije predstavljanja – Svet umetnosti 2000/2001*. Edited by Barbara Borčič and Saša Glavan. Ljubljana: SCCA.

multiple name really means: "A multiple name is a name, which can be used by anybody. Santa Claus, for instance, is a multiple name. Anybody who uses the name of Santa Claus, puts on a

beard, and wears red clothes becomes Santa Claus. In the art field this is a fairly common practice and Neoism is a movement, which is the most famous for extensive use of multiple names, in particular the name of Monty Cantsin, Karen Eliot, and occasionally also Luther Blissett."⁴

In the case of three new Janez Janšas – similarly to the case of Neoism – we can think about multiplication of a name but we cannot think about the phenomenon in terms of pseudonym. In this case a "real name" is actually being "pirated" by a group

of people and turned into a kind of multiple name. Moreover, this pirating is committed in reality, following the legal government procedure prescribed for official renaming. In that sense, the renaming has certain real as well as symbolical consequences; the new name is no longer a pseudonym, rather, it starts to function as a homonym, it is shifted into a more complex net of meaning. Of course, this act of a radical intervention on one's own personality provokes a question that simply cannot be avoided: why did the artists decide to change their names to the same name as the present Prime Minister of Slovenia? Furthermore, why is this uniformity (multiplication of the same name) so important?

Despite the fact that the present Prime Minister of Slovenia is not the only individual with the name Janez Janša – at the moment there are at least 10 people with this same name in Slovenia – it would be naïve to think that this act of renaming is not somehow connected with the person of the present Prime Minister. On the other hand, the artists' insistence that they had strictly personal reasons for their renaming to Janez Janša, can be interpreted as a conceptual stance producing a whole range of meanings. It is, firstly, a reiteration of a notorious phrase used by politicians when they don't want to give concrete explanations for certain radical decisions (such as, the act of resignation from an important political position). Secondly, by saying that they changed their names for personal reasons, the artists productively contradict two principles: on one hand, the collaborative principle of (artistic) group work, promoting collectivity, commonality etc., and on the other hand, the strictly individualistic principle of liberal societies insisting on the primacy of (self)deliberate,

rational, and “free” subject of civil liberties (including being able to claim the right to privacy for “personal reasons” after making certain decisions that are rather related to the public sphere). Thirdly, there is the negation of supposed “proper reasons” for changing the name or, rather, taking the name of the politician Janez Janša, can only increase the amount of interest (from the media, art critics, and political commentators) in those “proper reasons” and, consequently, for the project as such. Last but not least, this phrase (“proper reasons”) might be very useful argument for defending the “good” (or at least, *not* “malicious”) intentions of Janez Janša, Janez Janša and Janez Janša (the artists) when taking the name of Janez Janša (the politician). Although there is practically no provision in the Slovenian Law on Proper Names which might be utilized as a sufficient legal basis for a hypothetical lawsuit against the Janša artists, a threat of a legal action from the side of their political target is always latent.

My second question – why it is important to multiply the name – was already answered by Blaž Lukan in his paper delivered at the AGRFT symposium in October 2007 (Borštnikovo srečanje, Maribor). As he says, the Janša artists might have changed their original names for personal reasons “but it is a fact that the three artists chose the same name and they thus achieved a certain degree of identity with the best-known Janez Janša and – after all – everyone else who bears this name (there are at least ten of them now). If we try to theorize their act, we could say that they have produced a series.”⁵ Lukan continues with examples of this “series”, including Janša’s motto: “The more we are,

compares the artists’ act of renaming with the “ready made” method of producing art objects (Duchamp’s *Fountain* is the most known and paradigmatic example of that method).

As far as Janša’s political slogan is concerned, it is only one among many other elements of the artists’ “identification” with the political figure (or better to say, with their political target). In addition, all three artists became members of Janša’s party; during the presidential elections they wore T-shirts with the portrait of Lojze Peterle, (who was presidential candidate of the coalition of the leading right wing parties, including the Prime Minister Janez Janša’s party SDS); they also visited Mr. Peterle’s headquarters to publicly comment on the primary results. As their oppositional standpoints before the renaming were well known, this radical political turn could not be grasped without a conceptual explanation.

This method is usually referred to as “subversive affirmation” and it is well known, especially in the politically propulsive art practices of former-socialist Eastern European countries. Inke Arns and Sylvia Sasse, editors of a special issue on subversive affirmation for the Slovenian performing arts journal *Maska*, offered a possible definition of the concept. “Subversive affirmation is an artistic/political tactic that allows artists/activists to take part in certain social, political, or economic discourses and to affirm, appropriate, or consume them while simultaneously undermining them. It is characterized precisely by the fact that with affirmation there simultaneously occurs a distancing from, or revelation of, what is being affirmed.

