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Readymade

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g. Janez Janša
Predsednik vlade RS
Gregorčičeva 3
1000 Ljubljana

V Ljubljani, 30. julij 2007

Spoštovani g. Janez Janša,


Mogoče je do Vas že prispela informacija, da smo trije Ljubljančani, vsi trije ustvarjalci sodobne umetnosti, ki s svojim delom redno predstavljamo Slovenijo po svetu, ter vsi trije člani Slovenske demokratske stranke, pred kratkim zamenjali imena in priimke in se preimenovali v Janeza Janšo. Če tega še ne veste, smo veseli, da Vam novico posredujemo iz prve roke.

Naša odločitev je zavestna in posledica tehtnega premisleka. Za nas ni meja med našim delom, našo umetnostjo in našimi življenji in menimo, da se v tem prav nič ne razlikujemo od Vas. Skupaj živimo za to, kar ustvarjamo, in če nam dovolite, bi navedli besede iz pisma, ki ste nam ga poslali ob včlanitvi v SDS, »več nas bo, prej bomo na cilju«.

Ker bi Vam osebno radi podrobneje predstavili naša stališča in ker bi radi preprečili eventualne nesporazume, ki bi jih v naše razmerje lahko vnesel nekdo zaradi napačnega razumevanja, bi se radi z Vami osebno srečali. Predlagamo, da bi se to zgodilo čimprej, če le mogoče, pred 14. avgustom 2007, do takrat smo namreč vsi trije v Sloveniji. Zavedamo se, da je Vaš urnik zelo natrpan in se mu bomo seveda skušali prilagoditi.

V upanju na Vaš skorajšnji odgovor Vas lepo pozdravljamo.

Janez Janša
Slomškova 27
1000 Ljubljana



Janez Janša
Neubergerjeva 25
1000 Ljubljana



Janez Janša
Gestrinova 3
1000 Ljubljana



Mr. Janez Janša
The Prime Minister of the Republic of Slovenia
Gregorčičeva 3
1000 Ljubljana

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Ljubljana, 30 July 2007

Dear Mr. Janez Janša,

Perhaps, by now, the news has reached you that three people from Ljubljana (all three of us are contemporary artists whose works regularly represent Slovenia overseas and we are also members of the Slovenian Democratic Party [Slovenska demokratska stranka/SDS]) have recently changed their names to Janez Janša. If you have not been made aware of this, we are pleased that we can deliver the news firsthand.

Our decision was a conscious one and it came about as a result of careful consideration. For us, there are no boundaries between our work, our art, and our lives, and, in this respect, we believe we are no different from you. We live for what we create and, with your permission, we would like to quote here the words from the letter you sent us when we joined SDS: "The more we are, the faster we will reach the goal!"

Since we would to explain our position to you in detail as to avoid possible misunderstandings, we would like to meet you in person. We suggest that we do so as soon as possible, preferably before 14 August 2007 – the three of us will be in Slovenia until then. We are aware of how busy your schedule is, and so we will do our best to accommodate you.

We are looking forward to your response.

Kind regards,

Janez Janša
Slomškova 27
1000 Ljubljana
[signed]

Janez Janša
Neubergerjeva 25
1000 Ljubljana
[signed]

Janez Janša
Gestrinova 3
1000 Ljubljana
[signed]

Blaž Lukan

The Janez Janša Project



Janez Janša

Jaz sem Janez Janša,

Intervention on the Multi-touch Collaboration Wall by Perceptive Pixel,
WIRED NextFest 07, Los Angeles Convention Centre, Los Angeles, 2007

Courtesy: Aksioma

The title of this essay is *The Janez Janša Project*, but this project needs, first of all, to be proven; we need to prove that there is indeed a “project” deserving this name;

that a planned action has been carried out, which can be understood as a performative act. We must also prove that we are not dealing simply with an intimate, private, act, for whose analysis there is no place in the context of performance studies. There are certainly a handful of signs that point to the latter; the three Slovenian artists who have decided to change their names to Janez Janša have remained silent regarding their decisions and have offered no comments regarding the change, stating only that this was an intimate, personal decision, which requires no public rationalization. It was simply a change of name, which constitutes the individual’s civic right and which – at least in Slovenia – requires no explanation (not even a formal administrative one).

¹This is warranted by the nature of the “project”, while the fact that we can, at least to some extent, assume an intimate stance towards an intimate performance, which, after all, is what *The Janez Janša Project* supposedly is, further justifies such a perspective.

✂ If we think about this issue in an entirely personal context¹ we have to admit that the change of name of one of the

performers is particularly perplexing, even shameful.² What are we now supposed to call the man who was called Emil Hrvatin before he changed his name to Janez Janša?

Of course, if we respect the individual’s “intimate decision” – which is what the artist has emphatically pointed to on a number of occasions – there should be no dilemma; Emil Hrvatin is now Janez Janša. However, in a completely private situation, addressing (the former) Emil as

²We find appropriate explanations of shame in Agamben (*Remnants of Auschwitz/Kar ostaja od Auschwitzta*) and Žižek (*Kako biti nihče*): shame as de-subjectification, powerlessness, disappearance of the self as the subject, shame as a reaction to disclosure, etc. We can “find ourselves” in all of them.

Janez – and not just any “Slovenian” Janez (by the way, Emil Hrvatin is Croatian by birth), but rather precisely that Janez, i.e. Janez Janša, the Slovenian Prime Minister – has not come easily to the author of this essay, and I must admit that I actually avoided seeing this Janez Janša for a while. I will not discuss the most fundamental reasons for this here, but they are certainly connected to my relationship with the most prominent owner of this name.

Nonetheless, in this text, I will challenge this account, which understands the change of name not as a project, but rather as a personal decision of the three artists, on a number of key points. The first counter-argument concerns the public nature of this change. The three individuals who decided to change their name appear regularly in public, in various contexts, mostly to do with art; their name change is thus public not only in the administrative sense (administratively speaking, data such as names belong to the private sphere while being, at the same time, publicly accessible in places like phone books), but also in the broader sense of the public sphere. The decision was made

by three artists, not three anonymous individuals, and two of them are active in the field of contemporary performing arts; moreover, in their work, these artists often problematize the foundations of contemporary art practices. So we can hypothesize – for now, though we have no proof to claim this – that their name change concerns their art practice and artistic activities.

✕ What, then, is a change of name? Legally speaking, this is a civil right, for which, in

³ The official response to the question posed to a Slovenian administrative body on the web portal *e-uprava* on 3 October 2007 – if there exists, for instance, a list of names which the citizens cannot change their names into – states: “Such a list does not exist.” There is, however, a statement in a chapter of The Issue of the Provision regarding the Change of Personal Name webpage of *e-uprava* at the State Portal of the Republic of Slovenia, which reads: “Personal name is a personal right of each citizen. Every person is obliged to use their personal name. This consists of a name and a surname. Personal name can be changed. [...] Decisions regarding the change of personal name are made by the administrative body, with which the application was lodged. [...] When personal name is changed, all personal documents used for the purpose of identification must be changed. The former personal name can be verified with a birth certificate.” (<http://e-uprava.gov.si/e-uprava/dogodkiPreivalci.euprava?zdid=110&sid=147;25> September 2007).

⁴ Restrictions are imposed in the cases of individuals who are involved in legal proceedings; one cannot change one’s name into the name of a famous person if the purpose of the change is profit or mockery; it is impossible to take on a name that is protected by copyright or that is insulting, etc.

Slovenia, there are virtually no formal restrictions³. Therefore, it is the result of the individual’s entirely personal decision, which is legalized by an official institution⁴. The situation in the United States, for instance, is different, as we can see if we read the *Wikipedia* entry for “name change” (1st October 2007). In America, there exists a complex legal system that regulates the change of name, and the decision is in the discretionary power of the court. Since this is not only a legally compelling field but, also, often an

entertaining one, we should have a look at a few illustrative examples. In the United States, names are often changed for political reasons that are more transparent than the ones we are dealing with in our case. For instance, the son of the famous social activist Abbie Hoffman has changed his name to america Hoffman, with the first letter of America in lower-case, because he wants to emphasize his non-chauvinist patriotism. In another instance, the candidate Byron Looper changed his name – for reasons related to his pre-election campaign – to Byron Low Tax Looper; while the name change might have helped him win his position as “tax assessor” the 1998 murder put an abrupt end to his political ascent. For less politically-ambitious but, nevertheless, engaged reasons, a man called Rob changed his name into Free Rob Cannabis, while another man is now called Nigel Freemarijuana, and yet another person has adopted the name Goveg.com to promote a vegan website. The person whose new name is Kentucky Fried Cruelty.com requires no further commentary, nor does the man who had to pay an unjustly imposed £20 fine and has since changed his name to Yorkshire Bank PLC Are Fascist Bastards. We could also mention the guy who used to be called David Fearn, but whose new name comprises the titles of all existing James Bond movies... All this to say that, the change of name has a special place, which depends on the (various) strategies and is related to the motivation of the naming. Anonymity is a pre-identitarian principle, but to take on a pseudonym is to adopt a crypto-identity. A nickname gives the nicknamed person a playful, prosthetic identity, and the change of name offers a new identity, which – depending on the choice of name – can bring about various associations with the name and its owner.

The second counter-argument concerns the choice of name. The three artists did not pick just any name, they chose Janez Janša – the name of the Slovenian Prime Minister, the president of the centre-Right *Slovenska Demokratska Stranka* (Slovenian democratic party), the front man of the Slovenian right wing. No doubt, the choice of name indicates a certain agenda. If we know anything about these three artists' worldviews – or at least about the worldviews of two of them – we can say, with certainty, that they are closer to the Left, and that they have been critical

of the political stance and policies associated with the best-known (though the Telephone Register of Slovenia lists seven individuals called Janez Janša) owner of the name Janez Janša. We can deduce this conclusion from their artistic actions, manifestoes, and performances. Take Janez Janša formerly known as Emil Hrvatin, for example, his editorials in *Maska* and his activities as one of the leaders of the Association of Non-Governmental Organizations confirm our assumption. Take Janez Janša formerly known as Davide Grassi, his artistic projects

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REPUBLIKA SLOVENIJA
UPRAVNA ENOTA LJUBLJANA
SEKTOR ZA UPRAVNE NOTRANJE ZADEVE
ODDELEK ZA MATIČNE ZADEVE
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Telefon: 01 206 12 13, Telefaks: 01 206 2 042
e-pošta: uc.ljubljana@gov.si

Številka: 211-1403/2007-6(23105)
Datum: 21.06.2007

Upravna enota Ljubljana izdaja na podlagi 18. člena Zakona o osebnem imenu (Uradni list RS, št. 20/2006) na zahtevo Emila Hrvatina, stanujočega v Ljubljani, Slomškova ulica 27, za spremembo osebnega imena, naslednje:

ODLOČBO

1. Emilu HRVATINU, roj. 06.02.1964 na Rijeki, Hrvaška, se dovoli sprememba osebnega imena v novo osebno ime JANEZ JANŠA.
2. Sprememba osebnega imena na podlagi odločbe velja od dneva vročitve odločbe.
3. Posebnih stroškov v postopku ni bilo.

Obrazložitev

Emil HRVATIN je z vlogo dne 08.06.2007 na takojšnji upravni enoti zaprosil za spremembo osebnega imena. V vlogi je navedel, da želi pridobiti novo osebno ime JANEZ JANŠA.

Zahtevek je utemeljen. Uradno je bilo ugotovljeno, da ni zadržkov za spremembo osebnega imena iz 19. člena Zakona o osebnem imenu, zato je bilo v skladu z 10. členom tega zakona odločeno, kot je navedeno v izreku odločbe.

Na podlagi 2. odstavka 21. člena Zakona o osebnem imenu (Uradni list RS, št. 20/2006) sprememba osebnega imena na podlagi odločbe velja za polnoletno osebo od dneva vročitve odločbe.

Glede na določbo 1. odstavka 118. člena Zakona o splošnem upravnem postopku je ugotovljeno, da posebnih stroškov v postopku ni bilo.

Postopki pravnih sredstev:

Zoper to odločbo je dovoljena pritožba na Ministrstvo za notranje zadeve Republike Slovenije. Pisna pritožba se izročil naravnost ali pa pošlje po pošti na Upravno enoto Ljubljana, Sektor za upravne notranje zadeve, Oddelek za matične zadeve, Tobačna ulica 5, 1000 Ljubljana. Na navedenem naslovu se lahko poda pritožba tudi ustno na zapisknik. Pritožba se vlož v roku 15 (petnajst) dni od dneva vročitve odločbe. Taksa za pritožbo v znesku 14,18 EUR po tar. št. 2 Zakona o upravnih taksah (Uradni list RS, št. 42/07-uradno prečiščeno besedilo) se plača osebno pri organu ali s položnico na podračun notnega zakladniškega računa Upravne enote Ljubljana, št. 01100-8450001482 s slikico številko 00 240300-200.

Taksa po taksi tarifi št. 1 in 21 Zakona o upravnih taksah (Uradni list RS, št. 42/07 – uradno prečiščeno besedilo) v znesku 46,09 EUR je plačana v gotovini, potrdilo je priloženo k vlogi.

Postopek vodila
Maja RADKOVIČ, inž. 1. r. o. v. m.
VIŠJI REFERENT-MATIČAR



Svetka TIVADAR, univ. dipl. prav.
VODJA ODDELKA

- VROČITI:
1. Emil HRVATIN- osebno
Slomškova ulica 27
1101 Ljubljana

- OBVESTITI:
1. Upravna enota Ljubljana, SUNZ, Oddelek za matične zadeve
-za vpis v matični register

Janez Janša, Janez Janša, Janez Janša
Emil Hrvatin, born 06.02.1964 in Rijeka, Croatia,
is allowed the change of his personal name to the
new personal name, Janez Janša, Ljubljana, 2007
Two prints on paper, 29,7 x 21 cm each
Courtesy: Aksioma

as *DemoKino - Virtual Biopolitical Agora* or *Test Ballot - Examining the Fault Machinery of Democracy*. And take Janez Janša formerly known as Žiga Kariž, for example his project *Terror=Decor*. Since the new name, therefore, cannot be simply the result of a fascination with PM Janša (which could indeed be the motivation for a name change), for the three artists through their choice of name reach into a certain traumatic core – in this case, the traumatic core of the Slovenian state and its transition – the reason for the

change must lie somewhere else. We can assume, then, that we are dealing with a conscious – even conceptual – decision (at least two of the artists involved are often classified precisely as conceptual artists), for we can discern in this name change an act of a conscious and carefully planned *over-identification*, which exceeds the personal, intimate character of the decision and which manifests itself, first and foremost, as its critical point.



Številka: 211-1472/2007-6(23105)
Datum: 29.06.2007

Upravna enota Ljubljana izdaja na podlagi 18. člena Zakona o osebnem imenu (Uradni list RS, št. 20/2006) na zahtevo Davideja GRASSI, stanujočega v Ljubljani, Neubergerjeva ulica 25, za spremembo osebnega imena, nasledilno

ODLOČBO

1. Davideju GRASSI, roj. 07.12.1970 v kraju Bergamo, Italija, se dovoli sprememba osebnega imena v novo oseбно ime Janez JANŠA.
2. Sprememba osebnega imena na podlagi odločbe velja od dneva vročitve odločbe.
3. Posebnih stroškov v postopku ni bilo.

Obrazložitev

Davide GRASSI je z vlogo dne 18.06.2007 na tukajšnji upravni enoti zaprosil za spremembo osebnega imena. V vlogi je navedel, da želi pridobiti novo oseбно ime Janez JANŠA.

Zahtevek je utemeljen. Uradno je bilo ugotovljeno, da ni zadržkov za spremembo osebnega imena iz 19. člena Zakona o osebnem imenu, zato je bilo v skladu z 10. členom tega zakona odločeno, kot je navedeno v izreku odločbe.

Na podlagi 2. odstavka 21. člena Zakona o osebnem imenu (Uradni list RS, št. 20/2006) sprememba osebnega imena na podlagi odločbe velja za polnoletno osebo od dneva vročitve odločbe.

Glede na določbo 1. odstavka 118. člena Zakona o splošnem upravnem postopku je ugotovljena, da posebnih stroškov v postopku ni bilo.

Peuk o pravnem sredstvu:

Zoper to odločbo je dovoljena pritožba na Ministrstvo za notranje zadeve Republike Slovenije. Pisna pritožba se izroči naravnost ali pa pošlje po pošti na Upravno enoto Ljubljana, Sektor za upravne notranje zadeve, Oddelek za matične zadeve, Tobacna ulica 5, 1000 Ljubljana. Na navedenem naslovu se lahko poda pritožba tudi ustno na zapisnik. Pritožba se vložiti v roku 15 (petnajsti) dni od dneva vročitve odločbe. Taksa za pritožbo v znesku 14,18 EUR po tar. št. 2 Zakona o upravnih taksah (Uradni list RS, št. 42/07-uradno prečiščeno besedilo) se plača oseбно pri organu ali s polnočrtno na podračun enotnega zakladniškega računa Upravne enote Ljubljana, št. 01100-8450001482 s sklicno številko 00 240300-200.

Taksa po takсни tarifi št. 1 in 21 Zakona o upravnih taksah (Uradni list RS, št. 42/07 – uradno prečiščeno besedilo) v znesku 46,09 EUR je plačana v gotovini, potrjeno je priloženo k vlogi.

Postopek vodila
Maja RADIKOVIČ, inž. prom.
VIŠJI REFERENT-MATIČAR



Saška TIVĀDAR, univ. dipl. prav.
VODJA ODDELKA

- VROČITI:

1. Davide GRASSI - oseбно
Neubergerjeva ulica 25
1113 Ljubljana

- OBVESTITI:

1. Upravna enota Ljubljana, SUNZ, Oddelek za matične zadeve
-za vpis v matični register

Janez Janša, Janez Janša, Janez Janša
Davide Grassi, born 07.12.1970 in Bergamo, Italy, is allowed the change of his personal name to the new personal name, Janez Janša, Ljubljana, 2007
Two prints on paper, 29,7 x 21 cm each
Courtesy: Aksioma

With the change of name, the three artists could not assume the real economic and political power of the prime minister; they did, however, usurp the symbolic power entailed in his “bare” name. The equation we can make, then, is valid at the level of the name change, that is, Emil Hrvatin + Davide Grassi + Žiga Kariž = Janez Janša; the three artists have exchanged their own real power – which they all definitely possessed in their own, somewhat more limited, social sphere of contemporary arts (performing arts in

the case of two artists, and visual arts in the third case) – for the symbolic power of the “original” owner of their new name. In an economic-marketing sense, then, Emil Hrvatin, Davide Grassi, and Žiga Kariž have traded their brand names, while the market effect of this trade (or re-branding) has not been entirely transparent, as the performer Janez Janša notes in the interview with Tanja Lesničar Pučko (20).⁵ However, what about the effect of the retroactive power of the name change, of its inadvertent

REPUBLIKA SLOVENIJA
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Številka: 211-1484/2007-6 (23106)
Datum: 1.05.07.2007

Upravna enota Ljubljana izdaja na podlagi 18. člena Zakona o osebnem imenu (Uradni list RS, št. 20/2006) na zahtevo Žige KARIŽA iz Ljubljane, Triglavskva ulica 49, za spremembo osebnega imena, naslednjo

ODLOČBO

1. Žigi KARIŽU, roj. 28.05.1973 v Ljubljani, se dovoli sprememba osebnega imena v novo osebno ime JANEZ JANŠA.
2. Sprememba osebnega imena na podlagi odločbe velja od dneva vročitve odločbe.
3. V postopku ni bilo posebnih stroškov.

— Obrazložitev —

Žiga KARIŽ je z vlogo dne 19.06.2007 pri takajšnji upravni enoti prosil za spremembo osebnega imena. V vlogi je navedel, da želi pridobiti novo osebno ime JANEZ JANŠA.

Zahtevek je utemeljen. Uradno je bilo ugotovljeno, da ni zadržkov za spremembo osebnega imena iz 19. člena Zakona o osebnem imenu, zato je bilo v skladu z 10. členom tega zakona odločeno kot je navedeno v izreku odločbe.

Na podlagi 2. odstavka 21. člena Zakona o osebnem imenu (Uradni list RS, št. 20/2006), sprememba osebnega imena na podlagi odločbe velja za polnoletno osebo od dneva vročitve odločbe.

Glede na določbo 1. odstavka 118. člena Zakona o splošnem upravnem postopku (Uradni list RS, št. 24/06 – uradno prečiščeno besedilo, 119/05) je ugotovljeno, da posebnih stroškov v postopku ni bilo.

Pouk o pravnem sredstvu:

Zoper to odločbo je dovoljena pritožba na Ministrstvo za notranje zadeve Republike Slovenije. Pisna pritožba se izroči naravnost ali pa pošlje po pošti na Upravno enoto Ljubljana, Sektor za upravne notranje zadeve, Oddelek za matične zadeve, Tobočna ulica 5, 1000 Ljubljana. Na navedenem naslovu se lahko pritožite tudi usno na zapisnik. Pritožba se vloži v roku 15 (petnajsti) dni od dneva vročitve odločbe. Taksa za pritožbo v znesku 14,18 EUR po tar. št. 2 Zakona o upravnih taksah (Uradni list RS, št. 42/07 - uradno prečiščeno

besedilo) se plača z gotovino ali s polnočeno na podračun enotnega zakladniškega računa Upravne enote Ljubljana št. 01100-8450001482 s sklično številko 00 240300-200.

Taksa po takсни tarifi št. 1 in 21 Zakona o upravnih taksah (Ur. list RS, št.42/07 - uradno prečiščeno besedilo) v znesku 46,09 EUR je plačana v gotovini, potrdilo je priloženo k vlogi.

Postopek vpelja
Matijsa SVETAK
VIŠJI REFERENT - MATIČAR



Danica KRONEGGER, univ.dipl.psih.
VODJIA REFERATA

- VROČITI:

1. Žiga KARIŽ - osebno
Triglavskva ulica 49
1113 Ljubljana

Janez Janša, Janez Janša, Janez Janša
Žiga Kariž, born 28.05.1973 in Ljubljana, Slovenia,
is allowed the change of his personal name to the new
personal name, Janez Janša, Ljubljana, 2007
Two prints on paper, 29,7 x 21 cm each
Courtesy: Aksioma

multiplication, on the original owner? The original Janez Janša seems to have remained untouched by this change, he has remained intact after the “lease” of his name; there have been no noticeable or polemical official

⁵ We could further consider the fact that the artists have indeed given up their individual names, but in exchange, they have acquired a collective name, and a fetishistic one at that. The latter, the collective and fetishistic name, has no doubt contributed to the fact that the artists now appear in collective projects such as *Mount Triglav on Mount Triglav* or *Signature Event Context* (see <http://www.aksioma.org/sec/press.html>) – in which the artists inscribed their collective name into the Holocaust Memorial in Berlin – more often than ever before. The relationship between the inadvertent or “spontaneous theatricalization” and conceptualized performative action is dynamic in *The Janez Janša Project*, and it should be examined anew with each new “event”.

⁶ They were seen at the ceremony where the results of the Slovenian presidential election were announced in October 2007; more specifically, they were seen in the headquarters of Lojze Peterle, the candidate supported by “their” party. They appeared as intriguing interviewees in a short interview recorded on this occasion by POP TV, in which the performer Janez Janša explained the reasons for their coming to Peterle’s election office: to congratulate the presidential candidate on his victory in the first round of the election. Janša answered the journalist’s question, if this is an art project, by saying that it is not, unless she herself interprets it in this way.

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. The series and its effects are invoked; for

reactions from the government or his party, or at least none that we know of. We do not know whether or not the appearance of the name Janez Janša in new and unexpected contexts (to which we will return below) has had any effect on his public visibility or popularity.

The third counter-argument is related to the decision that all three artists assume the same name. Of course this decision could be simply personal, 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

instance, an exclamation that witnesses have attributed to Janez Janša formerly known as Davide Grassi at his wedding, “The more of us there are, the faster we can achieve our goal!” This is the motto of PM Janša’s SDS, the party that now counts these three new Janšas as new members.⁶ The Janšas are also hinted at in *We are all Marlene Dietrich FOR*, the title of one of the latest performances by Janez Janša, who was still known as Emil Hrvat in at the time of the performance, and the series is also attested to by the joint appearances of the artists, who have, for example, collaborated as a group in the exhibition at Mala galerija in Ljubljana entitled *Triglav – OHO, Irwin, Janez Janša, Janez Janša and Janez Janša*,⁷ whose performer and publicist, visual artist, and intermedia artist are all called Janez Janša.

Let’s think about this then: on the one hand, there is the intimate personal decision made by three citizens of the Republic of Slovenia to change their names, but, on the other hand, there is the decision of three artists, three public figures – at least two of whom are involved in contemporary performing practices – and their decision concerns a charged name, the name of the Prime Minister, a right-wing politician. The three artists have assumed this name and thus produced a series, which points less towards the assumed name as such than towards the meaning and effect of the series itself. “The other hand” of this contemplation, then, seems stronger and it invites the thought that this is a performative project, but to be able to prove this, begin at the beginning.

