

Janez Janša®

Janez Janša, Janez Janša, Janez Janša

Janez Janša®

+MSUM – Museum of Contemporary Art Metelkova, Ljubljana
October 18, 2017 – February 18, 2018

Curated by: Domenico Quaranta

Press conference and private preview: October 17, 2017 at 11:00 am

Opening: October 18, 2017 at 8.00 pm

Curator's guided tour: October 19 at 11:00 am

janezjansa.si/works/janezjansa-r

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In 2007, three Slovenian artists joined the conservative Slovenian Democratic Party (SDS) and officially changed their names to that of the leader of the party, the Prime Minister of Slovenia at the time, Janez Janša. While they renamed themselves for personal reasons, the boundaries between their lives and their art began to blur in numerous and unforeseen ways.

Since then, they have been living their private and public lives, working individually and collectively under the same name, and exploring the philosophical, psychological, political, biopolitical, historical, legal, economic, linguistic, and social implications of the name change; turning their lives into an ongoing performance and their art into a powerful means to question rituals and conventions, and to discuss the status and function of identity-related objects such as signatures, passports, ID cards, credit and debit cards.

Ten years later, this anthological exhibition offers an overview of this story which, although strongly rooted in Slovenia and its recent history, raises some universal questions about identity in the age of biopolitics and about art in the age of information; and casts it into the future, by announcing the registration of the Janez Janša name as a trademark for the next ten years. What's in a name? How does it relate to ownership, legal status, self-perception and self-representation, profiling, surveillance, copyright and commodification of language, and related

topics that define the contemporary condition? What's an artwork and what are the boundaries that define it in relation to life, institutions and companies?

Co-produced by [Moderna galerija \(MG+MSUM\)](#) and [Aksioma – Institute for Contemporary Art, Ljubljana](#), and curated by independent curator [Domenico Quaranta](#), *Janez Janša*[®] presents a comprehensive selection of works and projects produced by Janez Janša, Janez Janša and Janez Janša over the last ten years – most of them arising as collateral effects of the name change or other life events related to it. As an action pursued with no explicit artistic or political agenda, the name change sparked a series of consequences, reactions and interpretations that were either political or artistic. From an artistic perspective, the name change was perceived as either a performance or provocation. From a political perspective, it was perceived as either an act of political affiliation or resistance. These interpretations were often reflected in public statements and media stories. From a plain administrative perspective, the name change was seen as a regular procedure that – automatically or upon request – produced the related documents, such as ID cards and passports, birth and marriage certificates, and so on.

Janez Janša[®] explores this dimension – which the Janšas term “collaterality” – presenting articles, open letters, radio interviews and other documentary materials as well as official and valid legal documents as readymades, a category that Janez Janša, Janez Janša and Janez Janša embraced and sought to improve upon. They thus introduced the notion of “collateral art” – the individual artefacts produced by institutions and companies in response to their gestures and requests, such as ID cards, membership cards and other documents, presented as artworks while they are still valid documents, as well as the notion of “custom-made readymades” – objects that are customized upon request by certain companies. This has led to a path of research that creates ambiguous artefacts that question the relationship between art and the media, and that between art works and functional objects, comparing different notions of value and exploring post-Fordist means of production.

Other paths of research focus either on the act of signature as a performative gesture, an act of identity affirmation and of legal validation, or on the ways in which a symbolic gesture can be re-encoded and reshaped by the identity performing it. The first is explored in the show by such artworks as the [Signatures](#) (2007 – ongoing) series of interventions in public space and the installation [Signature](#) (2010); the second is evident in [Monument to the National Contemporary Art \(Golden Triglav\)](#), 2008, or the [I ♥ Germany](#) (2013 - ongoing) series, both working on the re-encoding of gestures and popular icons.

As an exhibition, *Janez Janša*[®] both diligently enacts and irreverently plays with the nature of a mid-career show, by avoiding a linear narrative, presenting alternative versions of some pieces, and experimenting with forms of display. Furthermore, it explores the act of changing one's name as one of symbolic death and rebirth, framed as it is by a work that translates into graves the institutional difficulties that occur when changing a name ([Life Span](#), 2017), and another that, by turning the artists' personal name into a registered trademark, opens up a new range of possibilities (*Janez Janša*[®], 2017).

Janez Janša[®] is hosted by the Museum of Contemporary Art Metelkova (+MSUM), part of the Moderna galerija, Ljubljana – a museum that, since its foundation in 1947, has resisted existing hegemonic models, advocating instead for a plurality of narratives and the priorities of local

spaces that intend to enter into equal dialogues with other spaces using only their own symbolic capital.

The exhibition is curated by [Domenico Quaranta](#), a contemporary art critic and curator whose work focuses on the impact of current means of production and dissemination on the arts, and on the ways they respond - syntactically and semantically - to shifts in technology. The author of *Beyond New Media Art* (2013) and *AFK. Texts on Artists 2011-2016* (2016), he curated a number of exhibitions, including *Collect the WWWorld* (2011-2012) and *Cyphoria* (2016).

The exhibition is part of [State Machines - Art, Work, and Identity in an Age of Planetary-Scale Computation](#), a project that investigates the new relationships between states, citizens and the stateless made possible by emerging technologies, focussing on how such technologies impact identity and citizenship, digital labour and finance.

ACCOMPANYING PROGRAMME

[*Proper and Improper Names. Identity in the Information Society*](#)

CONFERENCE

Curated by Marco Deseriis

[Kino Šiška](#), 17-18 October 2017, 5.00 pm onward

With: Natalie Bookchin, Marco Deseriis, Kristin Sue Lucas, Gerald Raunig, Ryan Trecartin, Wu Ming

[*My Name is Janez Janša*](#)

MOVIE SCREENING

[Kinodvor](#), October 22, 2017 at 7.00 pm

What's in a Name?

CONFERENCE

Curated by Janez Janša

+MSUM - Museum of Contemporary Art Metelkova, 10 January 2018, 11.00 am onward

With: Urša Chitrakar, Konstantina Georgelou, Janez Janša, Mala Kline, Lev Kreft, Aldo Milohnić

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[*My Name is Janez Janša*](#)

MOVIE SCREENING

[Kinodvor](#), 10 January 2018, 8.00 pm

Followed by

Janez Janša and Beyond

BOOK LAUNCH

With: Mladen Dolar, Jela Krečič and Robert Pfaller

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[Janez Janša®](#)

Book launch and guided tour

+MSUM – Museum of Contemporary Art Metelkova, 11 January 2018 at 4.00 pm

With: Domenico Quaranta

COLOPHON

Janez Janša, Janez Janša, Janez Janša
Janez Janša®

Guest curator: Domenico Quaranta

Produced by

[Moderna galerija Ljubljana](#) and [Aksioma – Institute for Contemporary Art, Ljubljana](#)



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Bibliography: Teja Merhar

Technical support

Zavod Projekt Atol



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STATE MACHINES

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ACCOMPANYING PROGRAMME PARTNERS

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