⁵ Blaž Lukan. “The Janez Janša Project”, in this volume, pp. 11-28.

⁶ Inke Arns and Sylvia Sasse. 2006. “Subversive Affirmation: On Mimesis as a Strategy of Resistance”. *Maska* (Ljubljana), vol. XXI, no. 3-4 (98-99), p. 6.

the faster we will reach the goal!” Later on in the paper he

In subversive affirmation there is always a surplus

which destabilizes affirmation and turns it into its opposite.”⁶ Subversive affirmation can have different forms, one of them is known as “over-identification”. Historically, during the regime of former Yugoslavia, this was the tactic for radical criticism of the political system. Invented by the Slovenian art movement *Neue Slowenische Kunst* (NSK), the basic principle of the over-identification method is embedded in reasoning about a political system as an internalized cynicism. The most effective way to break through this ideological barrier is not to take the “classical” dissident position (as that is precisely what is expected and even desired by the system itself), but to do the opposite, to engage in a fanatic struggle for the (criticized) Idea in its “purest” and the most “authentic” form. As pointed out by Arns and Sasse, “the tactic of NSK did not formulate itself in an openly critical discourse on the state and its ideology; nor did it distance itself from ideology through irony or ironic negation. On the contrary, it was about a repetition, an appropriation of components and elements of the ruling ideology, a game with these ‘ready-mades.’”⁷

Thus, it seems that the Janša artists are working with political “ready-mades” on several levels in an attempt to subvert the ideology of the (present) ruling party in Slovenia. Their method of over-identification is adapted to a post-socialist situation with the SDS right-wing ruling party as an obscure combination of nationalist ideology, neoliberal economics, Stalinist-like hierarchical intra-party organization, and totalitarian tendencies in overruling key mass-media, state, and quasi-state funds and corporations. If we take seriously these key elements of the ruling party ideology, in a not-so-distant future the brave new Slovenia might end up as a post-fascist

society, saturated with nationalism, wild neoliberal capitalism, servile journalism, and corporativism. If that is “the goal” from the Janša’s motto (“The more we are, the faster we will reach the goal!”), then “we” are supposed to play the role of the soldiers of that post-fascist revolution. One of the possible ways to resist such a scenario is to take literally both the subject (“we”) and the object (“the goal”), and this is precisely what has happened in the case of the “Janša project”.

What is the mechanism of this artistic subversion? In my interpretation, this mechanism is centered in the personal pronoun “we”, a complex linguistic category consisting of *I + others* (you, they...), and a proper name (Janez Janša) as the dominant element “I” in the formula *we = I + others*. Supporting references for this thesis are to be found in Jakobson and Benveniste’s writings on the peculiarities of personal pronouns and proper names.

The personal pronoun “we” belongs to a class of grammatical units which Jaspersen calls “shifters”. According to Roman Jakobson, the general meaning of a shifter cannot be defined without a reference to the message, “the sign I cannot represent its object without ‘being in existential relation’ with this object.”⁸ Personal pronouns are grammatical categories, which is to say, they exist only in language; more precisely, according to Benveniste,⁹ personal pronouns refer only to “speech reality” and can be defined only in terms of speech acts and not in the realm of extra-grammatical objects. Furthermore, Benveniste explains

⁸ Roman Jakobson. 1990 [1957]. “Shifters and Verbal Categories”. In: *On Language*. Cambridge / London: Harvard University Press, p. 388.

⁹ Émile Benveniste. 1988 [1956]. “Narava zaimkov” [The Nature of Pronouns]. In: *Problemi splošne lingvistike I* [Problems in General Linguistics]. Ljubljana: ŠKUC / Filozofska fakulteta, p. 274

that singular forms of personal pronouns are not automatically translatable into their plural counterparts. For instance, “we” doesn’t mean simple multiplication of the same objects (personal pronoun “I”), it is rather a fusion between “I” and “not-I” (I + you, I + they, etc.). In other words, “we” attaches to “I” a certain multitude of other amorphous global persons.¹⁰

While the personal pronoun is always related to a message, a proper name – on the

¹⁰ Émile Benveniste. 1988 [1946]. “Struktura osebnih odnosov v glagolu” [Relationships of Person in the Verb]. In: *ibid.*, pp. 253-255.