✎ However, before we go straight back, we need to ask ourselves what has truly

⁷ The exhibition was at Mala galerija in Ljubljana from 15th October until 15th November 2007.

happened with the change of name. In a personal as well as in a civic sense, the life of the three artists has, no doubt, changed significantly. We can gather this from the fact that they have changed their names in all contexts, the artistic as well as the private ones, in which they had been appearing until the moment of the change. The names Emil Hrvatin, Davide Grassi, and Žiga Kariž have disappeared, so to speak, from the public sphere partly and even retroactively (for example, the biography of the performer and publicist Janez Janša, for instance, states not that the performance *Miss Mobile* was directed by Emil Hrvatin – which can be proven – but rather that it was directed by Janez Janša),⁸ although we can say, in accordance with empirical facts, that their bodies and personalities have remained the same. Externally and physically, the three artists have not changed, at least not thus far (which is probably a source of disappointment for those who believe that the three artists are “performing” a role of Janez Janša). Their performance is not simply a form of artistic masquerading, and judging from the information available to the public, they have kept up their artistic activities. It is a fact, however, that the “former” Emil Hrvatin, Davide Grassi and Žiga Kariž no longer exist; there are three people called Janez Janša or – in the sphere of arts – there is the performer and publicist Janez Janša, there is the mixed-media artist Janez Janša, and there is the visual artist Janez Janša. The event, then, that was triggered by the change

⁸ See http://www.maska.si/sl/sodelavci/umetniki/janez_jansa_1/.

⁹ Let's say in their identity, although we could also pose the question of their possible division, but this would exceed the scope of our discussion here.

of name is called *Janez Janša*. This is how it is perceived by the public, and this is how it manifests itself to its viewers and

readers. Yet, *Janez Janša* is not just a triple performative event, or rather, it is not only Janez Janša (the most famous owner of the name) that reveals himself in the event, in the performative, so to speak; the event also represents its authors and, at the same time, the (new) owners of the name. In so doing, however, through their “modification” or “filter”, the event unmistakably points back to the original, “master”, owner of the name and thus also to the problematic real and symbolic power that coalesces in his name as well as in his person.⁹

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What else can a change of name mean? It is actually a private act, closely connected with the individual's inner motives and, as such, his or her personality and his or her identity. It entails giving up a part of one's former identity and personal history as well as one's self-image and possibly, the way one is seen by others. This image is closely connected with one's name and the assumption of a new name which is, in effect, the assumption of a new identity. The change of name, then, is not only an intimate performance, it is also a peculiar social spectacle. The name – even though it is originally assigned to one arbitrarily, at birth, at christening, or when the newborn is registered in the records – signifies one's legal, administrative, identity as well as one's intimate self becomes merely representation through this name change; the change legalizes, or rather, reveals, precisely the original randomness of the name.

✂ As an introduction to the problematics of identity – which we will only touch upon briefly here – let's summarize the autobiographic story of American feminist theorist Peggy Phelan, recounted in her book *Unmarked*. Her account might help us elucidate the subtext of naming and

re-naming. Peggy grew up in a family with six children, where her mother could not remember all the children's names and her father invented new names for the kids to be able to memorize them. The result, as experienced by Phelan, was an "absolute break between the sign and the referent", which became a form of the child's play in their home, and the failure of the name to grant the child an identity was an everyday experience in their household. The children realized that identity did not derive from the name in the way that, according to Phelan, has become the "substitutional economy" of the family. Identity, then, resides neither within the name, which can be uttered, nor in the body, which can be seen; it is the result of the failure of the body to completely embody one's existence and the result of the failure of the signifier to express precise meaning. Identity is perceivable only through the relationship with the other, which is a form of simultaneous resistance and support; it marks the boundary where the self differentiates itself from the other and where it also merges with the other. However, in this declaration of identity, Phelan says, there is always loss, the loss of not being the other while remaining dependent upon the other to be seen, to exist. Phelan thus introduces the notions of the self and its relationship to the name, the relationship to the other and the boundary between the two, with the most exciting part of her discussion focusing on the concept of loss (p. 11–13).

Equally compelling is the reflection of Michel Foucault in his *Ceci n'est pas une pipe* (*This is Not a Pipe*), where he writes about the principle within the field of fine arts of "equivalence between the fact of similitude and the establishment of a representational link". Between the pipe and the painted

eponymous sentence, which appears in Magritte's painting, Foucault claims, there exists a bulge which divides their formerly shared space; it is a gap or a void, which points to the absence of space (similar to the border that separates the image and the text), to the erasure of the "shared space". The proliferation of negations – this is not a pipe, this painting is not a pipe, this written statement is not a pipe, this image of a pipe is not a pipe, etc. – renders the image of the pipe and the text – which should (through negation) name the image – unable to find the "space where they converge and attach themselves to one another". Magritte "names his paintings," Foucault argues, "to show respect for the act of naming. Yet, in this draughty space, unusual relationships are formed, incursions happen, unexpected and devastating invasions take place, images fall into the domain of words, verbal flashes furrow the images and make them break down into a thousand pieces." (Foucault, p. 27) Foucault's aggressive, militant vocabulary posits naming as a battle, which is not an act of identification but rather an act of conflict and division, an act of de(con)struction. Between the name and the self, there is war, which necessarily leads to loss, as Phelan opines. Foucault claims that similitude always has a "guardian" and "to be similar always presupposes a reference, which prescribes and classifies". What represents what, who is the original, and which the copy are the questions that hierarchise and lead into the "monarchy" of meanings; but there will come a day, Foucault concludes, "when the image itself, together with the name that belongs to the image, is de-identified by similitude, and transferred into infinity along an entire series. Campbell, Campbell, Campbell, Campbell." (p. 42)

JANEZ JANŠA
 ŽIGA KARIŽ
 It's so Simple and that's the Way I Like it
 2005/07

Former name replaced with the new one at the exhibition *Land(e)scape*, Künstlerhaus, Graz, 2007
 Photo: Janez Janša

Therefore, between the name and identity or (self-) image, a gap or a bulge appears, as Foucault argues, a gap which leaves the name on one side and puts the individual's self on the other, and throws into relief the arbitrariness of the connection between the two. The name becomes a sliding signifier and thus sheds light on the problematic nature of considering identity as something predetermined or determined once and for all, and suddenly, we notice its (Badiouean) multiple, its (Foucauldian) multiplicity.

Furthermore, if we know that this sphere of identity is one of the primary arenas of

¹⁰ From the extensive register of body art let's mention only the French artist or, more accurately, body artist Orlan here. She problematises the issues of identity and (self) image through conceptual plastic surgery performed on her face. See also <http://www.orlan.net/> (17th January 2008).

contemporary art practices, including performing arts,¹⁰ we can begin to understand the change of name of the three Slovenian artists in this

sense, as a change enacted in the field of performativity. Between Emil Hrvatin, Davide Grassi, Žiga Kariž and Janez Janša, there is, then, no simple hierarchical relationship that would also have psychological connotations; the link between them is discursive. As soon as we assume that Janez Janša is in fact a project or a performative event, its internal relations are established anew. In the sequence introduced by Foucault with the development of European painting in mind, the sequence of similitude – representation – signification (p. 63), *The Janez Janša Project* falls into the category of the paradigm that is also applicable to the development of theatre and performing arts. Emil Hrvatin, Davide Grassi and Žiga Karž in conception or Janez Janša, Janez Janša and Janez Janša in realization thus exploits a certain elementary form of representation, similitude. Yet, he does not adopt it for the purpose of representing anything; rather, with its

performative act, it ends up in the realm of signification. Signification is produced by the play of meanings, which is triggered by the collision of similitude and representation. In the process of identity, which unfolds as a battle between the image and representation, what is left is loss.

An additional confirmation of this thesis about performativity comes from the fact that the change of name was carried out by three artists, two of whom, as already mentioned, have been working in the field of performing arts and expanding the field's thematic and strategic horizons through original and witty projects (such as the project of Janez Janša, then Emil Hrvatin, *Refugee Camp for First World Citizens* [2004], or the project of Janez Janša, then Davide Grassi, with Igor Štromajer, *Problemarket.com-The Problem Stock Exchange* [2001]). It is also confirmed by the fact that the three artists, through their name change, have produced a series, which is a common phenomenon or concept in contemporary (visual) arts. Moreover, if we can understand the change of name in the sense of identity as a body-art event of sorts (by which I mean not only the rupture between the individual and his/her name, that is, a rupture in one's identity, but also the common, albeit pathological, bodily changes that a name change triggers), the production of the series is most forcefully inscribed precisely in the fields of the social and the political; in other words, the production of the series becomes an ideological inscription. The series leads to the disappearance of the subject, to its emptying or de-subjectification. The series – with its continuation ad *infinitum* – produces a sequence of empty signifiers, which can then be filled at random with new content. The series is authorised through absence; the self in the series appears, as Žižek argues, as the “pure void

of auto-referential signification” (Kako, p. 171), as an empty name. A causal chain appears between the three artists and the “original”¹¹ Janez Janša; the chain produces a posterior identity, which in turn raises the fundamental question of the referent. What is at stake, then, is not the disappearance of Emil Hrvatin,

Davide Grassi, and Žiga Kariž as artists, public figures or citizens, but rather the concurrent disappearance of Janez Janša, as the name and its owner: the disappearance of the “original” Janez Janša and his symbolic function. The multiplication of the name as a signifier leads to the disappearance of the referent, and the aforementioned motto of the party now has to be taken literally; the more individuals called Janez Janša there are, the faster we can achieve the goal of the emptying out of the subject, its de-subjectification and the establishment of the empty signifier. The goal – more or less de-conceptualized, collateral – of the act of changing one's name in this case, then, is to undermine the real ideological, economic, and political power of the owner, and this entails giving up one's own personal, intimate, artistic, or public identity. What is crucial here, then, is the emergent empty space – the void in which the ideological mechanism, as such, is revealed – which can be territorialized by a new political subjectivity.

The change of name as “non-event”, or rather, as an event which does not want (in a manifestative sense) to be one, exploits a certain unintentional, spontaneous action, triggered by the administrative act of renaming. In the “identitarian” sense, the

¹¹ Given that there exist at least seven people with that name, the notion of the original is particularly problematic, but we will not explore it further here. For some productive ideas regarding the relationship between the original and the copy, see Auslander (pp. 121–185).

act becomes an event through the staking of one's own personal history, name, and identity or self-image, through the indication of their disparity. As an event, the act enters the register of contemporary performing arts in the sense of having to do with reality; yet, in the context of institutionalized theory, in the moment when it is carried out by an artist or an actor from the field of contemporary performing arts (the situation is similar to the circumstances created by the appearance of the readymade, that is, by the placement of an object from everyday reality into a gallery space), the act becomes an artistic event or a performative project. On the other hand, however, this act becomes an artistic event also through the concept, which is discernible in the choice of name as the target of the renaming and in the production of the series, which triggers a chain of new meanings, whose radical implications are politically or ideologically subversive.

✎ When talking about the subversive nature of this project, we need to know that the path chosen by its performers is the strategy of subversive affirmation. Subversive affirmation is a tactical procedure, common especially in political activism and artistic media activism, also known as activism.¹² Through affirmation, Inke Arns

¹² In Slovenia, Aldo Milohnić and Sylvia Sasse has written extensively about the phenomenon in "Artivism". write, "a distance is established from

the object of affirmation or its disclosure. With subversive affirmation, excess is always produced, which destabilizes affirmation and turns it into its opposite". The parasitic techniques of subversive affirmation are thus imitation, simulation, mimicry, and camouflage, and they follow the notion that "spectacle can only be undermined by taking it literally". The model or the object

of subversive affirmation is a readymade of sorts, yet, one with which the performer – in the process which Žižek describes as over-identification or excessive identification – identifies excessively, "fanatically", and with an investment that is inversely proportional to the critical distance towards the object (Arns, Sasse, p. 10).

23

In *The Janez Janša Project*, the strategy of subversive affirmation is certainly at work; however, the three Slovenian artists have also added an original dimension. We could first designate their act a subversive re-nomination or de-nomination, with the latter being a more appropriate term, for it implies the object's loss of value. Furthermore, we note that the artists achieve this effect in an almost passive manner, for the plan carries itself out by itself, by producing new meanings solely by appearing spontaneously in the media, with no additional special or planned activities. Since the name change, all three artists have been doing what they have always done, in the same way, and there is no evidence to the contrary; meanwhile their new names, in connection with their actions, produce new meanings. The following is important when considering this conclusion: if we ask ourselves how *The Janez Janša Project* is functioning or where its author is to be situated, we note that it is not to be found in any of the planned activities of the three artists (a plan or a concept can only be detected in their simultaneous decision to change their names into Janez Janša; see also n. 3), but rather in the media attention following their actions.

✎ Thus we can say that there is no stage or auditorium, there is no focused arena or space, where this activist manifesto would take place. We could argue that the

space of the act is the social body of the three artists, their “identitarian” sphere; however, the real space of *The Janez Janša Project* is a non-space, it is only a network of relations and relationships, into which the artists enter in their social and artistic lives. There is no space within; there is only an atmospheric vacuum, which can be assumed by various subjectivities. Thus, The Janez Janša Project is not unfolding in the manner of a performative event or realization, for with this project, for now, we can objectively identify only the moment of its beginning, that is, the moment of the change of name, when the news about three new owners of the name Janez Janša appeared in public (which happened due to media pressure and not at the will of the “performers”). Since then, the event has been in existence, as a permanent performance of sorts, but more precisely as a non-event. The viewer is not observing the performer, as is the case with performance art or body art, nor even his stand-in, as happens in various forms of technological performance; the viewer is watching his media representations.

The media are following the project mostly out of some sort of automatism, in agreement with their stated aim of reporting objectively about various events, including those in which the three artists called Janez Janša appear. It is to the artists’ advantage that the media coverage produces a certain buzz, which the artists might have even counted on and which stems from the undeniable subservience with which the media follow the figure and actions of Janez Janša. However, there have been no noticeable attempts to problematize the artists’ act in the media, and this is the whole point, of course: the act of changing one’s name becomes an event through the production of media

collisions, which are triggered precisely by the appearance of the name Janez Janša in new, completely unexpected contexts, such as “Janša dances in Berlin” (see, for instance, the report in *Delo*, 29th August 2007) or “Is Being Janez Janša an Art Form?” (*Dnevnik*, 28th August 2007). *The Janez Janša Project*, then, exploits the media reality and it enters this reality quite spontaneously and, at first sight, with no subversive intention (or, at least, in a significantly different way from the one deployed by, say, the guerrilla media projects by Joey Skaggs and the Critical Art Ensemble); it only becomes subversive through the collisions brought about by the appearances and actions of the three artists called Janez Janša. In so doing, the project undermines the real as well as the symbolic value of the name and its original owner; on the one hand, it imbues the name with spontaneous and critical irony, and on the other hand, it enables unexpected reactions (uncertainty, outrage, fear) and, perhaps most importantly, it divests the name of its symbolic power to such an extent that – as already suggested – it can offer this newly established void to someone else to fill up with new political ideological content.

✂ The concept of critical distance has proven completely ineffective. In a time governed by the mechanisms of power, that we call biopolitics (Foucault, 2003), it is impossible to be outside; action must start from within. The decision of the three artists, the realization of *The Janez Janša Project*, is indeed coming from within, from an intimate decision, and the change of name as a change of identity – from the artist’s body, so to speak – which is why the project can be understood as a form of body art (Amelia Jones defines manifestations of the self as performance, see *Body*). At the



Janez Janša, Janez Janša, Janez Janša
 6762260004368526154 (Bank Card), Ljubljana, 2007
 Expiration date: 2009 - 07
 Print on plastic, 5,4 x 8,5 cm
 Inscribed on the back side with black marker: Janša
 Property of Nova Ljubljanska banka, d.d., Ljubljana
 Courtesy: Aksioma

same time, it also reaches to the very core of the ideological system that it subverts by revealing its void; The Janez Janša Project is a “public performance of the obscene phantasmatic core of the ideological structure.” (Žižek, *Why*, p. 40)

Let’s conclude with two pitfalls of *The Janez Janša Project*. First, if the media decided to boycott the coverage of the activities of the three artists called Janez Janša for ideological reasons, the project would probably undergo a factual eclipse, at least in the public eye, for it would continue to operate on a purely intimate level of personal identity, as an invisible performance, and, in this case, the motivation for the project would probably gradually fade out. The second pitfall is the possibility of a planned, “orchestrated” functioning, which would try to run the project from without: this would entail the loss of spontaneity, which is currently driving the project and triggering those unexpected collisions and meanings. However, we have no way of knowing which direction the project will actually take, for it resembles the throw of a dice; we cannot imagine, for instance, what the ramifications of the impending parliamentary election will be for the project, where unplanned media coincidences could produce politically provocative – let’s refrain from predicting fatal – meanings and effects.¹³

The Janez Janša Project is thus, in addition to its physical dimensions, also a media event, or rather, a mediated event par excellence, for it is only through various forms of media representation that the project is fully realised. All three of its

performative, and the media or the mediated manifestation – can be best understood through the lens of contemporary biopolitics.

✎ The frame that the three artists undoubtedly penetrate, through an ostensibly spontaneous performative discourse, with their name change, is biopolitics – the forms of impact of sovereign power on bare life, which we can only observe in passing here. A despotic empire, according to Negri and Hardt, has no exterior; alternatives can only emerge from within where the subject is also situated. According to Agamben, however, the subject lacks voice; it reflects the failure of language and points to the gap between the effable and the ineffable, between the inside and the outside of language, between language as confession and language as archive. The subject is situated at the point of pure contingency of the emergence of language, and the possibility of the non-emergence of language is the basic presupposition of subjectification. The three artists called Janez Janša have thus, with their project, established the name as a form of biopolitical self-representation and, at the same time, as a series, in which their decision is marked less by the assumption of a new identity than by the erasure of the former one and the void of de-subjectification. Their act is an almost bodily sacrifice (if the name is a gift, which is given to us in a religious or civil ceremony, at the christening, the loss or the change of name constitutes its sacrifice), which incurs the loss of the referent and thus the loss of the symbolic value of its “model” or its forerunner in the series; in so doing, if we are entirely consistent, the act – through the use of the tactics of subversive affirmation – opens up a space for a new act, which will fill the void from within. This is not a matter of the aestheticization of

¹³ I am referring to the Slovenian parliamentary election, which is to be called in autumn 2008.

manifestations – that is, the intimate or the identitarian, the public or the politico-

politics, as understood by Rancière, who is aware that “art cannot simply territorialize the space which is left after the political conflict has receded. It must transform the space, at the cost of reconsidering the boundaries of its own politics.” (p. 9) It is also not a matter of the politicization of aesthetics which, according to Rancière, transpires in four different forms: the joke, the collection, the invitation, and mystery. Neither of these can be applied directly to our case, for both the aestheticization of politics and the politicization of aesthetics are marked by a delicate cosmetic contact between signifiers rather than by their rupture or collision in the battlefield of biopolitics.

With its complex investment, the project of the three artists poses the question of ideology; even more, it physically intervenes into it as a collective passive subject (in adopting the strategy of subversive affirmation, the artists have given up the role of the object), for the artists accept the fact that the play or the battle of signifiers will be fought literally on their skin, in the arena of their identities, which were fundamentally marked, even wounded, when they gave up their names. What is most important, however, is the fact that Hrvatin, Grassi, and Kariž a. k. a. Janša, Janša, and Janša offer, in this field, the possibility of political action, which is why our reflection – however protected by shame it may be – seems flawed in its very premise, for all it does is speak about the acts and actions from a safe distance. It is impossible to state clearly how fragile the artists’ bodies are revealed to be in this process, how vulnerable they are and what kinds of scars will be left by the ideology at the heart of this performative act. The playfulness of the project, which many perceive merely as a spur-of-the-moment

idea that counts on media response, is thus only a cover-up, concealing the project’s fundamental ideological subversiveness.

The self is the performance of interiority, a form of biopolitical self-representation. *The Janez Janša Project* undermines the structure of power from within, where it initiates itself through an almost procedural sacrifice and where it persists with extraordinary resistance. It is, however, more-or-less utopian to speak about the project as a genuine political alternative to the current powers-that-be, so what if we, rather, try to understand the project within the field of the politics of representation? *The Janez Janša Project* evades the representational aspect of the phenomenon, even though it falls squarely within the current notion of performativity, both in its “original” Schechnerian sense as well as in all of its new connotative senses, such as those added by Jon McKenzie (*Perform*). *The Janez Janša Project* is staged by reality itself and it is safeguarded by the infallible media attention. As such – to use a modernist expression – it is a *continuous work-in-progress*, an unstable formation, which does not strive for the establishment of its own stability and subjectification; on the contrary, its unconscious purpose is precisely destabilization and de-subjectification.

✂ Yet, this does not exhaust its meanings in the act of performative signification. By producing the series, the re-nomination has triggered another unstoppable process, that is, the process of emptying. However, the latter will be effective only if it is succeeded by a new – artistic, political, ideological – act and not only by the continuation of the series of Janez Janšas ad *infinitum* (although even such a continuation would not be meaningless); it needs to be succeeded

by an insight into the symbolic role of the “original” Janez Janša in the social network, a definition of this traumatic ideological core of the Slovenian society as empty, the emergence of critical positions, even more, the emergence of activist activities, and perhaps even – if we dare to speculate one more time – the emergence of a new political power, a party... In all this, it is, of course not Janez Janša, as a person, that is at stake here, but rather his role in the system that produced him – especially during his tenure as Prime Minister, (this problematic addition to society, as Foucault would say), during the time of the all but complete expansion of the political and ideological power. The strategies of subversive affirmation are not limited to totalitarian or repressive systems, although many of their original types were formed in such systems, but we would hard-pressed to say that they have in any way contributed to their demise or at least to the transition into a new, democratic system, where they could, ironically, become extinct at last. They represented – and they still do – the form of affirmative excommunication that is the subject of Agamben’s discussion; this affirmative excommunication opposes any societal contract which condemns, as Agamben says, “democracy to powerlessness every time we need to confront the problem of sovereign power, and which renders democracy constitutionally incapable of thinking politics outside the framework of the state in the modern era” (Homo, p. 120). Or, in Badiou’s words (The Subject), it is imperative for contemporary responsibility of artistic creation to find a new – third – subjective paradigm, which would not reflect the conflict between one form of power that is experimenting with the limits of pleasure and another form wielding the power of death (sacrifice in the name of an abstract

idea); rather, it would attempt to illuminate the obscurity of political determination by means of artistic determination.

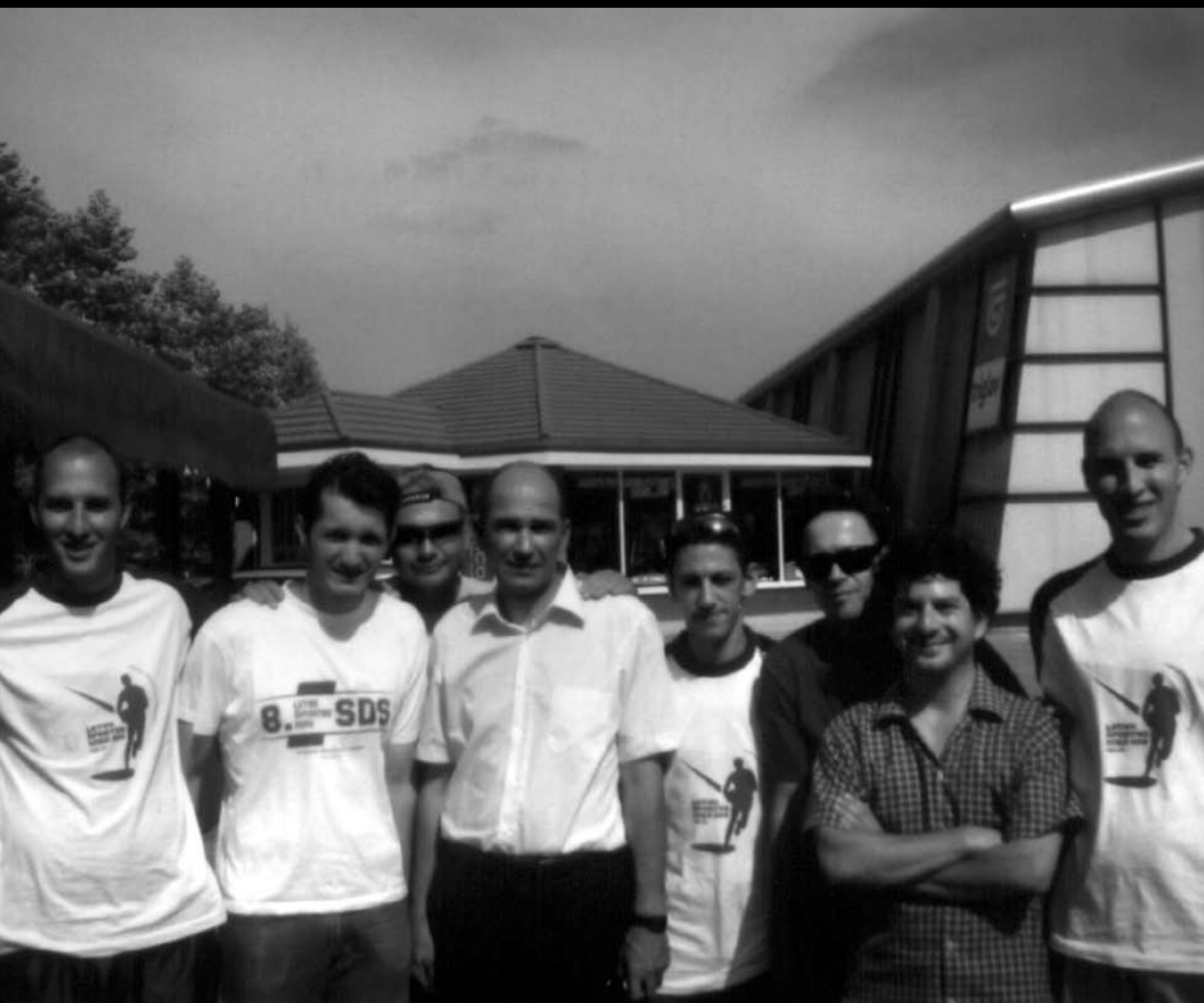
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Amelia Jones

Naming Power and the Power of the Name:
Janez Janša Performs the Political in/for the Art World



Janez Janša (prime minister, 4th from the left),
Janez Janša (6th from the left) and Janez Janša
(7th from the left) at the 9th Summer Sport
Games of the Slovene Democratic Party,
Celje, 2007
Photo: Janez Janša

NAMING/KNOWING

In the summer of 2007, three artists living in Ljubljana, Emil Hrvatin, Davide Grassi, and Žiga Kariž, changed their names to “Janez Janša,” the name of the Prime Minister of

Slovenia and leader of the SDS (Slovene Democratic Party). In doing so, the three artists made use of the power of the name to construct the subject as a source of agency. The three artists took proper bureaucratic measures to make this name change legally binding and they also became members of the SDS.¹ The artists have also proclaimed that this series of actions surrounding their mutual change of names was not a work of art.