¹¹ Jakobson, *ibid.*, p. 387.

other hand – cannot be defined without reference to the code. “In the code of English, *Jerry* means a person named *Jerry*.” The circularity is obvious, says Jakobson, since “the name means anyone to whom this name is assigned. The appellative *pup* means a young dog, *mongrel* means a dog of mixed breed, *hound* is a dog used in hunting, while *Fido* means nothing more than a dog whose name is *Fido*.” He paraphrases Bertrand Russell by saying that “there are many dogs called *Fido*, but they do not share any property of ‘Fidoness.’”¹¹ In that sense, political derivation of this linguistic theory, would lead us to the conclusion that the “we” in Janša’s motto consist of Janez Janša as the speaking subject and at the same time the totalizing pronoun in the function of the dominant signifier saturating the infinite chain of “not-I”, a multitude of (grammatical) persons attached to him. According to Benveniste, “I” is always a dominant element of “we”, for there is no “we” which is not originating from “I”; the relationship between “I” and the multitude of “not-I’s” is asymmetrical and hierarchical. In other (political rather than linguistic) words, only one Janša suffices for the mission (of Janša’s party) to be completed. The

alienation effect of the serial renaming to Janez Janša’s name is precisely an absurd type of subversive affirmation; over-multiplication of Janez Janša’s is a consequence of over-identification with the ideological mechanism of interpellating individuals as subjects.¹²

Althusser’s notion of “interpellation” is an allusion to the Biblical story of Moses being called by God, whose name is tautological, “I am that I am”,¹³ or the Subject with a “capital S” in Althusser’s nomenclature. “God thus defines himself as the Subject par excellence, he who is through himself and for himself (‘I am that I am’),

and he who interpellates his subject, the individual subjected to him by his very interpellation, i.e. the individual named Moses. And Moses, interpellated-called by his Name, having recognized that it ‘really’ was he who was called by God, recognizes that he is a subject, a subject of God, a subject subjected to God, *a subject through the Subject and subjected to the Subject*. The proof: he obeys him, and makes his people obey God’s Commandments.”¹⁴ Later on in the text Althusser explains that the ideology of Christian theology multiplies religious subjects by an absolute Subject; reduplicated subjects (the Christian multitude) and the Subject (God) are in a mirror relation. The message of this Biblical mirror structure is that “those who have recognized God, and have recognized

¹² Cf. Louis Althusser. 1971. “Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses”. In: *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays*. New York and London: Monthly Review Press.

¹³ “And Moses said unto God, Behold, when I come unto the children of Israel, and shall say unto them, The God of your fathers hath sent me unto you; and they shall say to me, What is his name? what shall I say unto them? And God said unto Moses, I am that I am: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I am hath sent me unto you.” (*The Holy Bible*, The Second Book of Moses, Exodus, chapter 3, paragraphs 13 and 14.)

¹⁴ Althusser, *ibid.*, p. 179.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 180.

themselves in Him, will be saved”¹⁵ In the context of a modern secular state, the act of overtaking the nominal identity of the political Subject (the name of the Prime Minister as the most powerful politician in a parliamentary democracy) might be a counterpart to the Althusserian example of interpellation by means of theological identification. In other words, if they wanted to point out that political idolatry is deeply embedded in the present regime of the Prime Minister Janša, the three Janša artists have obviously found a provocative way to do it. As to how subversive they have been in that regard, it is too early to say, as it would be nearly impossible to predict the results of the forthcoming Slovenian parliamentary elections.

The very fact that an individual can change his or her name indicates that, besides naming and renaming, the contemporary state has at its disposal other possibilities to control the personal identities of its

¹⁶ See Kovačič's contribution in this volume, pp. 101-106.

¹⁷ For instance, Spain, Romania, Germany, Czech Republic, Poland etc. (Kovačič, *ibid.*)

inhabitants (such as tax numbers, social and health security numbers, etc.).

As demonstrated

in Tadej Kovačič's comparative analysis¹⁶ between the European legal system and some others with regard to their policies of names and name changing, states commonly cited security concerns as the reason for placing limits on the right to change name. If a person is being prosecuted or other criminal proceedings are imposed on him, the state will not allow renaming. On the other hand, there are historical examples of forced renaming carried out by the state; for instance, it happened to many inhabitants of non-German and non-Italian ethnic origin in the times of German NS

Reich and Fascist Italy. These and other historical examples illustrate and confirm the fact that (re)naming has a lot to do with power, especially with the juridical and administrative apparatuses of the totalitarian state. Provisions regulating legal use of proper names are, however, part of the legal systems of many contemporary democratic states. An instructive example, which can be found in legal systems of many European countries,¹⁷ is the provision stipulating that the name has to mirror the biological sex of the person. In other words, a male is not able to bear a female name, and vice versa. Legal experts might have a difficult job satisfying that provision in certain situations, particularly in the case of a physical (surgical) changing of the biological sex. Furthermore, some states limit the right of an individual to write his or her name with lettering from its original language, rather transcribing it with the letters of that country's official language.