There are now a number of Janez Janšas in Slovenia, three of whom are enacting events in unlikely contexts (including one of them getting married in a public ceremony in August with the other two acting as best

¹ According to most sources, the SDS has moved increasingly to the right since gaining power in the early 21st century; see the party's website <http://eng.sds.si/> for descriptions of their platform.

men) and causing trouble for the Prime Minister, who is also so identified by this name. At the same time, those of us in

the art world who might want to write about the work of, say, the artist formerly known as Hrvatin, no longer know who is who in this triumvirate's strange interventions—and how to refer to them, except perhaps (as I will here) as the collective “JJJ project.” 33

When I was growing up in a small city in North Carolina, my family and the children at school called me “Amy.” This was what my mother originally wanted to name me (our family name being “Jones,” which was then one of the two most common names in the USA), but veered away from this choice when the naming dictionary she consulted during her pregnancy in 1961 stated that Amy was a diminutive for “Amelia.” Being the rule-following sort, she and my father duly named me Amelia – and then proceeded to call me Amy. I knew this story, and from as far back as I can remember I questioned my parents’ bizarre insistence on following the rules only to break them.

As I grew up, I began to rethink my name (and thus, inevitably, to rethink myself). I was tired of people assuming I was joking when I told them my name (“Amy Jones” sounded like the most common name possible, something like “Juan López” in Mexico or “John Smith” in England); and I was also tired of learning that in my new environs, the North East of the USA, “Amy’s” were usually blond athletes, an image that didn’t suit me at all. I decided that, as a professional scholar, I would be better off reverting to my “real” name: Amelia Jones. The day I arrived at graduate school at the age of 24, I began to identify myself by this, my given name.

So Amelia Jones is what I began as. And it is what I have been compelled to return to. It is what I have had to become. Amelia Jones enacts me as a scholar, an art historian, one who is serious rather than (“Amy



Janez Janša, Janez Janša, Janez Janša
70434566 (*Slovenian Democratic
Party Membership Card*),
Ljubljana, 2007
Print on plastic, 5,4 x 8,5cm
Courtesy: Aksioma



Janez Janša, Janez Janša, Janez Janša
70434582 (*Slovenian Democratic
Party Membership Card*),
Ljubljana, 2007
Print on plastic, 5,4 x 8,5cm
Courtesy: Aksioma



Janez Janša, Janez Janša, Janez Janša
70434567 (*Slovenian Democratic
Party Membership Card*),
Ljubljana, 2007
Print on plastic, 5,4 x 8,5cm
Courtesy: Aksioma

Jones”) banal. This act of self-re-nomination reminded me of the power of the name not only as a way to lay claim to acts and expressions but also to enact a particular kind of subject.

NAMING AND NATIONHOOD

Right around the time I was going through this minor upheaval in my self-naming (c. 1985), Yugoslavia was in the throes of renaming itself – a renaming that was intimately linked with the shattering of political formations and the redrawing (sometimes to gruesomely bloody effect) of “national” boundaries. Marshal Tito, its illustrious leader, had decentralized the government of the state into an eight-man presidency by the mid 1970s, and yet still ran Yugoslavia as a dictatorship until his death in 1980 after 35 years of ruling the country. With the dissolution of the USSR in the late 1980s, Yugoslavia also disintegrated; this disintegration was galvanized, in

² The brief background I sketch here is embarrassingly over-simplified but necessary for “Euro-American” readers as I define this loose cultural concept here. My sources for this history are primarily Janez Janša, *The Making of the Slovenian State 1988-1992: The Collapse of Yugoslavia* (1992; reprint Ljubljana: Mladinska knjiga, 2007); and Laura Silber and Allan Little, *The Death of Yugoslavia* (London: Penguin Books and BBC Books, 1995).

part, by political interventions on the part of a group of leftist youth writing in the journal *Mladina*, and this group included a young firebrand named Ivan Janša, who was arrested along with three colleagues (the

“Ljubljana Four”) in 1988 for his activities.² As Janša rather breathlessly describes his (and his colleagues’) heroic resistance: The arrest came as a huge shock for me. Even though I had been aware for a long time that the (then) authorities viewed with displeasure our political activities

and initiatives for a new Constitution, freedom of speech and expression, ... our criticism of the YNA [Yugoslav People’s Army, the Communist military] and the League of Communists and, in the months before the arrest, our open support of the multi-party system, neither my friends nor I expected such a sharp reaction.³

Janša’s expression of shock at being arrested – despite obviously being familiar with the tactics of totalitarian regimes and also well aware of the dangerous shifting tides of power in Yugoslavia at the time (even given the relative moderation of the leadership of Milan Kučan)⁴ – reads as a calculated strategy for performing himself as a hero. Janez Janša – the name by which he would be known by in the public arena – performed the hero first as defense minister in Lojze Peterle’s government, then as the leading member of the centre-right Slovenian Democratic Party (SDS), and then, from 2004 to the present, as Prime Minister of Slovenia. Janša, in his transition from Ivan to Janez,

from radical young activist to right-wing leader, performs – *signs* – himself via the name as the embodiment of the newly “democratic” nation of Slovenia.⁵ In a sense, Janez Janša “is” contemporary Slovenia – or would, at least, like to be seen as such. As cited above, his autobiography, *The Making of the Slovenian State 1988-1992: The Collapse of Yugoslavia*, which

³ Janša, *The Making of the Slovenian State*, p. 17.

⁴ In the late 1980s, Kučan was the leader of the Communist Party, and was nominally responsible for arresting Janša. Kučan became the first president of independent Slovenia in the early 1990s, with Lojze Peterle as Prime Minister. Janša served as defense minister in Peterle’s cabinet.

⁵ While favouring some liberal social policies such as same-sex civil unions, the SDS is pro-business and follows the Reaganite policy of devolving power to local governments, reducing funding for federal social programs. From the point of view of an American, Slovenia perfectly exemplifies the corruption of the notion of “democracy” in US-inspired (or US-forced, as in Iraq) initiatives around the globe.

poses as a history of modern Slovenia via his own diary entries and descriptions (thus, to some extent, collapsing Slovenia into Janez Janša), makes this much clear. As Janša retells the history of contemporary Slovenia as the history of his heroic participation

in the events resulting in the overthrow of the former Yugoslavia and the repulsion of Serbian aggression, His project raises the question of how histories are written, and how they – seemingly inevitably – get attached to “great names” (usually those of

TRIGLAV, NAŠ MOST

*kulturna prireditev v Triglavskem domu na Kredarici
v soboto, 4. avgusta 2007, ob cca 20.30*

ob

- 80. obletnici smrti Jakoba Aljaža,
- 33. obletnici Pešpoti z Vrhnik na Triglav,
- 5. obletnici Pešpoti z Vrbskega jezera preko Triglava do Bohinjskega jezera,
- 25. obletnici izhajanja Nove revije in
- 20. obletnici 57. številke Nove revije, temeljne publikacije SLOVENSKE POMLADI in
- 16. obletnici slovenske države.

Sodelovali bodo:

Pevci Bratje Smrtnik z avstrijske Koroške
Mili Hrovat, koroška pesnica
Logaški oktet
Jernej Kuntner, igralec
Tone Kuntner, igralec in pesnik
Tomaž Plahutnik, citrar
Marko Kobal, operni pevec
Kulturno – umetniško društvo Stara Vrhnika

DOM PLANIKA
 POD TRIGLAVOM
 2408 m

TRIGLAV, NAŠ MOST

Program of the commemoration of the 80th anniversary of the death of Jakob Aljaž; the 33rd anniversary of the Footpath from Vrhnik to Mount Triglav; the 5th anniversary of the Footpath from the Wörthersee Lake across Mount Triglav to the Bohinj Lake; the 25th anniversary of the publication of *Nova revija* magazine and the 20th anniversary of the 57th issue of *Nova revija*, the premiere publication of the SLOVENIAN SPRING; and the 16th anniversary of the independent state of Slovenia,
 Dom Planika, 2007

men who have access to the public visibility and agency that allows them to determine shifts in national or international affairs and then to ensure the documentation of these shifts in history).

Paralleling Prime Minister Janša's hijacking of history, the JJJ project adopts the name of power to retrieve a particular history of Slovenian contemporary art. In their 2007 *Mount Triglav* on *Mount Triglav* work, for example, the three artists reenacted a famous 1968 happening that was originally performed by the Slovenian OHO group (Milenko Matanovič, David Nez, Drago Dellabernardina) in the main square of Ljubljana and had already been recreated in 2004 by the internationally-known Slovenian artists' collective Irwin, as part of their 2003-4 project *Like to Like*.⁶ As Miško Šuvakovič notes in this volume, all three of these "Mount Triglav" projects "are the most radical executions of the *politically sliding sign*, that is, individual explanations of symptoms of Slovene identity and, more importantly, the historical construction and reconstruction of political identities."⁷ From the OHO project onward, the works are acts of *naming* that are at once individual (three men pose as "Mount Triglav", the mountain

⁶ Notably, the original OHO group members were of different nationalities; the same holds for the three artists who have renamed themselves Janez Janša (who are of Croatian, Italian, and Slovene origin). See "Irwin: Like to Like," on the NSK website for the complex way in which Irwin's project references OHO's practice but also their own past work: <http://www.nskstate.com/irwin/works-projects/liketolike.php>; accessed 22nd June 2008.

⁷ Šuvakovič, "3 x Triglav: Controversies and Problems regarding Mount Triglav", see in this volume, pp. 67-74.

that looks like three heads or "*tri glav[e]*" and is associated with the history and culture of Slovenia), collective (artists working as a team), and "national" (performing themselves in relation to symbols designating nationhood via an identification with

the Slovenian landscape).

As previously noted, Šuvakovič suggests that the national is a construct comprised of "politically sliding signs", and with each of the three enactments of "Mount Triglav", this sliding sign means something different. OHO performed their piece during a period in which Western Europe was in political turmoil, with students rising up in socialist revolutions. In the midst of this, OHO posed in a central square in Ljubljana as a traditional Slovenian monument, paradoxically literalizing a crucial signifier of "national" identity during a time in which Slovenia was not considered a political entity in its own right. Long after the official constitution of Slovenia as an independent nation but also after the idealism of the break from Yugoslavia had dissipated with the move of figures such as (Prime Minister) Janša to the right, the Irwin collective borrowed and reconstituted past works in order to put them into new contexts.⁸ In their "Like to Like" series they reconstituted the earlier actions and projects of OHO in various landscapes and exhibited aestheticized framed photographs of the actions, thus exacerbating the tension between the ephemeral politicized act and the fetish – the document that comes to stand in for it and that can become a commodity on the art market. Šuvakovič points out that Irwin deliberately turned OHO's conceptual performance into a fetish, commenting on the fetish status of the mountain itself as a sign of "national" identity.⁹

The JJJ project intervenes in this history at a new moment (or perhaps they have created a new moment as they play out new relations

⁸ Irwin describes their basic working method as the "Retro-Principle," which involves recombining elements from fine art and mass produced images; see "Irwin: Like to Like."

⁹ Šuvakovič, "3 x Triglav, pp. 67-74."

among the individual, the collective, and the state or between the nation and its symbols). The JJJ project engages past Slovenian works that had already intervened in these relations, and in so doing produces a new thing: an art-historical staging of nationhood as a lineage of past works leading to the present-day Slovenia. Posing “as” the mountain at the mountain itself – staging themselves in a way that informed Slovenes would understand is connected to the earlier art histories of OHO and Irwin – the JJJ project also produces a glossy photograph that reads as an artwork but also as tourist photo or (aside from the absurdity of the three men standing with their heads poking out from under a large piece of dark fabric) as part of an advertising brochure for Slovenian holiday pleasures. The JJJ project’s *Mount Triglav on Mount Triglav* marks the slippage between the symbolic and the “real”: the mountain itself has no significance; it has to be *transformed into culture*, through an act of appropriation, in order to signify the Slovene nation.

It is through the exploring and working through of such signs, both proper names and other labels, that identities (from individual to collective to national) are enacted as *identifications*. Rather than “illustrating” the Slovenian nation by claiming its coherence in relation to one’s own heroism (as Janez Janša does in his autobiography), the JJJ project presents Slovenia as a shifting ideological nexus taking shape through a process of encouraging individuals to identify with a network of ideas, visual and textual codes that are neither true nor false but, instead, cumulatively enact what the country now comes to mean for its inhabitants and others looking at it from the outside. Rather than disavowing their role in this (art) history of sign/nation-making, this history of producing Slovenia as a nation tied to

the image of its most recognizable natural landmark, the JJJ project embraces it, but in so doing it also opens up gaps in this process of nation formation, gaps in how the sign (“Slovenia” or “Mount Triglav”) functions. If the OHO happening indicated a hope for political change, and the Irwin project was a nod to the failure of such past idealisms (after all, they blatantly appropriate a political act and make it into a commodifiable fetish or work of art), then the JJJ project marks the performative process of *naming* as central to the way in which political, cultural, and social identifications take place. As such, a name – such as Janez Janša – can potentially be shifted to new arenas of signification.

After all, it is “Janez Janša” (times 3) who produces this glorious image of Slovenia’s entry into political history – as a legitimate state and a member of the European Union since 2004. Perhaps the irony that they are darkly pointing to is that it was precisely upon entry into the E.U. (the supposed front of democracy and liberal social policies) that Janša took over and turned the SDS party to the right.

THE LAW OF NAMING

Art historian Molly Nesbit has noted that in 1957 (just before this sequence of affairs in the naming of Amelia Jones occurred, and at the height of the Cold War in which Yugoslavia was only tangentially implicated since Tito wisely kept independent of the USSR), a law was passed in France securing a broad concept of legal authorship pivoting around the name as guarantor of the ownership of “work of the mind,” including books and art works. As this law of 11 March 1957 states, the author was to enjoy the right of protection “with respect to his name, his quality, and his work. This right is attached to

¹⁰ *Loi 11 Mars 1957*, as cited (and translated) by Molly Nesbit, "What Was an Author?," *Yale French Studies* 73 (1988), 238.

known via his name, is conflated with his art work: "I just bought a Jackson Pollock!").

As the groundbreaking study of French copyright law by Bernard Edelman makes clear, the 1957 law marked authorship, via the name, in terms of capital; the subject of making – the "person" who makes the work and has the "right" to it, or rather the right to make money from it – is indicated in a legal sense via a name which functions, more or less, as a sign of copyright or

¹¹ See Edelman's important 1973 book *Le droit saisi par la photographie*, translated into English in 1979 as *Ownership of the Image: Elements for a Marxist Theory of Law*, tr. Barbara Kingdom (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul).

¹² While my original family and very old friends still call me "Amy," I answer to it only because I know intellectually they are talking to me—not because Amy indicates in any way who I feel myself to be.

something, but it is a completely unreliable one, as the brief anecdote of my own naming "problem" indicates.¹²

The name is not a final indicator, then, but a process through which we make ourselves into what we believe ourselves to be; or else the name indicates how we want to be known, as in the multiple cases of Janez Janša. The legal name is given copyright status in order to refer what is said (or written or created) back to a subject; in this case the name refers back to the "origin" of the "democratic" Slovenian state. In Euro-American culture, the name functions as part of the process Martin Heidegger

his person."¹⁰ Within copyright law, the name is the person; (just as, within art discourse, the artist,

effectively, I would argue, as a logo.¹¹ In Euro-American culture (roughly speaking, the culture of Western Europe and its inheriting dominant cultures in North America), the name is a guarantor, pointing to a person or an agent who made

identified as characteristic of the modern age, whereby "man becomes subject" by producing the world "as a picture." The modern age (clearly European in Heidegger's own world picture) is thus characterized by the development of the notion of the subject as being in a particular position in relation to things, the world, knowledge: "Man makes depend upon himself the way in which he must take his stand in relation to whatever is as the objective. There begins that way of being human which... [means] the realm of human capability as a domain given over to measuring and executing, for the purpose of gaining mastery over that which is as a whole."¹³ The legal name is a word that indicates – in a limited, over-determined, and yet never fully-fixed way – that the person so labeled is an origin (of his own location, usually; in the case of Janez Janša the Prime Minister, of an entire nation) and that the person is at the apex of a (particular) world picture.

The name is also marked, conditioned by the vicissitudes of the beliefs that inform the culture from whence it is issued (legally-determined as a sign of ownership). As Euro-American feminists and philosophers (including Peggy Kamuf and Jacques Derrida) have pointed out, the traditional Euro-American patronym in particular (such as Jones) is put in place out of masculine anxiety about the connection between the body of the father, his transferable seed, and the body of the mother who begets the baby that must be named. The patronym, Derrida insists, is thus really a sign of absence, loss, or *death*.¹⁴ Kamuf amplifies this point, noting melancholically that, when I sign, "I am already dead because, according to the inexorable logic of the deictic or

REPUBLICA SLOVENIJA
UPRAVNA ENOTA
LJUBLJANA

Taksa po tarifni št.A.1. ZUT v znesku 1,06 EUR je
plačana

IZPISEK IZ MATIČNEGA REGISTRA O ROJSTVU

Preimek	Janša	
Ime	Janez	
EMSO	0712970500723	Spol M
Datum rojstva	07.12.1970	
Kraj rojstva	Italija, Bergamo	
Državljanstvo	Slovenija	

Podatki o starših

Mati	Preimek	Giuliani
	Ime	Sivana
Oče	Preimek	Grassi
	Ime	Sergio

Poznejši vpisi:

Šifra: 2007/7225

Datum: 03.08.2007

R00174554 MAT/REG-1


 Hočevar Vojka
 Preimek in ime matičarja

Janez Janša, Janez Janša, Janez Janša
 R00174554 (Birth Certificate), Ljubljana, 2007
 Print on paper, 29,7 x 21 cm
 Courtesy: Aksioma

REPUBLICA SLOVENIJA
UPRAVNA ENOTA
LJUBLJANA

Taksapo tarifni št.4.1. ZUT v znesku 1,06 EUR je
plačana

IZPISEK IZ MATIČNEGA REGISTRA O ROJSTVU

Primek	Janša		
Ime	Janez		
EMSO	0602964362319	Spol	M
Datum rojstva	06.02.1964		
Kraj rojstva	Hrvaška, Rijeka		
Državljanstvo	Slovenija		
Podatki o starših			
Mati	Primek	Hrvatini	
	Ime	Ema	
Oče	Primek	Hrvatini	
	Ime	Vito	


Poznejši vpisi:
Sklenil zakonsko zvezo dne 17.11.1990.
Zakonec: Bašić Hrvatini Sandra


Šifra: 7053
Datum: 30.07.2007

R00174632 MAT/REG-1

Primek in ime matičarja
Debeljak Maja

Janez Janša, Janez Janša, Janez Janša
R00174632 (Birth Certificate), Ljubljana, 2007
Print on paper, 29,7 x 21 cm
Courtesy: Aksioma


 REPUBLIKA SLOVENIJA
 UPRAVNA ENOTA
 LJUBLJANA



Po 32. točki 28. člena Zakona o upravnih taksah
 (Uradni list RS, št. 42/07 - uradno prečiščeno
 besedilo, 128/07) oproščeno takse.

IZPISEK IZ MATIČNEGA REGISTRA O ROJSTVU

Primek	Janša		
Ime	Janez		
EMŠO	2805973500487	Spot	M
Datum rojstva	28.05.1973, 12:40		
Kraj rojstva	Ljubljana		
Državljanstvo	Slovenije		


Podatki o starših

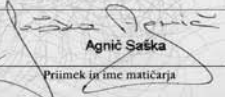
Mati	Primek	Kariž
	Ime	Nuša
Oče	Primek	Kariž
	Ime	Andrej

Poznejši vpisi:

Šifra: 2008

Datum: 05.09.2008




 Agnė Saška
 Primek in ime matičarja

R00255017 MAT/REG-1

Janez Janša, Janez Janša, Janez Janša
 R00255017 (Birth Certificate), Ljubljana, 2007
 Print on paper, 29,7 x 21 cm
 Courtesy: Aksioma

shifter, its singular referent – me – will have already submitted to the requirement of its generalization in order to signify itself... 'I' spells the death of me; it is already the effacement of a singular nature...¹⁴

The father (as a concept, signifying origins) motivates all naming in the Euro-American context, with the patronym a perfect example of a state-sanctioned performance of paternal certainty (in the face of its absence: before DNA testing, the man had to claim his offspring via the patronym for he could never be sure...). Women cannot figure in the patriarchal system of naming without forcing themselves on it, adopting the patronym and with it the accoutrements of masculinity it confers but only to the woman via a temporary loan which has its costs (Mrs. Margaret Thatcher, née Roberts, comes to mind). Within Euro-American culture, the proper name, the patronym, is tenuous on two accounts: it is both a feeble guarantor of copyright or legal "ownership"

¹⁴ Derrida notes, "the patronym is... 'the name of my death, of my dead life'; "Otobiographies: The Teaching of Nietzsche and the Politics of the Proper Name," tr. Avital Ronell, *The Ear of the Other: Otobiography, Transference, Translation*, ed. Christie McDonald (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1982/1985), p. 16. Importantly, Derrida's understanding of the name unhinges popular (and art historical) beliefs about intentionality; the author of any note (whose work remains) inevitably dies before his name, giving the lie to our impulse to excavate her intentionality. "It is not a question of knowing what he would have thought, wanted, or done," p. 29.

¹⁵ Kamuf, *Signature Pieces: On the Institution of Authorship* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1988), p. 5.

of creative products, which needs a body of law to sustain its authority, and a questionable means of claiming paternity in the face of its weak claim to ownership (of the woman's body; of the child). Unless women nominate and/or perform themselves as "masculine" (viz. "Mrs. Thatcher") both of the structures that keep the patronym in power also keep women out of structures of legal

and state power.

Whether one is a feminist, an anti-racist activist, a Marxist, a queer theorist, or all of the above, reiterating the proper name – "Amelia Jones, art historian, author of this text" – is, as Derrida suggests, to succumb to Euro-American structures of belief, which are patriarchal and fundamentally linked to capitalism. The concept that we "own" what we make is both patriarchal (I sign with the patronym of my father to claim ownership in the face of the fact that I cannot in anyway link this text to my "self" in perpetuity: my "paternity" is suspect) and capitalist (many artists and writers join "rights" agencies such as ARS – Artists [sic] Rights Society – in order to protect their economic interests, only to find they are funding corporate interests rather than accruing wealth on the basis of their name and its copyrighted products¹⁶). We are caught in a catch 22: we can't avoid the name (viz. the debacle of the "artist formerly known as Prince"¹⁷), but

neither can we gain control of its effects and capacity to confer power (or disgrace - as with Oscar Wilde in 1895, disgraced and his name sullied, no longer a signifier of dandy-esque wit but of depravity).

In contrast to these structures of belief Derrida offers critical and philosophical skepticism; the author is supposedly served by copyright law but she actually subordinates herself to it in order to

¹⁶ See the Artists Rights Society website: <http://www.arsny.com/>. Unfortunately these agencies end up benefiting the corporation rather than the artist, who gets a pittance of the fees charged to reproduce her or his work. Meanwhile the scholar must pay *out of pocket* to cover these fees in order to publish articles reproducing works by artists "represented" by the agency in academic journals or with academic presses. Who is benefiting from this permutation of copyright law? Certainly not individual "authors".

¹⁷ The rock star Prince changed his name to a cipher in 1993, only to find that the media had to resort to calling him "the man formerly known as Prince", thus exacerbating rather than reducing the power of the name. He gave in and returned to the name Prince in 2000.

imagine her “work” is secured by her “name” and thus finds herself losing the financial value attached to her products to the bureaucracy of copyright-mongers (agencies or copyright lawyers), while also restricting who can say what about the images or words attached to her name. While the author may try to control the meaning and value of her work, the author as a subject with agency means little in the long-term, losing contact with the work as soon as she produces the work. The author’s “intentionality” is lost even as she moves her hand across the page or programs the digital projector. Her signature becomes itself a “dead” weight, an indexical mark of her having been there, a signifier without clear referent (other than the array of ideas, places, people, or values associated with that name: for example, “Georgia O’Keeffe” ← → New Mexico ← → Alfred Stieglitz: the patronym returns...).

Rather than securing a relationship to her true meaning as a subject, her true original intentions in making the work, the signature (the name) always already fails to deliver. Derrida stresses that once the author puts the work forth she is no longer the signatory; the author, rather, becomes, “the addressee who signs.” There is, then, no “origin” to return to nor are there “precursors” who can be summoned as “influences” to secure our interpretation of the work (paradoxically, via our excavation of the author’s own “intentions”): “This is precisely the paradox of the proper name or the signature. It’s always the same thing, but each time it’s different; each time it’s a different history to which one must pay close attention.”¹⁸ Janez Janša. Janez Janša. Janez Janša.

Kamuf notes that the name as guarantor of the work functions in a contradictory fashion, whether one is a formalist, who believes that the work inherently expresses

the author’s intentions and thoughts through its structures or forms, or one is a historian, who claims external context is key in understanding the meaning and value of the work:

In the first case, which is that of formalism, the signature is supposed to sign from within the work; the text thus encloses it and erects it as monument. If, however, the signature belongs to the inside, it can no longer appropriate the work, the monument remembers nothing outside itself, filiation is lost, and the thread of memory cannot be retraced. In the second case, which is that of historicism, the signature is supposed to sign from outside, the work stands apart and on its own, as if no singular, finite or limiting existence had had a hand in its realization.¹⁹

These are similar to the terms Derrida sketches in his famous essay “Signature Event Context” (1971), in which he explores how the written or made mark points us back to the authorial subject but, at the same time, always fails to deliver this subject. Writing or making art is an act of representation that “supplements presence” but never delivers it.²⁰ Most profoundly, Derrida notes that any kind of mark making is inexorably linked to the absence at the heart of human existence (we make as a communicative act, to mark our “presence” even as it slips away): “The sign is born at the same time as imagination and memory, at the moment when it is

demanding by the absence of the object for present perception.”²¹ This evocation of the power of the name (of the signature) to indicate “presence”

¹⁸ Derrida, “*Otobiographies*,” pp. 79, 84-5.

¹⁹ Kamuf, *Signature Pieces*, p.p. 13-14.

²⁰ Derrida, “Signature Event Context” (1971), in , tr. Alan Bass (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982); p. 313.

²¹ *Ibid*, p. 314

in the face of the subject's absence is also a crucial exploration of the impossible possibility of "context" as a means of defining what marks mean (in Kamuf's terms, of knowing the "history" that is, the cultural pressures, that supposedly informed the act). The written sign comes from its context and yet inevitably "carries with it a force of breaking with its context, that is, the set of presences which organize the moment of its inscription." By breaking with its moment of inscription – by *drifting* – the act of mark making affords the possibility of communicating the sign "by inscribing or *grafting* it onto other chains. No context can enclose it."²²

Derrida's essay is clearly also a study of how mark making functions across time (we might in fact look to it as a model for how to do art history, literary history, or cultural history in general). In order to communicate, as he notes, the mark must be

²² *Ibid.*, p. 317. recognizable, having

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 315. been made before and capable of being

made again (it must be *iterable*) and yet it is fundamentally "new" in each instance. It is both identical and never-before enacted, each time; it is both the same and radically different. Iterability, Derrida notes, comes from the word *iter* (once again) which in turn comes from the Sanskrit *itera* (or *other*).²³ To be repeated is to be at once radically incommensurate with the first instance and to be "the same," recognizable as its copy. Like Janez Janša?

This sums up the conundrum of representation which Euro-American postmodern theory took on with particular alacrity in the 1980s – the time in which one Ivan (Janez) Janša was being arrested and performing himself as a radical irritant to the then-Yugoslavian state.

SIGNATURE EVENT CONTEXT

In 1980s Yugoslavia, in the area that was soon to become the independent nation of "Slovenia," a group of artists, musicians, and theatre practitioners developed the *Neue Slovenische Kunst* (NSK) collective. Internationally, the best known arm of this collective is the group Laibach, the members of which adopted the accoutrements of Nazi Germany while playing music meshing a range of styles from industrial heavy metal to neo-classical and repetitively enacting in their videos clichéd Christian imagery (associated with traditional culture in Slovenia, which was historically the most conservative and Christian area in the Balkans).²⁴ The self-proclaimed Slovenian "monumental retro-avantgarde" of the NSK produced a founding manifesto stating:

We proclaim that copies have never existed and we recommend painting from pictures painted before our times. We claim that art cannot be judged from the viewpoint of time. We acknowledge the usefulness of all styles for the expression of our art, those past as well as present.²⁵

Refusing iteration while mimicking mid-century fascists, Laibach and their

colleagues intervene in postmodern discourse in a way incomprehensible outside the "context" of 1980s Ljubljana – but, as Derrida's theory convincingly indicates, this "context" cannot be fully known, and it cannot be retrieved as somehow "outside" their

²⁴ See Silber and Little, *The Death of Yugoslavia*, p. 49.

²⁵ Cited by Pil and Gallia Kollectiv, "RETRO/NECRO: From Beyond the Grave of the Politics of Re-Enactment," in *Art Papers* 20 (2007), on-line version: <http://www.kollectiv.co.uk/Art%20Papers%20feature/reenactment/retro-necro.htm>, accessed 26th May 2008. See also the excellent history of NSK in "NSK 2000?," Joanne Richardson interviews Irwin and Eda Čufer, *Subsol* (January 2000, Ljubljana), available on-line at http://subsol.c3.hu/subsol_2/contributors/nsktext.html; accessed 16th June 2008.

cultural practice, telling us what it “means”. And yet, one (a UK-based American scholar such as myself, for example) certainly must take some understanding of the situation in Slovenia into account when thinking about Laibach and the NSK in general inasmuch as Ljubljana is not New York City, where most of the dominant discourses about postmodernism in the visual arts were generated and reified. In the US, the 1960s and 1970s were characterized by social upheaval and a disastrous recession; American cities had their vital centres hollowed-out by suburbanization and the collapse of the industrial base. During the 1980s the US economy was being restructured by Reaganomics and its viciously classist “trickle-down” policy, which eviscerated social programs and made the rich richer and the poor poorer. Big cities like New York were in the early throes of gentrification and urban renewal, which put artists in a highly compromised position in relation to state power and corporate money. While New York was becoming restructured by late-capitalist values, Slovenia was undergoing a massive transformation from a socialist republic into a newly capitalist nation, with Janez Janša at the forefront of a successful youth rebellion.

These are two vastly different cultural systems: the “democratic,” post-industrialized late capitalism of the USA – a culture driven by corporate interests in which artists are small cogs in a massive machine facilitating the circulation of capital – versus the shifting socialism of Yugoslavia which led into the right-of-centre representative “democracy” of today’s Slovenia. In the latter situation, artists and intellectuals had been used to an environment in which they had either to take state funds to produce state-sanctioned cultural products or to work in covert ways

to strategize alternatives. These two systems have produced entirely different relations between artists and state or corporate power, and thus two different models of critical practice and two different ways of claiming agency and relating to the patronym. The dominant Euro-American model is linked to the historic avant-gardes of the 1910s and 1920s as theorized by Peter Bürger in his 1974 *Theory of the Avant-Garde*, a study that was influential in 1970s and 1980s debates about postmodernism in art discourse – where many critics and art historians sought to challenge the stronghold of Greenbergian formalism in Euro-American modernism. The historic avant-gardes in this model – which postmodern theorists and artists advocated adopting in the 1980s particularly in debates centering in New York City and London – drew on strategies of “making strange” (from Russian formalism’s *ostranenie*), calling upon artists to employ “disidentificatory” methods of “shocking” the viewer, and on models of “critiquing” institutions by appropriating aspects of advertising culture in order to disrupt expectations as US postmodernism claimed to do. The new postmodern avant-gardes were to challenge existing value systems by appropriating the visual language of, say, advertising but reframing it in order to distance the viewer. As one of the most astute theorists of this mode of art-making, British feminist art historian Griselda Pollock, argued at the time, “[d]isidentificatory practices refer to the strategies for displacing the spectator from identifying with the illusory fictional worlds offered in art, literature and film disrupting the ‘dance of ideology’ which engages us on behalf of oppressive regimes of class, sexist, heterosexist and racist classifications and placements.”²⁶

²⁶ Pollock, "Screening the seventies; sexuality and representation in feminist practice—a Brechtian perspective," *Vision and Difference: Femininity, Feminism and the Histories of Art* (New York and London: Routledge, 1988), p. 158.

²⁷ See Hal Foster's reification of this binary in his "The Crux of Minimalism," *Individuals: A Selected History of Contemporary Art* (Los Angeles: Museum of Contemporary Art; and New York: Cross River Press, 1986), pp. 162-183; I discuss this binarization at length in my book *Irrational Modernism: A Neurasthenic History of New York Dada* (Cambridge, Massachusetts and London: MIT Press, 2004), p. 21.

of a double binary between the masculine and the feminine and between the feminist and the patriarchal values she must "critique" through oppositional practice.

Because of its roots in Tito's "soft" totalitarianism, Slovenian culture demands an entirely different mode of articulating the artist's relationship to power. After all, cutting-edge artists had gone underground during the Yugoslavian period, "sitting in apartments" to develop alternative ways of "forming a community".²⁸ They could hardly be expected to "critique" or hope to overthrow the government or its economic value systems through strategies of "distanciation", which could only be imagined to have critical value in a late-capitalist

²⁸ This is NSK member Borut Vogelnik in Joanne Richardson, "Interview: Neue Slowenische Kunst: Miran Mohar, Borut Vogelnik and Eda Čufer (Budapest, May 2000), published at *Art Margins*, at <http://www.artmargins.com/content/interview/richardson2.html>; accessed 18th June, 2008.

Euro-American postmodern avant-gardism, then, was a refinement of a particular concept of the earlier twentieth-century European avant-gardes.

Particularly with its feminist variants, this kind of avant-gardism pivoted around a binary, of "progressive" versus "regressive" practices.²⁷ In the case of feminism, this takes the form

Soviet bloc. Rather than a simple opposition to the monolithic state, Slovenian artists – since the reclaiming of Slovenia as a separate nation from the 1980s onward – have shrewdly articulated a nuanced relationship to power. As NSK member Miran Mohar has noted of the difference in their practice as opposed to Euro-American avant-gardism, "[In the Euro-American model there is a] permanent conflict between avant-garde and tradition. It is important to stress that [by contrast] our position from the beginning has not been to operate against existing institutions, or outside these institutions, but to create a parallel institution."²⁹ One way of achieving the latter is to take on the accoutrements of power to enact them otherwise, as with the JJJ project.

Slovenian philosopher Slavoj Žižek has characterized Laibach's work in particular as taking its critical power not from "distancing" or other strategies associated with the Euro-American models of avant-gardism but from a strategy of "overidentification" that is completely at odds with these models. Rather than "critiquing" state power, the artists in Laibach, as Žižek argues, thus overidentified with fascist gestures and accoutrements in order to expose the otherwise invisible, hidden underside of fading Yugoslavian models of totalitarianism (with its links to Hitler's and Stalin's brutal stylizing of state power). Historian Alexei Monroe also notes of the NSK group's practice, in general, that they articulated a "retrogardism" that "attempts to free the present and change the future via the reworking of past utopianisms and historical wounds."³⁰ This retrogardism leads us back (or forward) to the JJJ project, which resonates in terms of this complex history of Slovenian culture.

The Derridean “Signature Event Context...” of the JJJ project can never be pinned down or fully understood as explanatory of what their complex gesture of self-naming signifies.

But, at the very least, someone exploring it from the vantage point of Euro-American culture should make an attempt to sketch the bare bones of how the radical differences and subtle “sameness” of the iteration of the name in the Slovenian context means at this point in time. Clearly the JJJ project cannot be viewed as simply an attempt on the part

³⁰ Alexei Monroe, *Interrogation Machine: Laibach and NSK* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 2005), p. 120; cited by Pil and Gallia Kolektiv in “RETRO/NECRO.”

³¹ Interestingly, Čufer uses the term “identification” rather than “overidentification” but the sense is the same as Žižek’s elaborated term, which, this interview makes clear, was articulated in relation to the practice of NSK members, who had been attending the “Slovenian Lacanian School” lectures and were in dialogue with Žižek during this period. See “NSK 2000?,” Richardson interviews Irwin and Eda Čufer.

NSK strategies noted above, summarized in the words of NSK member Eda Čufer, “[Over-i]dentification, mimicking, rewriting something always brings a new moment, insight, or perception...”³¹

Derrida notes in “Signature Event Context” that “the sign is born at the same time as imagination and memory, at the moment when it is demanded by the absence of the object for present perception.”³² Signing—communication, and the establishment of the subject as one who “speaks”—takes

place through this constellation of forces. With their performance work *Signature Event Context* at the Holocaust Memorial in Berlin in 2008 the JJJ project most recently addressed Derrida’s points in relation to memorials as engaging each visitor in an act of remembrance.³³ Citing Derrida from his essay on the “empirical non-presence of the signer,” JJJ enacted themselves as traces in a haunted space. Each Janša overidentified with the mournful significance of the site itself as well as with their namesake’s and those named otherwise, navigating a path through the memorial using a GPS device, while chanting

continuously (in Slovenian) “My name is Janez Janša.” Speaking himself as Janša, each of these creative subjects marks his “presence” but as *an other* (or, as Derrida puts it, his presence as

³² Derrida, “Signature Event Context,” p. 314.

³³ The performance was scheduled for the opening evening of Transmediale.08 on January 29th, 2008 in Berlin but the piece was cancelled by the artistic director of the festival, Stephen Kovats, and the guest curator, Nataša Petrešin Bachelez. Documentation and recording relating to the work are available at www.aksioma.org/sec.

absence, his “identity” as *radical difference*). Or, rather, each performs as himself, but renamed as the Prime Minister of Slovenia. Or, is each taking the name away from the Prime Minister and enacting Janez Janša as something else entirely? What does the memorial (and the name) mean if it is taken away from its original referent and enacted otherwise by subjects who say they are someone (else) whose identity they have taking on deliberately through appropriating his name? They sign themselves vocally, making the memorial into (perhaps) a site of mourning for the death of idealism (as well as the death of those persecuted in the Holocaust); a site of mourning over Janez Janša’s own

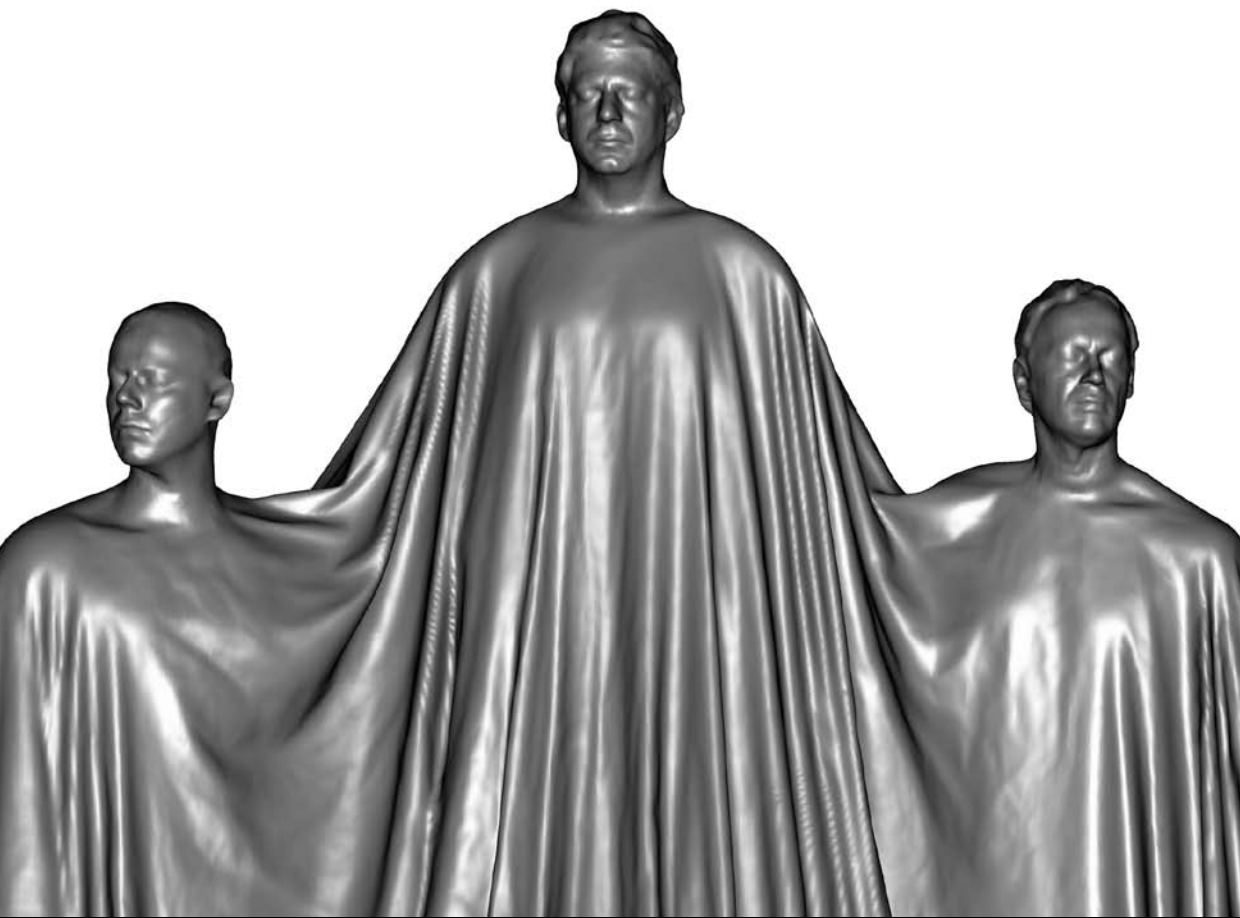
transformation from one type of subject (left wing agitator) to another (oppressor, bureaucrat).

It is, of course, a false project to over-interpret – to give some kind of final meaning to this complex act of naming, walking, chanting, finding a way through a complex social space of memory and loss. The JJJ projects thus beg some crucial questions not just about the power of the name to confer power or disgrace, to enact subjects as agents (origins of “world pictures”) or as objects of oppression, but also about the ways in which culture functions in a time when binaries no longer have purchase, in a time in which global networks of capital, information,

and power over-determine meaning and value even as they undermine any possibility of fixing either. In borrowing names and past cultural gestures, the JJJ project marks the making of histories in a critical way, highlighting the fact that they *take place through acts of enunciation and bodily comportment*, the results of which are never secure and never final. This may be the most potent (or, indeed, the only potent) avenue of “critique” open to cultural workers today – an avenue that is not “oppositional” but “overidentificatory,” always already penetrated with absence, with the debased and debasing values of late capitalism, with loss.

Zdenka Badovinac

What Is the Importance of Being Janez?



Janez Janša, Janez Janša, Janez Janša
Study for the *Monument to the National
Contemporary Art (Golden Triglav)*,
Ljubljana, 2008
Goldened sculpture, 115 x 123 x 45 cm
Courtesy: Aksioma

A SYSTEM OF (No) NAMES

Imagine if all artists shared the same name. When going to, for instance, the Venice Biennale or documenta, we'd enjoy the art without endeavoring

to commit to memory a multitude of new names from all over the world. It may sound like an impossible flight of fancy, but is it really so far removed from reality? As the world of art expanded in the 1990s, legions of new names from the world over started popping up at big international shows – names impossible to remember, particularly when they appeared only once. Having, for decades, gauged the import of big-scale shows by the number of “big” names featured, we now saw this become a sign of an uncreative and non-research-oriented approach, of playing it safe and repeating the familiar. Big-scale shows seem to be finding it increasingly imperative to discover new names and, by the same token, to adopt anti-market attitudes. At the same time, non-commercial research programs can be found at the very heart of the art market, represented by art fairs such as Basel, Arco, or Frieze. Thus, projects

that aspire to distance themselves from the market and those that enrich it with non-commercial content have similar consumers, and they are all part of the same art system: a system in which the prices commanded by blockbuster artists in the contemporary art market seem to be indirectly helping the artists without a made name to try and establish themselves at least in the framework of non-commercial programs. The current complexity of the art system and its market simply requires the tension between the initiatives that support the existence of big names and the initiatives that promote themselves on the basis of their anti-market orientation. Critical attitudes only make the system more vibrant and attractive. No matter how profoundly oppositional its individual components may seem, they are mutually supportive, since this is the only way the system can function as a whole. The true differences can be found between the spaces that are part of the system and the spaces that are excluded from it for one reason or another. After all, there is no avoiding the fact that most of the new names that the system embraces – and sometimes spits out overnight – come from non-Western spaces, and becoming a *name* in the West is what is still coveted by non-Western artists.

A NAME THROUGH LOCAL TRADITIONS

In socialism, the greatest names were the so-called state artists. Today, as the art market is also developing in Eastern Europe, these names represent a potential that might someday achieve results matching those in the West. Currently, Eastern European artists live between such potential possibilities and the echoes of the times in which individual glory was often more of an encumbrance than an advantage. There is an enduring



tradition in Eastern Europe, especially in the territories of former Yugoslavia, of neo-avant-garde artists commenting in various ways on the position of the individual artist and his or her name. Not only in terms of the modernist myth, produced by Western art, of the artist as creator, of originality and individuality, but also of them commenting on the artist whose position was quite anonymous in socialist times. In socialism, the principle of equalization and the spirit of collectivism counterbalanced the fame and marketability of the individual artist in the West. Obviously, there is a rich history of collective work also in the West, serving – among other things – as a platform for a critical stance toward an artist's name being transformed into a trademark by the market. Parallel to the history of that art which saw itself as autonomous creative production, throughout the 20th century there existed a line of doubt concerning such authorship, propagated mostly by collectives or groups of artists. Starting with the historical avant-gardes, numerous groups of artists were critical of manipulations with public space, be it by politics, ideology, or capital. Some examples are the Russian revolutionary artists' collectives, the Dada, CoBrA, Lettrism, Situationist International, and many other movements, and they have served as inexhaustible sources of inspiration for countless collective and socially critical actions to this day. Here we should emphasize the differences between groups that (used to) work in different geopolitical contexts. Boris Groys¹ pointed out the difference between Eastern and Western European art groups or collectives: while the forming of artists' collectives in the West is tinged

¹ Boris Groys, "Back from the Future," in *2000+ Artest Collection: The Art of Eastern Europe: A Selection of Works for the International and National Collections of Moderna galerija Ljubljana*. Bolzano/Vienna: Folio Verlag, 2001.

Installation views from the exhibition Triglav in Second Life.

Top - OHO, *Mount Triglav*

Middle - OHO, *Mount Triglav*, right Janez Janša, Janez Janša, Janez Janša, *Mount Triglav on Mount Triglav*

Bottom - Janez Janša, Janez Janša, Janez Janša, *Mount Triglav on Mount Triglav*

Projeto Noema, Second Life, 2007

Photo: Coney Burt

Courtesy: Aksioma

with nostalgia for early avant-garde or socialist traditions, collective creativity in the East is almost a rule. Groys does not speak only of groups in this context, but rather of a certain general penchant for collective activities. Typical of Eastern European neo-avant-garde artists is a group habitat that reaches beyond the concrete group work and makes up for the absence of an art system and Western-type networking. I would say Eastern European collectivism understood in this way replaces the modern Western type of association and of a common historical narrative. As an art system comparable to the Western one has still not (been) developed in this region, the search for local traditions is becoming all the more relevant. Eastern Europe knows highly evolved and ramified forms of collective work, which must be viewed in terms of specific contexts and traditions. Here, tradition is not meant as something familiar, but as something that remains yet to be discovered in full and then perform confronted with canonized history.

Since the late 1970s, reinterpretations of canonized history and its problematic character have been the subject of a group of artists-copyists from the former Yugoslavia going by the names of Mondrian, Malevich, Benjamin. Linked to them is the unusual Salon de Fleurus in SoHo, New York City, which has copies of early modernists such as Cézanne, Matisse, and Picasso on display. The artists-copyists are anonymous, their identities sacrificed to the consistency of their art. Their anonymity is carried over from the field of aesthetics to their personal lives, and their choices are often in stark contrast to the steps ordinarily taken by artists striving to make a name for themselves on the market. A group of five Slovenian artists who have adopted the name Irwin included the Belgrade Kazimir Malevich in

the genealogical diagram of their work, a wall installation entitled *Retro-Avant-Garde* (2000), wherein they retrogressively mapped the history of Yugoslavian avant-gardes, from the groups comprising the Neue Slowenische Kunst (Irwin included), Malevich, Mangelos, Braco Dimitrijević, and Mladen Stilinović, to the “classic” avant-garde of Zenitism and Avgust Černigoj. Believing that art is a collective act, the members of Irwin find it essential to focus on one’s own tradition, both in the frameworks of former Yugoslavia and that of Eastern Europe (for example, in the project *East Art Map*). I see such mappings as processes of self-historicizing in that they fill in the blanks left behind by the inadequate work done by institutions, and also because the main points of reference in such genealogies are the artists themselves, who are sifting through history and making different selections in order to find the roots of their work and place it in a broader context.