In her text on proper names and human rights, Barbara Novak emphasizes that the right of an individual to keep or freely change his or her name is a human right. The state's intervention into that sphere of the

¹⁸ “The most drastic, although in practice rather exceptional example of limiting of the freedom of expression through a proper name, is the obligation of an individual to change his or her name, enforced by the state. It is an example when the state in fact forces an individual to refrain from expression of certain information (which he or she might be proud of), implicitly originating from his or her name, not even to mention other human rights being violated by such a demand: right to use one's own language and script, as stipulated in the article 62 of the Slovenian Constitution, or special rights of the national minorities, as regulated by the article 64 of the same Constitution, as well as economic rights. An example [of violation of economic rights] would be a movie actor or actress deprived of the right to change his or her strange, unusual name; since such a name would be difficult to memorize by the audience, he or she could probably suffer loss in income.” (Barbara Novak. 1997. “Osebo ime in človekove pravice” [Proper Name and Human Rights]. *Pravnik*, Ljubljana, vol. 52, no. 1-3, p. 87.)

individual's privacy is necessary in conflict with the doctrine for the protection of human rights in the contemporary democratic state. According to Novak, it is not only about violation of political rights, it is also about depriving a subject of his or her economic rights.¹⁸ Thus, the relationship between a state and an individual regarding (re)naming might be interpreted as an intersectional point of the spheres of politics, law, and economy. If we try to grasp the concept of the three Janšas in that sense, it seems that the project deals precisely with that complex relationship.

"Engaged art" as we know it from the last century has been interfering in the political sphere through a "secondary elaboration" of the ideological content. According to

¹⁹ "When art gains autonomy, it cannot take any (dominant) ideology as its ideological basis; it founds itself on itself as its own ideology. But since the prevailing ideology of capitalism is the exchange of commodities, the modernistic autonomous moment is only a transitional phase: when art takes itself as its own ideological base, the inevitable next step is for it to found itself on the artistic ideology as the ideology of exchange. Art begins to understand itself as commodity..." (Rastko Močnik. 1983. *Raziskave za sociologijo književnosti* [Researches for the Sociology of Literature]. Ljubljana: DZS, p. 204.) A more detailed derivation of this early thesis supplemented by the concept of artistic "secondary elaboration" is to be found in Močnik's article 'EastWest', published in *Maska*, Ljubljana, summer 2004, no. 3-4/86-87, pp. 10-19.

Rastko Močnik, this artistic "refraction" of the ideologically already-prefabricated reality originates from the modernist autonomous moment of art production in the 20th century. Due to the inherent logic of the dominant economic system, the political autonomy of art ends up in its own commodification.¹⁹ Besides the economy, it is also the legal sphere which took a leading role in the political daily life of contemporary democratic states,

including the art production and the cultural sphere in general.²⁰ In short, contemporary

art finds itself in the hysterical situation of having to worship law as the guarantor of its own "autonomy" in relation to politics (freedom of artistic expression etc.) and the economy (copyright and the material gains implied thereby), while at the same time always having to fight for "autonomy" in relation to the legal sphere and within the legal sphere itself (in terms of having a right to define what is a work of art, who is an artist, etc.). Under political pressure and threatened by civil suits, art is running for the patronage of legal regulations, where it can exercise its specific privilege of "artistic freedom".

How then to be radical in the auspices of contemporary neoliberal capitalism, with its inherent cynicism and a fictional freedom of an autonomous subject of human rights? This may be the key question of today's "engaged art" production. If art is to be radical, it must not only be critical of 'society', but also of its own ontological predispositions, bringing it to a point where it has to cross the boundary between art and non-art. In that sense, the Janša trio is not only a benevolent artistic provocation. Janez Janša is neither a pseudonym of the three artists nor a "multiple nickname" of a group of artists; it is the real, officially-changed, name of three persons consciously risking various political, artistic, and private misinterpretations of their gesture.

The *economic* threat of their renaming is quite obvious: in a market driven art system functioning predominantly on artist's names as brands and guarantors of a marketing

²⁰ In his article "Politicization of Law" Jean-Louis Genard states that "the legal system is dominant to the spheres connected with it, but fighting for their autonomy. Because the power relationships are very asymmetrical, these spheres are in danger of getting their own logic suppressed by legal logic." (In: *Pravo in politika* [Law and Politics]. 2001. Edited by: Jelica Šumič Riha. Ljubljana: Liberalna akademija, p. 134.)