A year before the three artists assumed the name of Janez Janša, one of them (then Emil Hrvatin) had reconstructed a Slovenian cult neo-avant-garde theatre piece from the late 1960s, *Pupilija, papa Pupilo pa Pupilčki* (Pupilija, Papa Pupilo, and the Pupilceks). However, the contemporary production was more than merely a reconstruction of the original *Pupilija*, it was also its contextualization: what happens on stage is accompanied by projections of the responses engendered by the original production as well as contemporary commentaries. The promotional material stated that the show aimed to test how a historical event would be received in our times, when both rebellion and experiment have either lost their edge and been relegated to the margins of social and cultural life or else are let loose among the public at large as a quickly consumed

media scandal.² The Janez Janša's project aspires to diagnose this tradition of scandal and to see what scandal can mean today. Part of what was scandalous about the original 1969 production of *Pupilija* was the live chicken that was slaughtered on stage; back

² "Pupilija, papa Pupilo pa Pupilčki – rekonstrukcija", *Maska*, no. 100, summer 2006, p. 3

then this was an artistic choice, but today the director of the reconstruction

leaves it up to the spectators to decide by vote at the end of the show whether the chicken should live or not.

In 2007, soon after their renaming, the three Janez Janšas staged their first exhibition, dedicating it to the local tradition of collectivism. In their show *Triglav* at the Mala galerija they presented the 1968 performance *Mount Triglav* by the group OHO and two reenactments: one by the group Irwin in 2004 and their own 2007 version, entitled *Mount Triglav on Mount Triglav*. Crucial to all three groups of artists was the significance of Mount Triglav (which means "three-headed mountain") as a Slovenian national symbol. Three members of the OHO group "enacted" Mount Triglav by draping black fabric over their bodies so that only their heads jutted out. Just as is the case with the three peaks of the mountain, the middle head was higher than the lateral two, which were more or less level. The action was carried out in the centre of Ljubljana, and affected the passersby primarily with its absurdity in comparison to ordinary day-to-day socialist life. Irwin chose the same location for their re-enactment of the performance, but their action was intended primarily for the lens of the camera: for them what was important was the artifact – a high-quality, well-framed photograph. More than simply redoing OHO's performance, what interested Irwin was the idea of providing it

with higher quality documentation, which in itself represents a unique commentary on the poverty of documentation for Eastern European art and its non-inclusion in the international circulation of art works. The three Janezes were photographed in a similar manner: they wrapped themselves in a black cloth, but they did this on the mountain itself. The photographic prints displayed at the Mala galerija were blow-ups of this photograph published in the three main Slovenian dailies (*Delo*, *Dnevnik*, and *Večer*). Newspapers always record major state/national anniversaries, which in the process of annual reproductions most often become empty rituals or instruments of the politics du jour. Repeating history in an artistic action, on the other hand, underscores tradition as well as the loss of original meaning, since the latter is inextricably tied to the specific context of time and place.

Their performance *Signature Event Context* from early 2008 also commented on our attitude to the collective past. Outfitted with GPS devices, the three Janezes followed three different prearranged routes through the maze-like Holocaust Memorial in Berlin,³ and combined, the paths they traveled traced a signature only visible on the Internet. While walking, the three artists kept repeating the same mantra: "I am Janez Janša, I am Janez Janša, I am Janez Janša, I am Janez Janša ..." This performance is also fascinating as a recontextualization of a setting with very binding symbolic weight. By structuring the memorial as a labyrinth, its architect Peter Eisenman stressed a person's individual experience of history; as he put it: "we can only know the past through its manifestation in the present."⁴ The labyrinth has become a

³ The project was invited to the show *transmediale 08*, from which it was subsequently excluded, and then partly re-included. More at www.aksioma.org/sec. See also images on pp. 134 - 137

⁴ Peter Eisenman, "Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe, Berlin." <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/germans/memorial/eisenman.html> (accessed 21 July 2008).

kind of metaphor for historicizing, wherein only the individual experience of the

past is possible. Even in the context of our local tradition, the choice of the Holocaust Memorial is not a negligible reference, in which, for instance, the groups comprising the Neue Slowenische Kunst see the confrontation with the traumatic experiences from our national history as crucial to the processes of self-identification.

NEW COLLECTIVISMS

Like the three artists' individual work before it, their joint Janez Janša project does not aspire to undermine the powers that be, but

only to enhance the visibility of their actions by repeating some of their actual processes. The work the three artists did before their name change makes it evident what interests have led them to join in action.

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The reconstruction of the show *Pupilija, papa Pupilo pa Pupilčki* ended with a vote – a sort of commentary on our present democracy and collective decision taking. This was also the subject that another of the Janez Janšas (when still Davide Grassi) focused on in his 2004 project *DemoKino*, an interactive series of eight short films, in which the protagonist confronted eight topical ethical dilemmas: abortion, cloning, genetic manipulation, same-sex marriage, the privatization of water resources, copyright/copyleft, euthanasia, and therapeutic cloning. As the individual films ended, viewers voted

Janez Janša and Janez Janša signing at the location of deported Roma family Strojan near the village Ambrus, 2007
Photo: Janez Janša



pro or con by pressing voting buttons next to their seats, thereby also determining which door in his apartment the protagonist should open next. The last episode of the film ends with a shot of a clown and a caption reading, "What if I tell you it is all predefined?" The virtual agora in *DemoKino*, as Bojana Kunst writes,⁵ relates to the infamous "pianist

⁵ Bojana Kunst, "Virtual Biopolitical Parliament, Davide Grassi's *DemoKino*" in *DemoKino – Virtual Biopolitical Agora*, edited by Ivana Ivković and Janez Janša, Maska, Aksioma, Ljubljana, 2006

scandal" in the Italian Parliament that revealed the degree of autonomy in the democratic procedure – responsibility and connection are lost

in its self-sufficiency. As Kunst says, the perfection of the procedure leaves no space for position or opposition, so new stands must be taken towards agreement and rebellion.

Similar to the spectators sending the protagonist of *DemoKino* from one room to another, the third Janez Janša artist (then known as Žiga Kariž) also intervened in a private space. In 2003, he presented his series *TERROR=DECOR: ART NOW* at the Venice Biennale: he hung paintings with built-in cameras in several private apartments and transmitted the signal to the gallery. The surface of these paintings, which presented images of explosions from Hollywood movies, sought to fascinate prospective buyers, but hidden under the surface was the technology that enabled a communication network between the paintings hanging at various sites throughout the city. Kariž questioned the relation between terrorism and art; art remains the space of a mediated

⁶ Petja Grafenauer, "Hitrost, Alkatraz & Teror=Dekor." <http://www.ish.si/~ljish8/files/PDF2002-2004/Grafenauer-P-Hitrost-2004.pdf> (accessed 21 July 2008)

statement, it is not direct action that would bring about social change.⁶

The three artists do not determine the "object of rebellion" in their work beforehand, and they themselves are not clearly defined as the subject of the action either. Their common identity is in the name change, which triggers performative actions with unforeseeable end results and durations. The threesome goes through the formal processes of identification based on political and national categorizing; they problematize the fixed nature of citizenship and underscore the emerging need for other forms of participation. By adopting the name of a local politician, the three Janezes have highlighted the context of Slovenian society, which had shrunk after the disintegration of Yugoslavia and become rather xenophobic. With the artists' name change, the number of Janez⁷ Janšas in Slovenia went up to a dozen,

and, at the same time, the group's national structure was diluted, since two of the three

⁷ People from other parts of former Yugoslavia often refer to Slovenians simply as "Janezes," as this is one of the most frequent Slovenian male names.

artists were not natural-born Slovenians. The participation of non-Slovenians in Slovenian culture, art, and politics is still an exception rather than the rule, and there is a dearth of artistic projects in Slovenia assuming any sort of critical position toward Slovenian nationalism.⁸

The tradition of artists' collectives is related to rebellion against the predominant forms of social

collectivism, which has undergone a variety of mutations throughout history. For example, there has been a resurgence of nationalism in response to

⁸ One such example is the case of 18.305 people being struck from the register of citizens and permanent residents of the Republic of Slovenia. In 1992, these people, who were primarily from other ex-Yugoslavian nations, had – for a variety of reasons – missed the deadline to apply for Slovenian citizenship, and this error of omission subsequently jeopardized their existence.

increasingly close international bonds, the processes of globalization, and, last but not least, the growing standardization of the world. Collectivism continues to be determined not only by collective emotions and truths, but increasingly also by formal procedures. Ideologies, religions, nations, and leader figures that are now in conflict with the new collectivism do not exactly represent the same things as they did in other historical circumstances. The traditional forms of collectivism, with their promises of more harmonious relations and a less alienated life, now promote and transform themselves using media channels, just like all other modern world phenomena. At the processual level, where greater mobility of identities is enabled, any differences are growing more and more similar. With his autocratic image, the Prime Minister Janša calls to mind ghosts from the past; at the same time, the three artists point out his “multiplicability”. The present-day forms of collectivism are related to seriality without clearly defined content: on the one hand, we are defined by the media, and on the other, by the standards of various formal systems. The scandal around the people struck from the public register was started by a Liberal Democrat minister and it has continued unresolved for fifteen years under a variety of political options who all fail the test of the formal rule of law. True anachronism lies in this disregard of the form – at least to the same extent as it does in nationalism – and today, various formal systems are stronger than ever before, such that individuals – be they artists or politicians with their names – are becoming part of an increasingly self-sufficient system.

JANEZ JANŠA FOR PERSONAL REASONS

When asked why they had officially changed their names, each of the three artists answered in the same way: for personal reasons. Despite the fact that we cannot but interpret their act as a critical stand to Janez Janša's administration, the artists themselves have not even once publicly confirmed this popular assumption. At the beginning of 2008, the trio opened a public correspondence in the Saturday supplement of the daily *Dnevnik*, in a section of the newspaper that is otherwise reserved for correspondence between pairs of Slovenian public figures. The three Janezes shared benign personal epistles, interspersing casual information about their work with travel impressions, culinary advice, their children's adventures, and the like. Essentially, the whole Janez Janša project is based on the artists toying with their privacy. What will remain after this joint project, and may end up exhibited in a museum of contemporary art, will be largely composed of documents, testifying not only to the official change of the artists' names and to their membership in the Slovenian Democratic Party, but also to Janez Janša being present at the birth of his child, Janez Janša paying insurance and household bills, Janez Janša having a contract with the Ministry of Culture, and so on. In their case, the boundary between art and life has been lost in advance.

After the three Slovenian artists changed their names to Janez Janša and became namesakes of the Slovenian Prime Minister, nothing special or eventful seemed to happen; the Prime Minister did not react in any way, the three new Janezes were not excluded from the Prime Minister's political party (the Slovenian Democratic Party), which they had joined just prior to their

name change, the grants awarded to them by the Ministry of Culture were not withdrawn,⁹ and the three artists were able to stage quite a few collective and individual presentations. Fairly soon after the name change, they were even rewarded for their collective gesture with the group exhibition *Triglav* at the Mala galerija, an exhibition venue of Moderna galerija, the principal Slovenian institution

⁹ After this text had been written, the applications submitted to the Ministry of Culture by two Janez Janšas were rejected.

for modern and contemporary art. The media followed the entire affair with pronounced interest,

verging on sympathy. There were a number of critical comments, too, claiming that the artists had failed in their intended political provocation but succeeded in attracting the great media attention that had, allegedly, been their main goal in the first place.

What happened actually? We can say that – at least in our part of the world – the times when governments came close to falling as a result of artistic provocations are definitely over. Likewise, the era of censoring socially critical artists is evidently over too. But neither of the above is entirely true. There are many reasons to criticize Slovenian cultural policy; in recent years the control of public space has increased, with particular impact on the media, and contemporary art has been marginalized even more than before, to the benefit of time-proven traditional art forms. However – at least in terms of contemporary art – there has been only one instance of censorship, and it caused a public outcry.

In 2007, at the demand of the Ministry of

¹⁰ The exhibition *United in Victory* was organized by the National Museum of Contemporary History to commemorate the 15th anniversary of Slovenia's independence.

Culture, the portrait head of national hero Jože Pučnik was removed from the exhibition *United in Victory*.¹⁰ And the

reason? The portrait's face was "clawed out". The sculptor, Metod Frlic, explained that this was how the incessant struggles had marked the face of this dissident who, upon his return to Slovenia, greatly contributed to the processes of democratization and a greater sense of nation-state. The Minister of Culture stated publicly that the sculpture had been removed because portraits of this type should be executed in a realistic manner. Interestingly, it seems that the deformed face of Slovenia's right-wing ideologist upset the Prime Minister more than the fact that three artists had officially assumed his name.

When the three artists changed their names to Janez Janša, they in fact adopted a critical stance toward the Slovenian government, in which – until recently – it seemed as if all posts were occupied by a single person: Janez Janša. For a while, fear was rife that our young democracy would slide back into one of the harsher forms of government, but about the time when Janša's name appeared on the art scene, the power of capital became more manifest in our country, and in the last six months capital has subjugated even those media sources that had been perceived as being in Janša's hands. The countries in transition have seen quite a few situations where social anachronisms of various types seemed to jeopardize their budding contemporary democracies. It is now becoming increasingly obvious that the neo-liberalist processes predominate, market mechanisms are de-centering the positions of power, and the state is growing weaker. Michel Foucault wrote that the state may be nothing more than an imagined reality, a mystified abstraction whose importance is much more limited than many of us think. The state is becoming only one of the agents of governmentality, which Foucault describes as a contemporary form of the

1	REPUBLIKA SLOVENIJA RÉPUBLIQUE DE SLOVÉNIE	2	MATIČNA SLUŽBA SERVICE DE L'ÉTAT CIVIL DE	LJUBLJANA	OBRAZEC FORMULE B
3					
IZPISEK IZ MATIČNEGA REGISTRA O SKLENJENI ZAKONSKI ZVEZI ŠT. EXTRAIT DE L'ACTE DE MARIAGE N°					
MR 2008					
4	DATUM IN KRAJ SKLENITVE ZAKONSKE ZVEZE DATE ET LIEU DU MARIAGE	Jo Mo An 11 08 2007	Ljubljana	ŽENA FEMME	6
7	PRIIMEK PRED SKLENITVJO ZAKONSKE ZVEZE NOM AVANT LE MARIAGE	Janša	Okretič		
8	IME PRENOMS	Janez	Marcela		
9	ROJSTNI DATUM IN KRAJ DATE ET LIEU DE NAISSANCE	Jo Mo An 07 12 1970	Jo Mo An 28 12 1970	Bergamo, Italija	Buenos Aires, Argentina
10	PRIIMEK PO SKLENITVI ZAKONSKE ZVEZE NOM APRES LE MARIAGE	Janša	Okretič		
11	DRUGI PODATKI IZ IZVIRNE LISTINE AUTRES ENONCIATIONS DE L'ACTE				
12	DATUM IZDAJE, PODPIS, PEČAT DATE DE DÉLIVRANCE, SIGNATURE, SCEAU	Jo Mo An 31 07 2008			
OZNAKE / SYMBOLES / ZEICHEN / SYMBOLS / SIMBOLOS / ΣΥΜΒΟΛΑ / SIMBOLU SVYMAEN / SIMBOLOS / ISARETLER					
- Jo: Dan / Jour / Tag / Day / Dia / Ημέρα / Giorno / Dag / Dia / Gün - Mo: Mesec / Mois / Monat / Month / Mes / Mijev / Mese / Maand / Més / Ay - An: Leto / Année / Jahr / Year / Año / Έτος / Anno / Jaar / Ano / Yr - Sc: Ločitev / Séparation de corps / Trennung von Tisch und Bett / Legal separation / Separación personal / Χειρισμός από το σώμα - Div: Razveza zakonske zveze / Divorce / Scheidung / Divorce / Divorcio / Διαζύγιον / Divorzio / Echtscheidung / Divórcio / Bosanama - A: Razveljavitev / Annulation / Nichtigerklärung / Annulment / Anulación / Άκύρωση / Annullement / Neitigverklaring / Anulação / Iptal - Dm: Smrt moža / Décès du mari / Tod des Ehemanns / Death of the husband / Defunción del marido / Θάνατος του συζύγου / Morte del marito / Overlijden van de man / Obito do marido / Kocanın ölümü - Df: Smrt žene / Décès de la femme / Tod der Ehefrau / Death of the wife / Defunción de la mujer / Θάνατος της συζύγου / Morte della moglie / Overlijden van de vrouw / Obito da mulher / Karının ölümü					
DP0008516					

Janez Janša, Janez Janša, Janez Janša
 DP0008516 (International Marriage Certificate), Ljubljana, 2008
 Print on paper, 29,7 x 21 cm
 Courtesy: Aksioma



Installation view from the exhibition *Triglav*. Left OHO, *Mount Triglav*,
right Janez Janša, Janez Janša, Janez Janša, *Mount Triglav on Mount Triglav*
Curated by Zdenka Badovinac
Mala galerija, Ljubljana, 2007
Photo: Dejan Habicht
Courtesy: Moderna galerija, Ljubljana



“art of government”, no longer limited to state politics and applying also to the control of others and one’s control of the self. The various positions of power, which are not only concentrated in politics and capital but also in knowledge produced by the various systems of social life, have long colonized the private sphere. The three Janezes have, in effect, established a situation that makes evident the fact that a part of the governance of society is also based on the construction of auto-regulating and auto-correcting selves. It only seems that our names – together with our documents and our fingerprints – are proof of our individuality.

The fact that no eyebrow was publicly raised at this artistic appropriation of Janez Janša’s name also tells us that art is less and less able to serve as a representation of the state. The images of politicians are now shaped by the media, and the goal is a polished look. It is a rare occurrence in Western democracies when the abuse of the name or the image of a politician has serious consequences and understandably so, as the space of contemporary art is in the hands of the market rather than any one ideology. In those countries, however, where neo-liberalism has not yet occupied all pores of public life, art is still subject to state monopoly. Not surprisingly, our three artists still deal with the questions of their own creativity in the context of the nation-state and its phenomena. It is, then, also understandable that the most socially conscious artists strive to make contemporary art and its traditions an equal part of national history. Slovenia’s politics, with all its parties and protocols, is unjustified in pushing contemporary art to the margins. The official cultural program for the period of the Slovenian presidency of the EU Council was based on national

tradition, rather than contemporary art or even projects focusing on intercultural dialogue. Having headed the EU Council presidency for half a year, Prime Minister Janez Janša delivered a politically correct speech on intercultural dialogue being one of the fundamental EU values. None of the renowned Slovenian or foreign guest speakers at the official ceremony emphasized the fact that every dialogue is controlled by the relative positions of power and that we can never, in reality, speak of a dialogue between equal partners. With the Schengen border, culture will now be more easily divided into “European” and “non-European”. Engaged contemporary art has long been trying to get the message across that intercultural dialogue also has a dark side, the game of inclusion and exclusion. Our contemporary society could almost be described as divided into larger or smaller collectives of different cultures. On the one hand, we see numerous anachronisms triggered by, say, a caricature of Mohamed with a bomb, which is ostensibly offensive to the entire Muslim world, while, on the other hand, the Western world is full of distorted figures of American and European politicians circulating in the art market without causing any problems. In the face of such phenomena of the neo-liberal world, there still exist various anachronisms on the global and local levels, and artists deal with them in one way or another. The Janša project proves that nowadays artists are forced to function in different spaces, where the same rules do not apply. Thus the three Janezes function on the one hand as artists of a nation-state – a concept which is on its way out and which has long ceased to represent the plurality of various interests – and, on the other hand, they work in the international context, where they are already established and where a new name that nobody is

familiar with is only a drawback.¹¹ The three artists are thus investigating, first-hand, how the two spaces – the one still controlled by traditional national values and the other exposed to international market mechanisms – function. The Janša project is caught between various contexts and differing strategies.

Throughout history, socially critical collectives have employed the approach of adopting roles from formal societal life. In this way, artists create situations that generate a variety of (controlled and uncontrolled) responses. Artistic projects serve as social laboratories of sorts, where some kind of new and not yet instrumental knowledge is being produced. Assessing the Janša project by the success or failure of the provocation would be senseless since the provocation was just one of the many strategies in the varied process of experimentation. The measure of the quality of the artists' work is their search

for truth that has not yet been classified. It does make a difference if the media report on the wedding of Janša the Primer Minister or Janša the artist; the former would be plain news with probably some political PR thrown in, and the latter, a contemporary art strategy in an incessant search for its true frame of activity. The three artists absolutely legitimately explore strategies that suit their context and measure the artistic provocation of the government with carefully thought-out public relations actions aimed at conveying the message that Janša is in all of us. Collective gestures of artists can no longer focus on a single possibility, but must be structured around de-centered forms of government and identities. We can definitely say that the three Janezes have constructed a framework for exploring new forms of resisting the enemy, though who that enemy might be is no longer clear-cut.

Translated by Tamara Soban

Miško Šuvaković

3 x Triglav: Controversies and Problems regarding *Mount Triglav*



OHO
Miljenko Matanović, David Nez, Drago Dellabernardina
Mount Triglav
Kongresni trg, Ljubljana, 30. 12. 1968
Courtesy: Moderna galerija, Ljubljana

Since 1968, a certain provocative controversy has been at work in contemporary Slovene arts. This experimental, retro, avant-garde, “artivistic”, and artistic-political controversy seemingly refers to the famed happening of the group OHO’s *Mount Triglav*¹, which originally took place on 30 December 1968 in Kongresni trg, and was later resurrected and reimagined, first by the group Irwin in 2004 as *Like to Like/ Mount Triglav*² and last year it was performed atop

¹Milenko Matanović, David Nez, Drago Dellabernardina

²Andrej Savski, Borut Vogeltnik, Roman Uranjek

Mount Triglav by the artists Janez Janša, Janez Janša and Janez Janša as *Mount Triglav on Mount*

Triglav. In the mode of an experimental artistic situation the three performances only seemingly make metaphor of the geographic, national and state symbol of Slovenia that is Mount Triglav. All of the works are the most radical executions of the *political sliding sign*, that is, the individual explanations of symptoms of Slovene identity and, more importantly, the historical construction and realization of political identities.

PRELIMINARY PROBLEM 1: TRAGEDY AND THE GROTESQUE

Marx’s well-known – and, without a doubt, cynical – *dictum* (which we’ve heard countless times) asserts that history occurs twice, first as a tragedy, second as a farce, however this misses or conceals a certain important point: the fact that “repetition of history” is never simply “repetition”, but is, rather, always an authentic event with new consequences. The repetitions are carried out under different material conditions and in different circumstances. The carrying out of the *same* or at least *similar* event in different measures and circumstances, produces different results. This is necessary to consider when we observe, or rather, refer to and discuss the three ‘Triglavs’ in Slovene arts – the *Mount Triglav* of 1968, 2004, and 2007, respectively.

PRELIMINARY PROBLEM 2: ORGANISM, INDIVIDUAL, SUBJECT

An organism is a functional and articulated relation of different organs. An individuum is an organism with an identifying “social number” (personal ID number, tax number, social insurance number, voter registration number, resident registration number). A subject is the manifoldness of textual, audiovisual, and/or behavioural manifestations which represent, show and describe a certain individuum and organism in culture and society.

OHO GROUP: MOUNT TRIGLAV

The OHO group worked in Kranj and Ljubljana between 1965 and 1971 in the fields of Reism, Process Art, and Conceptual Art, and was the first “radical – urban

– ideological” artistic appearance in Slovene modern arts. Its function wasn’t only an experiment in the “autonomous field” of arts, but also the provocative gesture of neo-avant-garde artists in the spirit of the 1968 protests that had stirred up the arrangement of arts, culture, and society.

From its inception, the OHO product, that is the *article* and then the *happening*, was to carry out the concept of event as visual metaphor which the OHO members demonstrated in projects such as *Mount Triglav*. The purpose of the “visual metaphor” is primarily to problematize the referential relationship between visual appearances and the material or fictional world within them. The visual metaphor is a visual phenomenon which is erected in place of some other visual statement or discursive structure. OHO’s concept of the object (article) or event (happening) was founded on the relation of object/happening and word. The work *Mount Triglav*, which was carried out as a happening, demonstrates the function of visual metaphor: three authors draped by a cloth from which their long-haired hippie heads looked out at three different heights. The title of the work (displayed in front of them) hinted at Mount Triglav, that is, on the scheme: *tri* (three) + *glave* (heads) = *tri glave* (three heads). It established the following relational references: the position of the artists’ bodies and cloth’s iconographical hinting at a mountain, that is, what was visualized was an iconographic-oriented metaphor of a mountain. The artistic work, which models a mountain, showed the relationship between *mountain as material and name* as label; three real human hippie heads were similar to the three peaks of the mountain. The referential relationship between the title of the work, *Mount Triglav*, and the artistic work is repeatedly mimetic.

This mimetic quality has – in itself – realistic socio-political consequences, but also shows that there are “ideal” and “universally-established” symbols of work and the socialist Slovene nation can also be established as an object of intervention of young “rebels without a cause”.