GLASOVNICA

ZA PONOVRNO GLASOVANJE NA VOLITVAH

PRESEDNIKA REPUBLIKE

11. novembra 2007

Navodilo za glasovanje:

Glasuje se samo za 1 (enega) kandidata. Za kandidata glasujete tako, da obkrožite številko pred njegovim imenom in primkom.

Kandidata sta:



1. LOJZE PETERLE

2. DANILO TÜRK



Janez Janša, Janez Janša, Janez Janša
Ballot Paper, Ljubljana, 2007
Blue ink and print on paper,
21 x 14,8 cm
Courtesy: artists

success, changing an already well-known name into a name which is completely anonymous within the art world could result in less interest from curators, cultural

²¹ Of course, since the project is controversial in its own right, it is not surprising that there are different views on its material gains and losses. Some interpretations assess the Janša trio's gesture as nothing more than a shameless marketing trick and a politically corrupted deed counting on higher subventions of the Slovenian Ministry of culture.

operators, and potential audience.²¹ The legal aspect of the project of an official renaming is comprehensible only if we think about it as an example of subversive affirmation

method in the conditions of a neoliberal society. The gesture of the Janša trio is not subversive because of an openly expressed criticism of the actual Slovenian government and the Prime Minister Janša but, on the contrary, because of their absurd over-identification with the political party in power and

²² During its mandate (2004-2008), Janša's government has ignored frequent warnings from various local and international organizations regarding violation of human rights of minorities, especially Roma, so-called "Erased" people, asylum seekers. It has also been remanded for its continuous attempts to take over independent media and suppress the anti-corruption committee.

its leader. Their position is strictly within, not outside of, the system; they obey the law but, at the same time, they also insist on the government's respect of the rule of law. At least in the case of the present Slovenian government, it makes sense to insist that it has to show more respect for equal treatment of all its inhabitants.²² On the other hand, in their own artistic work Janez Janša, Janez Janša, and Janez Janša have to deal with certain limitations of their right to artistic expression. Precisely their exhibition NAME Readymade (steirischer herbst festival, Graz, October 2008) is an excellent example of the double-edged sword of legal rights and obligations; if the identity cards and other personal documents of the three artists are exhibited in a gallery, it means that until the end of the exhibition period, in the spirit of the law, they function as "persons without papers". It means that, for instance, they cannot legally travel outside of the EU as the border control would not allow them to cross the border without showing valid passports or at least (in some cases) identity cards. For an artist who is hyper-active on the international scene – and all three Janšas produce a lot of their projects abroad, including non-EU countries – it is a serious handicap.

A more cynical comment on that situation would be a quotation from Shakespeare's play *The Merchant of Venice*, when Portia says to Shylock (whose insistence on a strict execution of the law has a boomerang effect on him):

"For, as thou urgest justice, be assured
Thou shalt have justice more than thou
desir'st."²³

²³ William Shakespeare. 1969. *The Merchant of Venice*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 73 (4th act, 1st scene).

On the other hand, the Name Readymade exhibition is an

exercise in exploring boundaries between the law and conceptual art. It is a project following the tradition of the artistic practices of the last century, persistently questioning – even to this day – their own media and the status of the artist; moving the set boundaries of the artistic field; often "dematerializing" artistic products by shifting the focus from product to process, from the hand-made, self-manufactured works of art to ready-made objects. Jurists have good reason for frustration now that modern artists have acquired the right to proclaim "unilaterally" anything they designate as art – including their identity cards, passports and other personal documents.²⁴ Furthermore, legal experts have to delineate boundaries between the right of artistic expression, on one hand, and the obligation of an artist – as any other person – to fully respect the legal order, on the other. The boundary between the permitted and the forbidden is never completely clear in democratic societies, and it is per definitionem artists who should persistently probe this "grey zone" to see how far it extends. The exhibition NAME Readymade (as well as the whole three Janša project) opens some new possibilities and challenges in that direction.

It was Matisse who once said that artists should periodically change their names; Janez Janša, Janez Janša, and Janez Janša have been actively working on materialization of that idea since 2007, and I am sure that they have not yet said the last word on their Janša project.

²⁴ The "legal order" cannot accept what Haimo Schack calls "the monopoly on definition" of the artist, "subjectively designating what art is." See Haimo Schack. 2004. *Kunst und Recht: Bildende Kunst, Architektur, Design und Fotografie im deutschen und internationalen Recht*. Köln: Carl Heymanns Verlag, p. 4.