IRWIN GROUP (NSK): *LIKE TO LIKE/MOUNT TRIGLAV*

The Irwin group was formed under the framework of the *Neue Slowenische Kunst* (NSK) movement in the early 1980s. The early Irwinist mannerist and eclectic paintings illuminated the iconography of the national-socialistic arts, socialist-realism, and avant-garde (above all Kazimir Malevich). They established a supervisory painting gesture in the traumatic fissure between the large totalitarian projects of the twentieth century and the crisis of modernism in the 1970s and 1980s. These paradoxical connections are weak points, symptoms of a political demonstration of reality – the ideological as phantasm.

The works of the Irwin group are signs with which the group destroys the symbolic power of the totalitarian discourse, the projection of reality. With regard to real and self-management socialism their activity still appears as an excess/symptom – graphic (painting) and declarative (manifesto) speech which provoke the existing system of political and artistic values, at which the trauma is pulled into a game as “non-interpretive” or “hyper-interpretive”. “Retro-garde” action is not avant-garde action because it uses the *dead languages* of arts and the *dead languages* of culture and politics (languages of avant-garde arts and the totalitarian system). Within them are references to the archive of the historically deleted,



Irwin

Like to Like / Mount Triglav, 2004

Colour photo, 168 x 199,5 x 7 cm

Remake on the basis of a photograph. The

action of the group OHO *Mount Triglav*.

Photo: Tomaž Gregorič

Production: Cornerhouse

Courtesy: Gregor Podnar Gallery

exploited traces, artistic, ethical and political excesses, traumas, symbols, expressions and performances; thus making their work “anti-utopian”.

The series of works of *Like to Like: Irwin – OHO* (2004) was made in opposition to the status of retro-avant-garde artists. From the post-modern repudiation of avant-garde/neo-avant-garde Irwin group directed itself towards the establishment of its own modern or avant-garde traditions in the framework of its national culture. Suprematism, Nazi

kunst, and socialist realism were dead signs of politics and arts for the production of Irwin group. In contrast, the turn toward making images of OHO’s “anti-painterly” and the process proto-conceptual events was an entirely different act – the act of appropriation which adopted some key artistic acts from the end of modernism, was executed in the traditional visual media and implemented as a culturally-rooted fetish, an ‘object’ of fascination. Triglav is an object of fascination and, thus, a fetish.

On the other side, the visual performative (2004) recycling or rather, photographic happening *Mount Triglav* wasn't only an act of self-historicization by the Irwin group. It also meant the grotesque provoking of one of the fundamental political suppositions of identifying politics in transitional, nationally homogeneous countries which were founded upon the disintegration of the second Yugoslavia; and it signified the demands for national reconciliation of all that is Slovene – our – art and culture.

JANEZ JANŠA, JANEZ JANŠA, AND JANEZ
JANŠA: *MOUNT TRIGLAV ON MOUNT
TRIGLAV*

Janez Janša (formerly known as Davide Grassi) was born in Italy in 1970. He graduated from the Academy of Fine Arts in Milan in 1994. Since 1995, he has been living in Ljubljana. His work is dedicated to the investigation of new media social contradictions and dilemmas. Janez Janša (formerly known as Emil Hrvatin) was born in Rijeka, Croatia in 1964. He graduated from the University of Ljubljana's Faculty for Social Sciences and studied theatre directing in Ljubljana and the theory of theatre in Antwerp. His work is dedicated to the exploration of the role of conceptual strategies and tactics between theatre and society. Finally, Janez Janša (formerly known as Žiga Kariž) was born in Ljubljana in 1973. He graduated from the Academy of Fine Arts in Ljubljana. His work is dedicated to the investigation of new media and the roles of media productions of individual, cultural, artistic, and social identity in the contemporary world.

Davide Grassi, Emil Hrvatin and Žiga Kariž all legally took the first name and last name of the current Prime Minister

of the Republic of Slovenia, Janez Janša. However, the artists are not members of any artistic group or movement; rather they are individual authorial figures who work in the interdisciplinary scene of Slovene contemporary arts.

In addition to the change of names and surnames the three artists made the ritual act of an individual and collective – subjective and national – initiation, and presented the work *Mount Triglav on Mount Triglav* on 6th August 2007. They carried out the initiation on Mount Triglav, and the realization of the 'living Triglav' itself was shown with clear references to the works of OHO and Irwin (NSK). The occasion of the "mountain" event was also connected to the eightieth anniversary of the death of Jakob Aljaž, the twenty-fifth anniversary of the founding of the magazine *Nova revija*, the sixteenth anniversary of the founding of the independent Republic of Slovenia ... Emil Hrvatin, Žiga Kariž and Davide Grassi joined the political party (Slovenian Democratic Party – SDS) of the Prime Minister Janez Janša, and Davide Grassi, that is, Janez Janša, married under his new name.

The "work" that they realized, in short, is a reconstruction (re-enactment, recycling) of the works of OHO and Irwin. At work is the repetition of the artistic events from times of the neo-avant-garde and the retro-avant-garde. This repetition actually becomes a grotesque of Slovenian contemporary politics, but – and this "but" is essential! – OHO's event expressed a proclivity towards ludist grotesqueness – hippies in the place where we would expect a strong and righteous Slovene Worker/Farmer in the middle of the three-headed Mount Triglav. Irwin's "cool" recycling flirted with post-modern cynical grotesqueness: retro-avant-gardists in the place of avant-gardists;



Janez Janša, Janez Janša, Janez Janša
Mount Triglav on Mount Triglav,
Mount Triglav, 2007
Action
Photo: Gaja Repe
Courtesy: Aksioma

consumer signs in the place of vital gestures; dandies in the place of hippies. In contrast Kariž, Grassi and Hrvatin's performance, that is, Janša, Janša, and Janša's transparent positioning of the grotesque had within itself something tragic. The tragedy is that the 'artistic work', has as its constitutional elements, totally fixed and materially-concrete social, political, and personal-subjective consequences for the life of an artist. Artists in contemporary times – such as Janša, Janša, and Janša – are no longer

ludist actors (OHO) or professional creators of high art (Irwin), but rather *subjects* in a performative life praxis, which operates in the framework of transitional country/state bio-powers and their instrumental apparatuses. These types of artists carry out their "individual selves" in the bio-political mechanism, where the "machinery" has the effects of designing or rather achieving the forms of its own everyday/quotidian and occasional life. We are dealing with *artivism*, which functions as art not from the basic

arts, but from material moves or fluxes in bio-political society and society's authority of bio-powers. OHO and Irwin worked, or rather, *intervened with* the live performing in the framework of artistic autonomies, in the cultural and social space of socialistic and, later, transitional Slovenia. However Kariž, Grassi, and Hrvatin offered, in opposition, the "live construction" of *Mount Triglav on Mount Triglav* as a sign of the pre-design of their individual identities, not as Kariž, Grassi, and Hrvatin, but rather as Janša, Janša, and Janša, and for all the concrete social consequences of changing identities. And this is the point: the confrontation with the tragic in the work of the biopower, in the midst of repeating 'history', which, although calling tragically, resembles the grotesque. When someone today kisses the face, forehead or lips of Emil, Davide or Žiga, one will not touch those of Emil, Davide or Žiga, but, rather, of Janez Janša...but which Janez Janša? Who is Janez Janša? Who is the Janez Janša of *here and now*? There's no certain answer. Bio-politics are certainly at work; technology designing life.

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Translated by Jana Renée Wilcoxon

Janez Janša, Janez Janša, Janez Janša
Signature (NAME Readymade),
Graz, 2008
Marker and/or rubber-stamp on paper
16,4 x 23,6 cm

Janez Janša, Janez Janša, Janez Janša
Signature (NAME Readymade),
Graz, 2008
Marker and/or rubber-stamp on paper
16,4 x 23,6 cm

Janez Janša, Janez Janša, Janez Janša
Signature (NAME Readymade),
Graz, 2008
Marker and/or rubber-stamp on paper
16,4 x 23,6 cm

Catherine M. Soussloff
In the Name of the Artist



Janez Janša
Signature (Hollywood Walk of Fame),
Los Angeles, 2007
Action
Photo: Janez Janša
Courtesy: Aksioma

“The creation does not belong to the creator.”

Salmon Rushdie

According to the dictionary, a proper name is a noun that designates a particular

being. When a particular being is designated by a name something distinctive is denoted or signified, if only that the being is so understood by the society that names him. For the cultural anthropologist, the proper name functions as a place for the social inscription of the group upon the subject.¹ According to

¹See the extensive discussion of identity and the name in Claude Levi-Strauss, *L'Identité: Séminaire Interdisciplinaire* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1977), especially the essay by Jean-Marie Benoist, “Facettes d'Identité.” In the preparation of this essay I have been aided in innumerable ways by the friendship and learning of my colleagues at the University of California, Santa Cruz: Karen Bassi, Margaret Brose, Tyrus Miller, Deanna Shemek, and Hayden White.

²Michel Foucault, “Entretien avec Roger-Pol Droit (1975),” <http://foucault.info/documents/foucault.entretien1975.fr.html>

we know in our society.”² For Freud, on the other hand, the proper name is an integral part of the personality of the individual.³ But Freud also writes about “...the proper names

of persons, which naturally possess quite different psychological importance for different people.”⁴ In this view, the name tells us about the individual named or the person using the name, rather than telling us about the society that names him. These differing – if not opposing – views of what might otherwise be considered the simplest linguistic marker of the human being indicate the complexity entailed in an exploration of the name of the artist, a particularized particular being.

Where does the name of the artist belong in these conceptions of the proper name?

It seems significant to state, at once, that the name of the artist, both by nature of its infinite variations and by its very presence as a topic of concern in historical representation, refuses an “essential identity” for the individual artist.⁵ Perhaps the most mutable kind of name in Western culture, the name of the artist may well be the cultural marker *par excellence* of the impossibility of an “essential self” or a “complete individual.” The belief, or anxiety, that complete knowledge of the self or another may be impossible consistently appears

³Sigmund Freud, *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, Trans. by James Strachey (London: Hogarth Press, 1963), Vol. 6, p. 83.

⁴Freud, SE, Vol. 15, p. 76. In this passage and elsewhere, Freud uses the forgetting of the proper name as the indication of its significance for the speaker. He also explores, to a lesser extent, the effect of forgetting on the one who is not named, or who is forgotten.

⁵Here lies the crux of where the philosophers and the cultural anthropologist disagree. In *Naming and Necessity* (Cambridge, Ma.: Harvard University Press, 1980), Saul A. Kripke argued that the name constructs an identity in history for the body, while Levi-Strauss and others (see footnote 1, above) cannot accept a concept of identity that encompasses the idea of the human subject. By refusing the linkage between a self and a name, however, it is possible that the anthropologists cannot allow for the historical representation of the human. This may be more a question of what or whom history, as a discipline or discourse, has allowed than of who the named being may have been. One must recognize that it has been the assumption in the Western written historical record that the name signifies an actual person who had an identity that could be recognized, if only it could be known.

as a topic of concern in Western thought from the ancient Greeks until the present.⁶ The iteration of the name of the artist brings the issue of the meaning of the self to the fore in ways not possible with other kinds of proper names. While the recent assumption of the name *Janez Janša* by three different Slovenian artists (formerly known by their *given names*:

⁶ The amount of literature on this issue is extensive, but for this context, see Jacques Derrida, *On the Name*, Ed. by Thomas Dutoit (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995), pp. 84-5: "According to a formula that haunts our tradition from Plontinus to Heidegger, who does not cite him, and to Lacan, who cites neither the former nor the latter, and better than ever, the gift of the name gives that which it does not have, that in which, prior to everything, may consist the essence, that is to say—beyond being—the nonessence, of the gift."

Emil Hrvatin, Davide Grassi, and Žiga Kariž) signals, among other things, the mutability of the name of the artist, it does not explain it. This essay will attempt to place this particular act of naming, or re-naming, within a historical and conceptual framework so that the significance of

Janez Janša may be better known. The proper name of the artist denotes more than the particularity ascribed by the dictionary to any proper noun. Janez Janša demonstrates the validity of this statement, at least for today's situation. The surplus of knowledge given by the name of the artist and evidenced in the repetition of Janez Janša places the particular being named in a category of "better-known" or "well-known". However, fame hardly suffices to describe the kind of knowledge provided by the name of the artist, although the term has been extensively employed in regard to the renown of both individual artists and the

⁷ See, recently, Richard Brilliant, "Introduction: Images to Light the Candle of Fame," in Gordon Baldwin and Judith Keller, *Nadar/Warhol: Paris/New York Photography and Fame* (Los Angeles: the J. Paul Getty Museum, 1999), pp. 15-27.

cultural figure of the artist.⁷ While the proper name of the artist clearly indicates a certain kind of particularity, the topic

itself has been little explored by either art history or philosophy. In what follows here, I will argue that the name of the artist belongs to a special class of proper names designating particular beings for which Western culture has not and does not find it adequate to simply know, or to know simply.

Since the late fifteenth century in the West, our knowledge of the individual artist has relied on an increasingly elaborated biographical tradition.⁸ Biography became central to a culture that desired knowledge of "the exceptional or gifted figure," as Kris and Kurz argued in their seminal 1934 study on the "image" of the artist.⁹ As might be expected, the name of the artist figured large in this culture, which emphasized the textual representation of both the individuality and the exceptionality of the artist – what has come to be known among art historians as the "singularity of the artist". The desire for the singular artist has not diminished and the name of the artist remains a strong indicator of this conception of the artist.

Indeed, whether judged by the evidence of an increasing proliferation of biographies and monographs or by the escalation of prices in the art market for work by artists whose style may be described as singular, we could say that this desire has only increased.¹⁰ The repetition of the name of the artist in textual locations, such as biographies, but also in mainly non-textual galleries, museums, and media can be taken as sign and outcome of the desire for the artist that permeates

⁸ On the history of this tradition and the genre of the biography of the artist, see my book: *The Absolute Artist: The Historiography of a Concept* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997).

⁹ Ernst Kris and Otto Kurz, *Legend, Myth, and Magic in the Image of the Artist: A Historical Experiment*, Trans. by Alastair Laing and Lottie M. Newman (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1979), p. 14.

¹⁰ See the recent issue of *Artforum* edited by Thomas Crow for a number of articles that would support this statement, *Artforum* XLVI (April 2008).

contemporary culture. We might call this the “mediatization effect” of the artist, which is evident everywhere. For example, the artist Man Ray, deceased in 1976, currently has a website on Myspace.com (#39491992), where his surrogate(s) entertain(s) correspondence with anyone who logs on. It is tempting to explain the increase, over the last century, in the recognition of the singularity of the artist on the development and proliferation of mass media outlets – advertising, television, the world wide web – although such a correlation can only be surmised, not proven.¹¹ Many of

¹¹ This was, of course, the argument made by Jonathan Berger in the early 1970s, although he concentrated on the influence of advertising and television; see Jonathan Berger, *Ways of Seeing* (London: BBC, 1972 and New York: Penguin, 1977).

these outlets have been supported by and give support to institutions of art, such as museums and universities, which insist upon and enhance the

recognition of the singular artist through exhibition, publication, and instruction.

The heightened significance of the name of the artist in the contemporary world can also be noted in the present celebrity culture in which entertainers, filmmakers, actors, musicians, and others become known to the public, often without the prior necessity of

a strictly biographical representation. While it may be the case, as Carol Ockman and Kenneth Silver have argued, that the origins of the celebrity category known as the “star” lies in the person of the nineteenth century stage actress, Sarah Bernhardt, they also suggest that her elevation to such a status owed as much to artists as to anything else, for it was they who represented her.¹² In this case, representation occurred in visual as well as textual media, contributing to the recognition of both

¹² Carol Ockman and Kenneth E. Silver, *Sarah Bernhardt: The Art of High Drama* (New York: Jewish Museum and New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005).

the figure and the name of “The Divine Sarah.” Film historian David Bordwell demonstrated that Classic Hollywood’s star system not only “aids in distinguishing characters” in the

¹³ David Bordwell, Janet Staiger, and Kristin Thompson, *The Classical Hollywood Cinema: Film Style and Mode of Production to 1960* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985), p.p. 179-80.

movie narratives, it also works to project onto the characters the personality of the star.¹³ This process of the projection of a person onto a character requires audience recognition of the star within the film narrative in order for the presence of the star to be significant. Recognition comes prior to the film, or

Janez Janša
Signature (Kunsthau Graz), Graz, 2008
 Study for action, BIX Simulator_ 1.0.sit
 Courtesy: Aksioma



it might be applied in retrospect through criticism or publicity. So, too, the artist must be recognized in order for the work that he makes to be known as his work, that is, in order for us to see him in it. This process of recognition occurs textually and visually, but in both cases the name of the artist is central to it.

Until now, this last statement found its fullest expression in the figure and work of Andy Warhol. The visual artist Andy Warhol, who was born Andrew Warhola in 1928 in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, did the most to cement the relationship of the singular artist with celebrity culture in the popular imagination. The name and the representation of the face of Warhol must be considered central to any investigation of the recent history of the “image” of the artist, including the proper name. Whether or not the name change from Warhola to Warhol may be related to a conscious intention on his part to efface his Slovakian ethnicity, as some have believed, the changed name and its recognition pertains to the manipulation of a mutable public self that became a central subject of the artist’s work in the 1960s. Warhol’s manipulated image and his self-construction has affected contemporary culture’s understanding of the singular artist – particularly the name and the face of the artist – since ca. 1970. Some of the details of Warhol’s celebrity in his own time deserve further exploration before we turn to the historical aspects of the history of the name of the artist with which they resonate and on which they partially depend.

Warhol’s childhood and adolescence encompassed the classical Hollywood era and his formation as an artist has been tied to the star system, both because his later work in painting, silkscreen, performance, film and photography exhibit a deeply serious

connection with the concept of the star – one that extended to his own sexual and gender identity – and also because historians have found, in his early life, an exposure and identification with a major visual product of the Hollywood star system: the glossy 8 x 10 Hollywood publicity photograph.¹⁴ Beginning in the 1930s, Warhol began collecting

photographs of Hollywood stars. As early as 1941, he began manipulating them through colouration and collage. In these acts of celebrity manipulation, the name of the star figured significantly. In art school, he emulated the star photography of Cecil Beaton and Irving Penn and when he moved to New York City he sought to achieve the openly gay lifestyle that

these men embodied for him.¹⁵ Throughout his prolific and multi-faceted career as a visual artist Warhol used the portrait photograph – together with the increasing celebrity culture that depended on it – to fashion his own identity and to ensure the renown of his name. His self-portraits reveal a fascination with celebrity photographs of all kinds and the way that manipulation of his own image works with them. The culture of celebrity – the fashion-, film-, advertising-, and publicity-worlds – reciprocated this fascination and self-construction by employing Warhol during the 1960s and 1970s. Critics have understood the subsequent use of the celebrity artist

¹⁴ For an excellent summary of the facts of Warhol’s lifelong relationship to celebrity and celebrity photographs and photography, which I follow here, see Judith Keller, “Warhol: Andy Warhol’s Photo-Biography,” in Gordon Baldwin and Judith Keller, *Nadar Warhol: Paris New York Photography and Fame* (Los Angeles: the J. Paul Getty Museum, 1999, pp. 133-44 and the catalogue pp. 146-227).

¹⁵ The best discussion of how he and we view Warhol’s significance as an artist may be found in Douglas Crimp, “Getting the Warhol We Deserve: Cultural Studies and Queer Culture”, in *Visible Culture: An Electronic Journal for Visual Studies* (1999): http://www.rochester.edu/in_visible_culture/issue1/crimp/crimp/html.

¹⁶ Matthew Higgs, "Likeness," in Matthew Higgs, Kevin Killian, David Robbins, *Likeness: Portraits of Artists by Other Artists* (San Francisco, CCA Wattis Institute for Contemporary Arts, 2004), p. 13.

¹⁷ On the "Warhol effect," see Simon Whatney, "The Warhol Effect," in Gary Garrels, Ed., *The Work of Andy Warhol* (Seattle: Bay Press, 1989), p. 118.

work – which was perfected by Warhol and has since been deployed by numerous artists – signifies the extent of the circulation of the image of the artist.

Historically speaking, the first sign of the potential cultural effect of the circulation of the celebrity image of the artist may be found in the name.¹⁷ Even the appellation of "divine," which was tied to the name of the so-called first star, Sarah Bernhardt, belongs to an earlier representation of the artist. The Italian Renaissance had a concept of the "divine artist", someone whose creations both came from and manifested an inner vision brought about by a special access to divinity. For example, and most famously, the Italian biographer Giorgio Vasari followed his contemporary Ariosto in describing Michelangelo as *divino*: "Michel, più che mortale, Angel divino."¹⁸ Here the name of the artist explicitly signals the assessment of his singularity on the order of myth.

In the Early Modern period in Europe, this concept of the artist and the assessment or characterization of his work according to an individual style, or *maniera*, were mutually supportive. The work came to be viewed both as of a style that was identifiable as particular to an individual and the visible sign of the artist as an exceptional being.¹⁹ From the Renaissance onwards, the name recognition of the artist could not be separated from factors involving the visual recognition of

image and name to underwrite fashion and lifestyle products as resulting directly from Warhol's example and work.¹⁶

The extensive process of projection or "reverberations" between artist and

qualities inherent in the work of art. Often the name of the artist signaled qualities in his oeuvre deemed particularly significant. Such a practice appears to go back to ancient times, although it is hard to evaluate there because so little writing on art has survived from

the Greek period, including what might have been a significant biographical literature on the artist,

which is where the identification of the artist in the work presumably would have manifested.

The majority of the writing on art, however, consisted of treatises on the invention of forms and techniques by individual craftsmen and artists.²⁰ Some of these Greek names appear to bear the sign of the innovations in art for which the particular artists were known. For example, Eupompus reportedly espoused a return to naturalism, and his name means "trustworthy guide" because he showed the way to this naturalistic manner to the better-known sculptor Lysippus.²¹

Such special names for artists went against the common practice in ancient Greece of

¹⁸ Ariosto, Orlando Furioso, canto xxxiii.2, quoted in Patricia Rubin, Giorgio Vasari: *Art and History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), p. 183, note 160.

¹⁹ Phillip Sohm argues that the artist's style resides in the viewer or art historian, although I believe this is a somewhat simplistic, and possibly ahistorical, understanding of the complex interrelationship between the concept of the artist and the work of art, see Philip Sohm, *Style in the Art Theory of Early Modern Italy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

²⁰ A. A. Donohue, *Xoana and the Origins of Greek Sculpture* (Atlanta, Ga.: Scholars Press, 1988), p. 197.

²¹ Kris and Kurz, 19-20. The reliability of these statements may be questionable, as Kris and Kurz indicate. See J. J. Pollitt, *The Ancient View of Greek Art: Criticism, History, and Terminology* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1974), p. 65: "When asked which of his predecessors he took as a model, Eupompus is reputed to have pointed to a crowd of people and said that one ought to imitate nature itself, not another artist... Schweitzer has suggested that this passage may reflect a profound change in the attitude of the ancient world toward artists and artistic production, a change away from the view that the artist was simply a craftsman who learned his trade from other craftsmen toward the view that the artist must be understood as an independent creator with a deep understanding of nature."

using one name, usually the name of the father – the patronymic.²² Consequently, artists, like kings and philosophers, belonged to a special class of humans who could be known by a “nickname.” For example, the nickname of the philosopher Dio Crysostom meant “the golden

²² For what follows here on Greek names see, *The Lexicon of Greek Personal Names*, <http://www.lgpn.ox.ac.uk/names>.

²³ *Webster's Seventh New Collegiate Dictionary* (Springfield, Ma.: G. C. Merriam, 1967), p. 570.

²⁴ See Richard A. Lanham, *A Handlist of Rhetorical Terms, Second Edition* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), p. 17 whose examples lead me to make this statement.

mouthed”, referring to the eloquent speech for which he must have been particularly known. Because artists have often been known by nicknames, implying that the name of the father did not suffice, the meaning of the term

deserves comment here. The term “nickname” *describes* “instead of or in addition to the one [name] belonging to an individual.”²³ The nickname, therefore, supplements the proper name in order to describe the special particularity of the named being. What I will henceforth be calling the *descriptor name* points to that which the philosopher does or the artist has made, rather than to family or place of birth. The descriptor name relates closely to the rhetorical term *antonomasia*, but more to its ancient Greek meaning as an epithet given in substitution for a proper name, rather than to the modern meaning of “a descriptive phrase for proper name.”²⁴ In the Renaissance, names of artists were often such epithets, such as Il Sodoma, Bramantino, and Vecchieta. Such naming continues today, for instance, the popular music artist Curtis James Jackson III bears the name “50 Cent”, an epithet he chose for himself. The artist Judy Chicago changed her name after the death of husband, giving up Gerowitz, her married name, for the name of the city where she was born and raised, and with which she was identified.²⁵

According to *The Lexicon of Greek Personal Names*, the systematic practice of using hereditary surnames in Europe

did not occur until ca. 1000 A. D. so that the descriptor name would have been among several commonly-used methods of naming in European culture before that time. However, when a methodology of naming became uniform it must have seemed more necessary than in earlier times to provide an explanation for names that deviated from the norm, such as the names of artists. In our day, this explanatory necessity for the name of the artist manifests in the archaeology of art historical knowledge, particularly the *Union List of Artists Names*[®] (ULAN), “a structured vocabulary of artists’ names and biographical information” administered by the Getty Research Institute in Los Angeles, California.²⁶ This informational tool lists 293,000 names and biographies of visual artists, including so-called “variant names,” pseudonyms, and language variants. The expansion of explanatory means for understanding the name of the artist – which have resulted in publications like the ULAN – began with the Early Modern biographies.

The structure and many of the topics found in the early biographical literature on the artist had been modeled on the precedent biographies of the Tuscan poets Dante, Petrarch, and Boccaccio and the *topos* of the explanation of the descriptor name is no exception.²⁷ For example, a long section on Dante Alighieri’s name can be found in Boccaccio’s *Vita di Dante* (ca. 1350). First, the author explains, at length,

²⁵ See now, Gail Levin, *Becoming Judy Chicago: A Biography of the Artist* (New York: Random House, 2007), p. 2.

²⁶ See http://www.getty.edu/research/conducting_research/vocabularies/download.html.

²⁷ See Catherine M. Soussloff, “Lives of Poets and Painters in the Renaissance,” *Word and Image*, 6 (April/June 1990): pp. 154-162.

the unusual facts of how the cognomen or surname came to be derived from the mother's line. Then Boccaccio explains the first name or given name, Dante, meaning "that which is given by God."

Not long after it befell that the due time for her labor arrived, and she brought forth a son whom she and his father by common consent named Dante; and rightly so, or as will be seen as we proceed, the issue corresponded exactly to the name.

This was that Dante of whom the present discourse treats. This was that Dante given to our age by the special grace of God. This was that Dante who was the first to open the way for the return of the muses, banished from Italy. By him the glory of the Florentine idiom has been made manifest; by him all the beauties of the vulgar tongue have been set to fitting numbers; by him dead poesy may truly be said to have been revived. A due consideration of these things will show that he could rightly have had no other name than Dante.²⁸

There is no doubt that Boccaccio would have been aware that Dante's own writings give ample evidence of the ways that names describe the qualities of the person nominated, as he said in *Vita nuova*: "Nomina sunt consequentia rerum."²⁹ In chapter two

²⁸ Giovanni Boccaccio, "The Life of Dante," in *The Earliest Lives of Dante*, Trans. by James Robinson Smith (New York: Russell & Russell, 1901), p. 15.

²⁹ Dante Alighieri, *Dante's 'Vita Nuova'*, Trans. by Mark Musa (Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, 1973, p. 22. I am grateful to Margaret Brose for the following citations from Dante's text and for her discussion of the name in Dante's work.

³⁰ Dante, *Vita Nuova*, p. 3: "la quale fu chiamata da molti Beatrice li quail non sapeano che si chiamare."

of the same text, Dante describes his first meeting with Beatrice, whose name embodies her character as "Bearer of Beatitude."³⁰ Later, when Dante has a vision of Beatrice preceded by Giovanna, the girlfriend of the poet Guido Cavalcanti, he

is told: "The one in front is called Primavera only because of the way she comes today; for I inspired the giver of her name to call her Primavera, meaning 'she will come first' (*prima verra*) on the day that Beatrice shows herself after the dream of her faithful one. And if you will also consider her real name, you will see that this too means 'she will come first', since the name Joan (*Giovanna*) comes from the name of that of John (*Giovanni*) who preceded the True Light..."³¹

Following the model of the poets, the descriptor name may be found in abundance in the Early Modern biographies of artists, but as in Boccaccio's account of Dante these names provide the occasion for explanatory comment. Such is the case with Leonardo da Vinci, who Vasari said was the son of Ser Piero da Vinci (sir Piero, son of Antonio of Vinci), indicating a possibly aristocratic heritage with two prefixes: *Ser* before the father's name and *da* before the name of the small town in which he was born.³² To indicate the patronymic of an illegitimate son was, no doubt, in itself

unusual and an honorific sign. However, for the first time the title of Vasari's biography called Leonardo "Florentine Painter and Sculptor," an obvious way of stressing Leonardo's artistic lineage above that of his family. Vasari also spelled the first name, 'Lionardo,' referring in Italian to the heroic animal, the lion. With these variations on the name of Leonardo da Vinci, Vasari established the artist's strength and nobility together with a Florentine pedigree. Vasari also invoked both visual and name recognition at the level of myth at the beginning of the biography:

³¹ Dante, *Vita Nuova*, p. 52.

³² On the significance of Leonardo's name for his style and the concept of style *tout court*, see my forthcoming essay: "Discourse/figure/love: The Location of Style in the Early Modern Sources on Leonardo da Vinci," in *Leonardo da Vinci and the Ethics of Style*, Ed. by Claire Farago (Manchester: University of Manchester Press, 2008), pp. 65-89.



██████████ roj. 07.12.1970 v kraju Bergamo, Italija, se dovoli sprememba osebnega imena v novo osebno ime Janez JANŠA.

XXXX XXXXXXXX, born 28.05.1973 in Ljubljana, Slovenia, is allowed the change of his personal name to the new personal name, Janez Janša.

Janša

Janez Janša, Signature, 2008, Marker or rubber-stamp on paper, 14 x 23 cm

Janez Janša, Janez Janša, Janez Janša
Signature (Conspire. Transmediale 08), Berlin, 2008
Action
Marker or rubber-stamp on book pages 216-217, *Conspire. Transmediale Parcours 01*, Stephen Kovats, Thomas Munz (editors), Revolver, Frankfurt am Main, 2008
14 x 23 cm
Edition of 1000
Courtesy: Maska



██████████, roj. 06.02.1964 na Rijeki, Hrvaška, se dovoli sprememba osebnega imena v novo osebno ime Janez JANŠA.

XXXX XXXXXXX, born 06.02.1964 in Rijeka, Croatia, is allowed the change of his personal name to the new personal name, Janez Janša

Janez Janša

Janez Janša, Signature, 2008. Marker or rubber-stamp on paper, 14 x 23 cm

Janez Janša, Janez Janša, Janez Janša
Signature (Conspire. Transmediale 08), Berlin, 2008
Action
Marker or rubber-stamp on book pages 212-213, *Conspire.*
Transmediale Parcours 01, Stephen Kovats, Thomas Munz
(editors), Revolver, Frankfurt am Main, 2008
14 x 23 cm
Edition of 1000
Courtesy: Maska



██████████ roj. 07.12.1970 v kraju Bergamo, Italija, se dovoli sprememba osebnega imena v novo osebno ime Janez JANŠA.

XXXX XXXXXXX, born 07.12.1970 in Bergamo, Italy, is allowed the change of his personal name to the new personal name, Janez Janša

A large, stylized handwritten signature of 'Janez Janša' written in black marker or rubber-stamp on a white background. The signature is slanted and occupies the right side of the page.

Janez Janša, Signature, 2008, Marker or rubber-stamp on paper, 14 x 23 cm

Janez Janša, Janez Janša, Janez Janša
Signature (Conspire. Transmediale 08), Berlin, 2008
Action
Marker or rubber-stamp on book pages 214-215, *Conspire.*
Transmediale Parcours 01, Stephen Kovats, Thomas Munz
(editors), Revolver, Frankfurt am Main, 2008
14 x 23 cm
Edition of 1000
Courtesy: Maska

The greatest gifts are often seen, in the course of nature, rained by celestial influences on human creatures; and sometimes, in supernatural fashion, beauty, grace, and talent are united beyond measure in one single person, in a manner that to whatever such an one turns his attention, his every action is so divine, that surpassing all other men, it makes itself clearly known as a thing bestowed by God (as it is), and not acquired by human art. This was seen by all mankind in Leonardo da Vinci, in whom, besides a beauty of body never sufficiently extolled, there was an infinite grace in all his actions; and so great was his genius, and such its growth, that to whatever difficulties he turned his mind, he solved them with ease. In him was great bodily strength, joined to dexterity, with a spirit and courage ever royal and magnanimous; and the fame of his name so increased, that not only in his lifetime was he held in esteem, but his reputation became even greater among posterity after his death.³³

Importantly, Vasari was the first writer to systematically include portraits with the biographies of artists. He explained the great lengths to which he went to obtain true likenesses, thereby underlining the interconnection between the name and visual representations of the faces of the artists towards establishing a broader recognition of the artist in historical representation.³⁴ This is the moment in Western art when the name, the work, and the body (particularly the face)

³³ Giorgio Vasari, "Life of Leonardo da Vinci Painter and Sculptor of Florence," in *Lives of the Most Eminent Painters, Sculptors & Architects*, Trans. by Gaston Du C. De Vere (London: Medici Society, 1913), vol. 4: p. 89.

³⁴ Rubin, pp. 205-08.

become mutually-supporting aspects of the concept of the singular artist. These are the factors of the name of the artist that later fed into

the concept of the star in popular culture. In this sense, portraits supplement and enhance – even further than a descriptor name alone could do – the name of the artist. After Vasari, publishing portraits and biographies of artists together became the established literary-historical convention. 95

Significantly, the repetition or iteration of the name of the artist is central to this convention, as illustrated by Giovanni Pietro Bellori's book of 1672: *Le vite de pittori, scultori et architetti moderni*. There, the narrative of each artist's life is preceded by at least three iterations of the name of the artist, together with illustrative material each on separate pages: 1) a title page with the name of the artist imposed over an allegorical figure, 2) a portrait engraving of the artist with the name of the artist either at the base or in the portrait itself, and 3) the name of the artist on the first page of the narrative, above which can be found another allegorical figure. In the 1651 edition of Leonardo da Vinci's *Trattato della Pittura*, which also includes a biography, the first page consists of an engraved portrait of the artist with the name of the artist illusionistically inscribed on the base. The simplicity of this arrangement underlines the aspects of the artist required in historical representation – the name, the portrait, and the work, indicated in the title page by the artist who is visualized literally as the work of art.

I have been arguing that the elevation of the artist to celebrity status further enhances what had already been established in the early biographies: the belief that the artist is in the work of art and that his character and body are significant to it.³⁵ I have already noted the significance of the star in this culture of celebrity and the recognition of body and name that this implies. The philosopher Bernard Williams posited the body as essential

to the personal identity of any individual, but, as we have seen, the artist's body is triangulated in historical representation with his name and his work creating a distinctive kind of being, one that is known both visually and textually.³⁵ The proper name distinguishes beings from one another and the nickname and the descriptor name often further distinguish the singular artist,

³⁵ I have expanded upon much of what I state here in summary form in Chapter One of *The Absolute Artist*, pp. 19-42.

³⁶ Bernard Williams, *Problems of the Self: Philosophical Papers 1956-1972* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973), pp. 1-10.

thereby heightening the significance of both for the work of art. This heightened significance of the artist's name – or the celebrity artist's name – surfaces

in the disciplinary functions of art history related to connoisseurship, attribution, and the definition of personal style. Two locations in the work of the artist may be explored in support of this last statement: the signature of the artist, in which the textual and the visual may be said to merge or superimpose; and the use of visual quotation in the work of art, which, based on the history given here, cannot be separated from the name of the artist. In both instances, the artist may be said to be subject to quotation; as Mieke Bal argues when she investigates the use of Caravaggio for art history, writing: "Quotation then is situated beyond individual intention, at the intersection of objecthood and semiotic weight."³⁷

The signature of the artist may be said to be as mutable as the name of the artist. It is often the case that individual artists "sign" their work, but the variation on signatures remains a major source of interest to scholarly

³⁷ Mieke Bal, *Quoting Caravaggio: Contemporary Art, Preposterous History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999), p. 14.

catalogues and the ULAN because signatures aid in the authentication of

works of art for the market. In his book on the social history of style in the fifteenth century, Michael Baxandall demonstrated that the name of the artist, as well as his signature or the recognition of his "hand" (mainly in documents), became part of "the economic basis for the cult of pictorial skill."³⁸ In the early biographical literature, the hand of the artist is sometimes

discussed, while the signature of the artist is barely mentioned.

One of the first instances of an

extensive discussion of the hand of the artist occurs with Leonardo da Vinci. The discussion of his hand figures prominently no doubt because he was known for his writings on art, done in "mirror" writing, as much as for his paintings. In 1517-18 Antonio de Beatis wrote: "One cannot indeed expect any more good work from him, as a certain paralysis has crippled his right hand."³⁹ In this passage the 'hand' of Leonardo serves as a descriptive and metaphorical marker for the style of the artist. The discussion of the hand, or *mano* in Italian, functions to indicate how the artist literally marks out and describes the bodies that are represented and of how he may be distinguished from others: "he can no longer paint with the sweetness of style that he used to have, and he can only make drawings and teach

others."⁴⁰ *Divinum Ingenium, Divina Manus'* forms part of an epitaph appended by Vasari to the 1550 edition of da Vinci's biography. The Latin may well be a play on the name of the artist. In a discussion

³⁸ Michael Baxandall, *Painting and Experience in Fifteenth Century Italy: A Primer on the Social History of Pictorial Style*, 2nd Edition (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), "Preface to the First Edition", n.p.

³⁹ See, Ludwig Goldscheider, *Leonardo Life and Work* (London: Phaidon, 1959), p.

³⁹ Translation of the Italian of Antonio de Beatis in Ludwig von Pastor, *Erläuterungen und Ergänzungen zu Janssens Geschichte des Deutschen Volkes*, Vol. 4: *Die Reise Cardinals Luigi d'Aragona durch Deutschland, die Niederlande, Frankreich, und Ueberitalien von 1517-1518 von Antonio de Beatis* (Freiburg im Breisgau: Herderiche, 1905), p. 143.



JANEZ
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of the variation on the signatures found in the paintings and prints of the nineteenth century artist Edouard Manet, James Rubin demonstrates the significance of wordplay and mirroring between hand (*la main, manus*)

⁴⁰ Beatris quoted and discussed in Carmen C. Bambach, "Leonardo, Left-Handed Draftsman and Writer," in *Leonardo da Vinci Master Draftsman*, Ed. by Carmen C. Bambach (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art and New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), p. 239.

⁴¹ James Rubin, "Signatures and the Double Self," a chapter from a forthcoming monograph on Manet. I am grateful to James Rubin for allowing me to read this important study prior to publication.

We could say that beginning with Manet Avant-Garde artists and movements play a major role in the increasing variety found in the names of the artist in modernity and post-modernity. According to Karen Moss, the ubiquity of the name changes of Dada, Surrealist, and other Avant-Garde artists of the first half of the twentieth century indicates a desire for an alternative personality, or as she puts it, an "altered ego."⁴² An emerging self-

⁴² See the extremely important but little-known exhibition catalogue and collection of essays on this topic: Karen Moss, *Altered Egos* (Santa Monica: Santa Monica Museum of Art, 1994).

such as Marcel Duchamp as Rose Sélavay, Alfred Jarry as Père Ubu, Kurt Schwitters as Anna Blume, Lucy Schwab as Claude Cahun, Emmanuel Radnitsky as Man Ray, and Maya Derenkowsky as Maya Deren, to call out but a few. According to Kris and Kurz, however, this self-consciousness about one's position in the art tradition occurs at the professional level,

and name (Manet).⁴¹

In Manet's case, the signature functions as a kind of visual punning. Rubin views the new emphasis on the inscribed signature of the name of the artist in Manet's painting as evidence of the integration of realism with the first Avant-Garde aesthetic in the history of art.

consciousness about the representation of the artistic self may surely be recognized in the proliferation of such name changes,

while the "enacted biography" of the artist, which prominently includes the name change, points to the unconscious.⁴³

To be sure, the self-consciousness that leads to the appropriation of a *nom de plume* functions at the individual level in ways that the historical significance of the name of the artist that I have outlined here may indeed subvert. An investigation of the particular artists who changed their names reveals a number of more or less motivated reasons for doing so. In brief, Amelia Jones has argued that Marcel Duchamp's appropriation of the name of a woman distinguishes, for the first time, the figure of a woman or feminized artist together with the possibilities of her role in the history of art.⁴⁴ But a convincing argument has been made by Milly Heyd that Man Ray's name change relates to a desire to conceal his roots as

the son of a Jewish sweatshop worker.⁴⁵ My own work on the avant-garde filmmaker Maya Deren reveals that the meaning of the artist's assumed name shifts according to who speaks her name or writes her history.⁴⁶ This returns us to Freud's observation that the name signifies differently according to context or hearer.

The same point has been made by Jacques Derrida in regard to speech of any kind.⁴⁷ However, as we have seen, the proper name has a heightened resonance in speech, a point made manifest by the existence and definition of the "proper name." In addition, the name

⁴³ Kris and Kurz, p. 132.

⁴⁴ Amelia Jones, *Postmodernism and the En-Gendering of Marcel Duchamp* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993).

⁴⁵ Milly Heyd, "Man Ray/ Emmanuel Radnitsky: Who is Behind *The Enigma of Isidore Ducasse?*" in *Complex Identities: Jewish Consciousness and Modern Art*, Ed. by Matthew Baigell and Milly Heyd (New Brunswick, N. J.: Rutgers University Press, 2001, pp. 115-141).

⁴⁶ Catherine M. Soussloff, "Maya Deren Herself," in *Maya Deren and the American Avant-Garde*, Ed. by Bill Nichols (Berkeley: University of California Press, pp. 105-129).

⁴⁷ Jacques Derrida, "Signature Event Context," in *Limited Inc* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1977), pp. 1-23.

of the artist further increases – in the many ways that I have outlined here – the magnitude of

the resonance of the proper name. Derrida also argued that iteration affects the speech act or event in ways that the originator of the event cannot control, and Amelia Jones explores an aspect of his argument in her essay in this volume. It must be observed that the heightened iteration of any proper name will be bound to occur in our present context, a society that legislates a normalized identity through the marker of the name in "identity papers" (such as the birth certificate, driver's license, and passport) and one in which celebrity figures large.

I have already explored the issue of celebrity in regard to the name of the artist in the twentieth century. When the culture that has particularized the name of the artist demands the iteration of the proper name as a matter of course and when the artist enacts that iteration, the act of iteration assumes a heightened significance in the context of the name of the artist. This is the situation or event in which *Janez Janša* has/ve emerged and is/are articulated. In this current situation, it could be said that the name of the artist has drowned out or overwhelmed the particularity of the work of art. If it is the case now that the creation no longer belongs to the artist, as Rushdie asserts in the opening of this essay, then the artist and the work of art no longer appear in the same relationship as they did

in the past. Recent theories and histories of "performance" and "performativity" have implicitly argued as much.⁴⁸ The "actions" of Janez Janša, including their appropriation of a name from an overtly political context, may be placed in this realm of performance.

The conclusion to our investigation of the name of the artist may already be obvious but it bears stating: when the artist performs the

name of the artist as the work of art in the present social context, relationships to the concepts of art, the artist, and the institutions of art manifest in ways that relate to present historical and political situations. Just as the name of the artist remains imbedded in historical discourse, this present includes references to the past imbedded in it.

However, no longer transparent to each other, as they once were, the artist and the work of art have, to a great extent, lost each other as a stable referent. This situation, or result, of the name of the artist should not be lamented as a loss for art, but recognized rather as the outcome of the representation of the artist today. The overtly political referent in *Janez Janša* names the state of being of the artist and the work of art in the new era.

⁴⁸ A good place to begin to explore these changes is the introduction to *The Twentieth-Century Performance Reader, 2nd Edition*, Ed. by Michael Huxley and Noel Witts (London: Routledge, 2002), pp. 1-9.

Tadej Kovačič

The Right to (the Change of) Name
– A Comparative Judicial Survey



Janez Janša, Janez Janša, Janez Janša
*Waiting for JJ (Los Angeles International
Airport / LAX),*
Los Angeles, 2007
Digital photography, 2448 x 3264 px
Courtesy: artists

I. THE PERSONAL NAME AND ITS MEANING FOR THE INDIVIDUAL

The personal name is a key attribute of the individual's personality,

and its function is to mark the person as an individual and thus differentiate him/her from other people. In a narrower sense, the personal name serves as a means of identification and individualization; in a broader sense, it is a symbol of the personality, with all the idiosyncrasies and qualities that distinguish the person as a particular social being.

In terms of its differentiating function, the personal name often reveals the individual's connection with a specific geographic space and indicates his/her nationality, ethnicity, and/or religious belonging; in certain *milieus*, it also indicates the person's social status.

Last names, in particular, are often indicative of connections between specific people that would have otherwise remained more or less invisible.¹

In everyday life, making these connections known is not always beneficial to the

¹ Barbara Novak, »Osebno ime in človekove pravice«. *Pravnik*, ISSN 0032-6976, Vol. 52, No. 1/3, 1997, p. 84.

² Historical evidence shows that people have changed their names under various kinds of hegemonic pressure.

individual and can even become an obstacle in the process of the individual's integration into

his/her environment.² The personal name can thus become a trigger for discrimination and a pretext for limiting the individual's freedom of expression in a broader sense.

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II. THE RIGHT TO THE (CHANGE OF) NAME AS A HUMAN RIGHT

Initially, the individual's possession of a name was a public duty; the transformation of this from the duty to *the right* to have a name occurred later.

The judicial nature of the right to a name was contentious for a long time. The French theory considered the right to a name a right of ownership; others believed that the right to a name constituted a right to a non-material good. The opinion was gradually established that it was a personal right. A combined theoretical approach – exemplified in Mitič's

work – argues that the right to a name constitutes a personal right as well as a legal obligation.³

The institution of the personal name exists not only for the

³ Alojzij Finžgar, *Osebnostne pravice = Die Persönlichkeitsrechte*. Ljubljana: Slovenska akademija znanosti in umetnosti, 1985, p. 92.

⁴ Lovro Šturm, *Upravnopravne institucije, izbrana poglavja* (study material). 4th revised and enlarged edition. Ljubljana: Pravna fakulteta, 1986, p. 42.

benefit of the person possessing a name, but also for the benefit of the judicial order and judicial security.⁴

Various human rights are related to the personal name: the right to privacy, freedom of expression, the right to use one's own language and alphabet, the right to express one's nationality, the right to a cultural identity, the right to dignity, and equal rights under the law.

The right to a personal name has been an international standard for a while. It is explicitly stated as such in the second paragraph of Article 24 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights,

wherein it states that immediately after birth, every child must be entered into the Register and s/he must have a name.⁵ The same provision is made in Article 7 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.⁶

⁵ The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly Resolution No. 2200 A (XXI) of 16th December 1966. It came into force on 23rd March 1976.

⁶ The Convention on the Rights of the Child was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly Resolution No. 44/25 of 20th November 1989. It came into force on 2nd September 1990.

the change of name is recognized only in legislation, but it is not mentioned in the constitution, the highest judicial document of the state.

III. THE EUROPEAN COURT OF HUMAN RIGHTS JUDICATURE

On several occasions, the European Court of Human Rights has had to deal with questions related to the individual's right to the change of personal name.⁷ Since the right is not managed directly by the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights (ECPHR), the Court can only judge about limitations and abuses of this right from the perspective of other rights and

⁷ The most famous example is the sentence in the *Stjerna versus Finland* case of 25th November 1994. Also important are the sentences in the following cases: *Johansson versus Finland* of 6th September 2007, *Burghartz versus Switzerland* of 22nd February 1994, *Guillot versus France* of 24th October 1996, and *Cossey versus the United Kingdom* of 27th September 1990.

The right to the change of personal name has not yet acquired the same international recognition, and it is reasonable to assume that this will not happen any time soon. On a national level, the right to

freedoms covered by ECPHR, such as the right to respect for private and family life (Article 8), the freedom of expression (Article 10), and the prohibition of discrimination (Article 14).⁸

In the *Stjerna* case,⁹ the Court used the right of respect for private and family life to adjudicate a request for the change of last name; the Court deemed that the personal name as a means of one's identification and one's tie to one's family concerns the individual's private and family life.¹⁰ This connection between personal name and privacy originates in the differentiating function of the name, by means of which the individual communicates certain personal information to

his/her environment. In this sense, the individual's name (inadvertently) reveals to the community the individual's national/ethnic identity, his/her membership in a certain caste or clan, his/her religious beliefs, nobility or the lack thereof, socio-economic status, and – last, but not least – the individual's sex. Therefore, the Court ruled, the limitation of the right to the change of personal name may interfere with the individual's right to privacy.

In principle, the right to privacy guarantees the individual the right to decide how much of his/her privacy s/he is prepared to share with others. For this reason, the individual has the right to change his/her name to be able to conceal private information evident from his/her name. This is particularly

⁸ The European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights, drafted by the Council of Europe, was signed on 4th November 1950. It came into force on 3rd Sept 1953.

⁹ Mr. *Stjerna* wanted to change his last name into *Tavaststjerna*, which was his family's surname more than two hundred years ago. The name was changed into *Stjerna* when one of Mr. *Stjerna's* ancestors was born as an illegitimate child, and was only given a part of his father's surname (*Stjerna*). Mr. *Stjerna's* request for the change of name was rejected due to the very restrictive measures in Finnish legislation concerning the change of the family name.

¹⁰ Contemporary theory defines privacy as the sphere of the individual's activities, which must not be interfered with unless special (legal) authorization is given. The right to privacy establishes for the individual a space of intimacy, and the state guarantees the individual the right to choose which interventions into this space, if any, s/he will allow.

important in those cases where the individual does not want his ethnic background, nationality, or another aspect of his/her identity to be manifest, for they might hinder his/her integration into the environment

¹¹ Barbara Novak, 1997, p. 85. where s/he resides.¹¹

If the state imposes excessive limitations on the possibility of changing one's personal name, this can affect the individual's privacy, for the public will know more about the individual in question than the latter desires.

Yet, the right to privacy is not unlimited. As the second paragraph of Article 8 of ECPHR stipulates, the right to privacy may be limited in the interest of national security or the economic well-being of the country, for the protection of health or morals, or for the protection of the rights and freedoms of others. In the *Stjerna* case, the Court pointed out this stipulation and explained that the public interest—regardless of the reasons given by the individual why s/he wants to change his/her name—may require (judicial) limitations of the right to the change of name. What follows from this is that a rejection of the request for the change of personal name does not necessarily constitute an unacceptable interference with the individual's privacy. When deciding about limiting the individual's human right, the balance between individual and collective interests is decisive, and the limitation of the right is acceptable if the interests of the community take precedence over those of the individual.

Finally, in the *Stjerna* case, the Court also touched upon the issue of the legitimacy of limiting the right to the change of personal name within the context of freedom of expression, which entails the freedom to communicate any kind of information to the public.¹² In this case, the Court found that

the state must never force the individual to change his/her name, yet, the Court took no further step. The right to the change of name was not treated as a right which enables the individual to appear and act in public (official) life with a name of his/her choice, even though this certainly constitutes an important aspect of the individual's freedom of expression. Since Article 10 of ECPHR mentions freedom of expression and the right to privacy for the same reason, the issue of limiting freedom of expression again brings to fore the decisiveness of the balance between collective and individual interests.

¹² The stipulation of Article 10 of ECPHR regarding freedom of expression requires complex interpretation. On the one hand, freedom of expression is interpreted as freedom of self-expression and freedom of free flow of information; on the other hand, freedom of expression reflects important rights, freedoms and even social needs concerning acquisition of information.

IV. JUDICIAL REGULATIONS WORLDWIDE (APPENDIX)

The table in the appendix features a short review of judicial regulations regarding the change of personal name in several countries around the world. Some states give the individual a fair amount of freedom to choose his/her personal name, while other states impose severe restrictions. In some states, the limitations are content-based (the change is possible only if sound reasons are stated), while in others, formal aspects of the change are brought to the foreground (the change is allowed if a special procedure confirms that all required conditions have been met). Finally, the costs (fees) of such procedures may, also, be considered a limitation.

In most countries, the change of personal name requires sound justification:

- the content or the meaning of the name (scornful, offensive, shameful, indecent,

- humiliating, extravagant)
- the grammar of the local language (difficult pronunciation and spelling, translation from a foreign language)
 - indication of belonging to a social group (religion, sex, nationality, citizenship)
 - pragmatic circumstances (long-term use of the name which is different from the individual's official name)
 - differentiation between people (homonymy – two people with the same first name and the same surname, frequent occurrence of particular surnames)

Some countries also limit the right to the change of the personal name with a time limit, that is, with the specification of the minimum period of time since a previous name change; in some countries, the number of name changes is also limited. The procedure itself is fairly simple in the countries where the change of name is regulated by common law (e.g. England, Wales, Northern Ireland, USA); the most complicated are the procedures in those countries where a formal investigation is required to determine whether or not the individual meets all required criteria (e.g. Belgium, Australia). Public notice and possible objections by third parties are also considerable obstacles in acquiring a new personal name.

V. IN LIEU OF A CONCLUSION

For now, it is impossible to speak about a general, universal right to the change of personal name, which would be applicable everywhere and to everyone. The states limit this right in various ways, and in its cases thus far, the European Court of Human Rights has ruled that the individual has the right to change his/her personal name if this is required for the protection of the individual's privacy. No doubt, the Court will soon deal with the question of whether or not freedom of expression gives the individual the right to appear and act in his/her public life with a name of his/her own choice.

This would be an important step towards achieving judicial uniformity in regard to the change of personal name in all ECPHR states. Of course, the possibility of limiting this right will remain open in those cases where the change of name could constitute a threat to the national security, health, morals, or the rights and freedoms of others.

Translated by Polona Petek

	Reasons	Procedure	Costs
EUROPE			
Austria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Compelling reasons (e.g. offensive, contemptuous, difficult pronunciation or spelling, foreign origin, duplication of personal details) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · The application must state the reasons for the change. · A minimum of 10 years must pass between two consecutive changes. 	€500 altogether for the change
Belgium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Last name: compelling reasons (e.g. family-related, personal, socio-historical, administrative ...) · First name: no restrictions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · The change of last name is not a right - it is a royal favour. · The application must state the reasons for the change · The change is not permitted if it could create confusion or cause damage to another person. · The change of name is announced in the Gazette, and third parties may object. The procedure for the change of last name takes 18 to 24 months. 	€49 – 740 for the change of last name €490 in special cases €490 for the change of first name €49 in justified cases
Bulgaria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Humiliating, offensive, socially unacceptable, other compelling reasons 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Judicial procedure 	(no information available)
The Czech Republic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Last name: offensive, contemptuous or another compelling reason · First name: no restrictions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · The application must state the reasons for the change · The change of first name is not permitted if it does not correspond to the applicant's gender. 	CZK100 (€4) for the change of last name that is offensive, laughable or something similar. CZK1,000 (€40) for the change in all other cases

	Reasons	Procedure	Costs
Croatia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Compelling reason 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · The application must state the reasons for the change. · When the application is publicly announced, third parties may object · The change is not permitted if it conflicts with the morals and mores of the applicant's place of residence. · The change is not permitted if the applicant is involved in criminal proceedings, or if s/he has been convicted, until the sentence takes effect and while the legal consequences of the verdict are still in force, or if s/he wants to evade liabilities. · A minimum of 5 years must pass between two consecutive changes 	(no information available)
Estonia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · No restrictions 	(no information available)	EEK600 (€38) per change
France	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Last name: contemptuous, offensive, foreign origin, inciting hatred, or if a last name other than the official one has been used for a longer period of time · First name: no restrictions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · The application must state the reasons for the change. · The change of name is announced in the Gazette, and third parties may object. 	€150 per change

	Reasons	Procedure	Costs
Germany	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Compelling reasons (e.g. offensive, contemptuous, difficult pronunciation or spelling, sex change ...) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · The application must state the reasons for the change. · The applicant's financial liabilities are checked. 	€2.50 – 255 for the change of first name €2.50 – 1,022 for the change of last name
Italy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · The name is contemptuous, shameful, indicative of nationality, or other compelling reasons 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · The application must state the reasons for the change. · A summary of the application is published, so that third parties may object. · The change of last name is not permitted if the name is historically important or if it belongs to a person who is important or very well known in the town where the applicant was born or where s/he resides, as this could cause confusion 	€15 for change of first name, last name or an addition to the name.
Luxembourg	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Last name: compelling reasons · First name: no restrictions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · The application must state the reasons for the change. · The change of name is announced in the Gazette, third parties may object. 	(no information available)
The Netherlands	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Last name: compelling reasons (foreign origin, offensive, contemptuous, very frequent) · First name: no restrictions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · The application must state the reasons for the change. · The new last name must be derived from the old one or, in exceptional cases, a new Dutch-sounding last name or the parents' last name is permissible. 	€390 per change

	Reasons	Procedure	Costs
Poland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Last name: offensive, contemptuous, foreign origin, same as first name, or if a last name other than the official one has been used for a longer period of time · First name: no restrictions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · The application must state the reasons for the change · The change of first name is not permitted if it does not correspond to the applicant's gender. 	PLN37 (€10) per change.
Romania	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Last name: indecent, contemptuous, customary use of another last name · First name: translation from a foreign language, sex change, other compelling reasons 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · The application must state the reasons for the change. · The change of name is announced in the Gazette. · The change is not permitted if the applicant is involved in criminal proceedings. 	RON1 (€0.30) for each requested change
Russia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · No restrictions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · First name, last name, and patronym change are permitted. · The application must state the reasons for the change. 	RUB500 (€14) per change
Scotland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · No restrictions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Only one first name change is permitted. · A maximum of three last name changes is permitted, · A minimum of 5 years must pass between two consecutive changes. 	GBP36 (€48) per change

	Reasons	Procedure	Costs
Serbia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · No restrictions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · The change is not permitted if it conflicts with the morals and mores of the applicant's place of residence. · The change is not permitted if the applicant is involved in criminal proceedings, or if s/he has been convicted, until the sentence takes effect and while the legal consequences of the verdict are still in force 	Less than €5 per change
Slovenia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · No restrictions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · The change is not permitted if it goes against the interest of public safety or morals, or if this is required for safeguarding the rights and freedoms of other people. · The change is not permitted if the applicant has been lawfully convicted, until the sentence takes effect and while the legal consequences of the verdict are still in force. 	€43 for the first change, €86 for all subsequent changes.

	Reasons	Procedure	Costs
Spain	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Last name: the sequence of last names may be changed; they may be translated from any foreign language or into any Spanish language; · First name: compelling reason (e.g. detrimental, confusing, does not fit gender, translation into any Spanish language, customary use of another name, homonymy) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · The application must state the reasons for the change. · Only one first name change is permitted. · The change of first name is not permitted if it would cause damage to another person · The change of first name is not permitted if it does not correspond to the current interpretation of historical, mythological, legendary or fictional personae, geographical names or fictional names. · The change of first name is not permitted if the name is extravagant. 	(no information available)

	Reasons	Procedure	Costs
ASIA			
Sweden	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Compelling reason 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · The application must state the reasons for the change. · The application is usually published in the Gazette, and third parties may object. · The change is not permitted if the chosen personal name is contemptuous or offensive, if a first name is used as last name or vice versa, if it denotes place or venue, or if it conflicts with the domestic linguistic image (structure, accent, spelling). · The change of last name is not permitted if: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · it belongs to someone else · it used to belong to a significant family that has become extinct · it is a well-known foreign last name · it belongs to a famous artist · it is the title of a copyright-protected work · it is a brand or company name, etc. 	<p>SEK800 (€85) for the change of first name SEK1,500 (€160) for the change of last name</p>
Switzerland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Compelling reason 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · The application must state the reasons for the change. 	<p>CHF50 (€30) for the application form CHF300 (€180) for the change of first name CHF600 (€360) for the change of last name</p>

	Reasons	Procedure	Costs
United Kingdom (Except Scotland)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · No restrictions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Common law procedure. · The change of name can be confirmed by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · a letter from a trustworthy person (lawyer, priest etc.) · a newspaper announcement · a special statement for the CAB (Citizens Advice Bureau) · deed-poll 	GBP34 (€45) for a change based on a unilateral statement
China	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Last name: if the same first name and last name belong to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - another person at work, in school or similar, - someone in the family up to, and including, relatives twice removed - someone living at the same location as the applicant for at least 6 months - someone who is also taking an exam for government clerks - someone against whom a warrant has been issued · First name: if it is vulgar or if another compelling reason is stated · Both: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - if first name and last name are translated from another language, which is difficult to use - if the applicant has renounced monastic vows - if this is required to perform a state job 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · The applicant must not have a warrant issued against him/her and s/he must not be remanded in custody. · The applicant must not be sentenced to imprisonment, community service or imprisonment in a youth correctional facility (the restriction remains effective 5 years after the sentence has been served) 	(no information available)

	Reasons	Procedure	Costs
India	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · No restrictions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · The intended change must be announced in the local newspaper. · The change of name is announced in the Gazette. 	INR700 (€12) for the announcement in the Gazette INR900 (16€) if a name is assumed which is typical of a certain religion but not of faith
Kazakhstan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Discordant name, difficult pronunciation, nationality of the ancestors (e.g. omission of the Russian suffix) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · First name, last name and patronym change are permitted · The application must state the reasons for the change. 	KZT97 (€0.50) for a new certificate KZT97 (€0.50) per change
Pakistan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Sex change or religious conversion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · First name and patronym change are permitted 	Free of charge
Philippines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Difficult pronunciation or spelling, contemptuous or shameful, if a last name other than the official one has been used in public for a longer period of time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Only first name and nickname can be changed. · The application is published twice in the daily newspapers. · The applicant must not have been convicted and s/he must not be subject to judicial procedure. · The change is publicly announced. 	PHP3000 (€50) per change
THE AMERICAS			
Argentina	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Homonymy, does not fit gender, extravagant, contemptuous 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · The application must state the reasons for the change · The application is published in the Gazette, and third parties may object. · Complaints are published in the Register of Personal Affairs 	(no information available)

	Reasons	Procedure	Costs
Canada (Quebec)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · If a last name other than the official one has been used in public for the last 5 years. · Foreign origin, difficult pronunciation or spelling, contemptuous or shameful, other compelling reasons 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · It must first be verified that compelling reasons are stated. · The change is announced in the Gazette and the daily newspapers ,and third parties may object. 	C\$300 (€200) for the administrative costs and the announcement
Chile	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · If intended name has been used for the past 5 years. · If current name is contemptuous, offensive or detrimental, must be translated from a foreign language, or needs a spelling or pronunciation adjustment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Only one change is permitted · The change is announced in the Gazette, and third parties may object. 	(no precise information available, free of charge for the poor)
Colombia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · No restrictions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · The application must state the applicant's blood type. · The change is publicly announced 	(no information available)
The Dominican Republic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · No restrictions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Only first name change is permitted. · The application must state the reasons for the change · The change is announced in the Gazette, and third parties may object. 	DOP6 (€0,10) per change
Honduras	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Contemptuous, offensive or detrimental, difficult pronunciation or spelling, translation from a foreign language 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · The application must state the reasons for the change. 	(no information available)

	Reasons	Procedure	Costs
Mexico	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Customary use of a name other than the official one, offensive, contemptuous, translation from a foreign language, homonymy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Judicial procedure · The change is publicly announced. 	(no information available)
Peru	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Extravagant, contemptuous, offensive, homonymy · If the applicant's name is the same as that of a known criminal or of a person who has been ridiculed in public, other compelling reasons (inability to work, discrimination, victimization) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Judicial procedure · The change is publicly announced 	(no information available)
El Salvador	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Homonymy, indecent, detrimental, translation from a foreign language 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Only one change is permitted. · The applicant must not be subject to judicial procedure. · The change is announced in the Gazette, third parties may object 	(no information available)
USA		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Common law procedure is possible – similar to England 	
(California)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · No restrictions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · State law procedure. · The application need not state the reasons for the change. · The application is publicly announced, and third parties may object. 	US\$335 (€225) for the change in a judicial procedure

	Reasons	Procedure	Costs
(Texas)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Compelling reason 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · State law procedure. · The application must state the reasons for the change · If the applicant has been previously convicted, s/he must be fingerprinted and given an FBI number. · Announcement of the application is not compulsory, but if done third parties may object. · The change is not permitted if the applicant does not benefit from it or if it is not in the interest of the community. · The change is not permitted if the applicant wants to avoid judicial procedure, formal agreements or duties, or if s/he could thus defraud someone. 	<p>(no information about the change available)</p> <p>US\$10 (€7) for the certificate verifying the change</p>
AFRICA			
Madagascar	(no information available)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Only one change is permitted. · Judicial procedure 	(no information available)
The Seychelles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · No restrictions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · The change is announced in the Gazette three times in the period of four months · Third parties may object. 	SR500 (€42) for the application
The Republic of South Africa	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · First name: no restrictions · Last name: compelling reason 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · The application must state the reasons for the change of last name. · The change is announced in the Gazette 	<p>ZAR80 (€8) for the change of first name</p> <p>ZAR275 (€27) for the change of last name</p>

	Reasons	Procedure	Costs
Tunisia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · First name: if it is not of Arab or Maghrebi origin, if it creates confusion, if it is contemptuous or the same as that of a brother or a sister · Both: when citizenship is granted 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · The application must state the reasons for the change. · The change is announced in the Gazette 	TND5 (€3) per change
AUSTRALIA AND OCEANIA			
Australia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · No restrictions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · The application must state the reasons for the change and provide information · about the applicant's financial circumstances. · A minimum of 12 months must pass between two consecutive changes. · The application can be rejected if the new name is obscene, offensive, too long, unpronounceable or in conflict with public interest. · The application may be rejected if a previous name change was used for illegal or fraudulent purposes 	AU\$58.80 (€35) per change
New Zealand	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · No restrictions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · The new name must not be offensive, its length must not exceed 100 characters, · and it must not contain official titles or positions, punctuation marks, brackets or ciphers 	NZ\$125 (€66) for the applicants born in the state NZ\$80 (€42) for the applicants born overseas

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 photography,
20 x 30 cm
Photo: Borut Kranjc
Courtesy: artists



Janez Janša, Janez Janša,
Janez Janša
Signature – Lojze Peterle,
Prežganje, 2007
Action
Black marker on photography,
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.*)

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. “Osebnostno 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 modernist 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

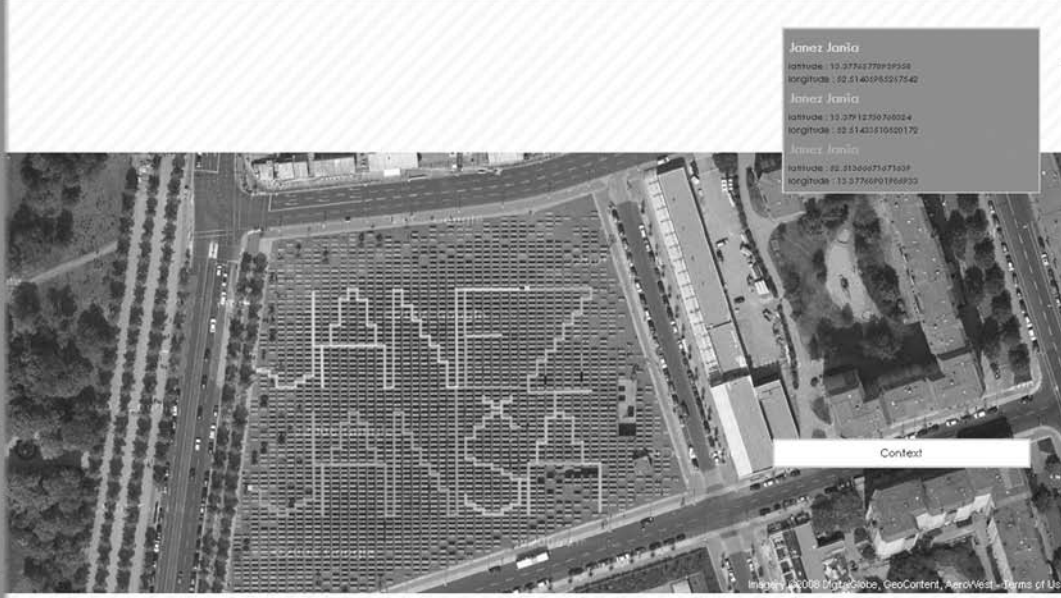
exercise in exploring boundaries between the law and conceptual art. It is a project following the tradition of the artistic practices of the last century, persistently questioning – even to this day – their own media and the status of the artist; moving the set boundaries of the artistic field; often "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.

Antonio Caronia

Identity, Possibility, Rigid Designators
On Formally Undecidable Propositions of Janež Janša and Concerning Systems



Janez Janša, Janez Janša, Janez Janša
Signature Event Context,
Berlin, 2008
Performance
Courtesy: Aksioma

1. DEUS ABSCONDITUS

It might seem that the practices of conceptual art (a field so vast that it makes one think that it is synonymous with

contemporary art) induce us to abandon the prejudice, dating back to the romantic culture, that urged the viewer not to take the artist's projects and intentions into much consideration, since the work of art was the fruit of a tortuous and mysterious process – of a poorly-defined “inspiration” that largely eluded the conscience of the artist himself. However, this very inspiration – also for reasons hard to explain – led the artist to express (to a greater or lesser degree) the *Zeitgeist* that almost always eluded the conscious intention of the artist him/herself.

Today, on the other hand, the mediatic and conceptual character of contemporary art leads the public to take the artist's statements and intentions into much consideration, and they are often regarded as an integral part of the work of art (installation, video, performance). Since the meaning of the work of art itself¹ depends more on the project and the conceptual concatenations the visual

pure and simple realization of the work of art, it is clear that what the artist says about his work is of the utmost importance. The critic or the curator often does nothing else but explicate the artist's intentions, thus functioning in many cases as a true accomplice in his operations and providing theoretical and historical framework, reinforcement, support, and enrichment of the project – basically, intervening throughout the course of its realization (not just *a posteriori*) and offering a reading when the work has been completed.

Nevertheless, behind the idea that in conceptual art the artist's intentions are crucial for its comprehension, there hides a risk that is sometimes a proper trap: the illusion of transparency of the work of art, of its formal readability being determined once and forever, of an authentic “interpretation” intended to give it a “meaning” that is certain and no longer debatable. The apodicticity of the work of art – its definite and almost sacral character, in short its “aura” – which was repeatedly driven out the door throughout the 20th century, could thus come back comfortably through the window regardless of all the honours and almost providing relief to the public who've been daunted by the invitations to become co-authors of the work of art. This is perhaps the reason, that some artists include, within their works, robust countermeasures to avoid this risk. I have the impression that the extreme caution with which Janez Janša, Janez Janša, and Janez Janša moved during the initial stages of their operation – between summer and autumn 2007 – was due to something more than simply the understandable desire to complete the legal and official change of their names as safely as possible (acting individually and without any statements whatsoever

¹ This refers more generally to the artistic and expressive process.

artist intends to dispose and expose, rather than on the

to avoid untimely publicity compromising the positive outcome of their application). Their reluctance – not quite refusal – to label the change of their nominal identity as an artistic operation was also evident on the occasion of their first joint public action (*Mount Triglav on Mount Triglav*, 6th August, 2007), which was carried out when

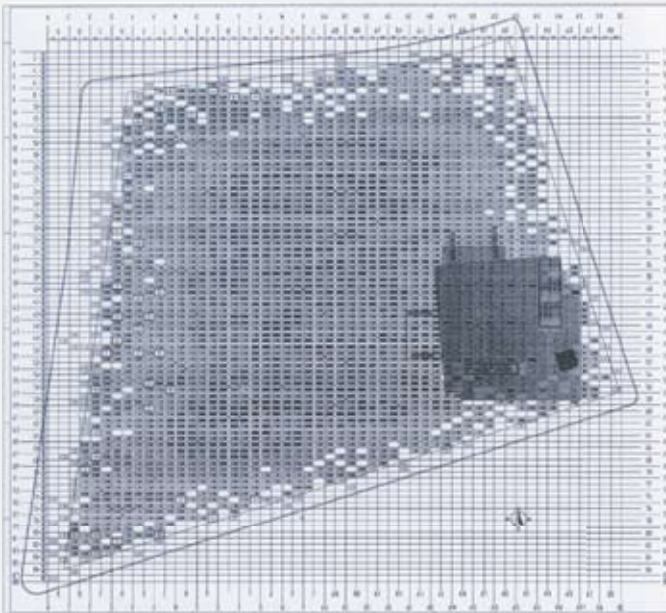
the three had not yet changed their names, and only later designated as a Janez Janša, Janez Janša, and Janez Janša production. On the occasion of their first international exhibition/second joint appearance (*Signature Event Context*, Berlin, 28th January, 2008), the three Janez Janšas were again extremely careful not to put emphasis on

Draw Your Path and Walk it Out

at the Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe, Berlin, Germany

"In this monument there is no goal, no end, no working one's way in or out. The duration of an individual's experience of it grants no further understanding, since understanding is impossible. The time of the monument, its duration from top surface to ground, is disjoined from the time of experience. In this context, there is no nostalgia, no memory of the past, only the living memory of the individual experience. Here, we can only know the past through its manifestation in the present."

Eisenman Architects, Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe, Berlin
Project text by Peter Eisenman



BASIC INSTRUCTIONS

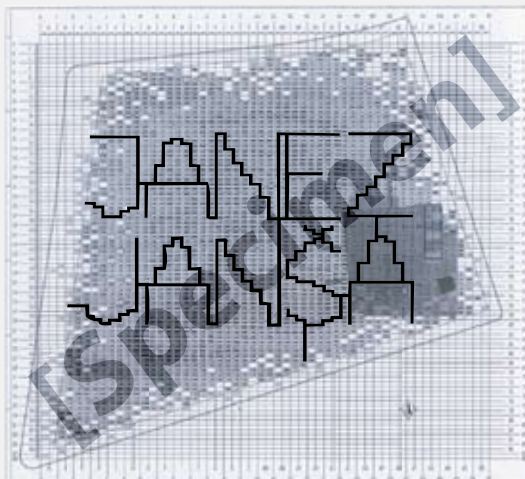
- 1] Draw a path on this plan
- 2] Go to the Memorial
- 3] Spot your starting position
- 4] Walk following the path you have drawn

Janez Janša, Janez Janša,
Janez Janša
Signature Event Context
(*Specimen*, 1st page),
Berlin, 2008
Print on paper,
29,7 x 21 cm
Courtesy: Aksioma

the issue of the name and instead explained the expressive and theoretical reasons of the work, comprehensively expounded and solidly sustained with references to texts by Jacques Derrida, architect Peter Eisenman, and others. It seems to me that the same statement can be made about their first international exhibition.

It seems that it would be completely superfluous for the artists to have insisted too much on the element that otherwise strikes the eye in each of their actions: the name with which it is signed is one of the key elements (if not the most important one) for understanding the action. While this yet again seems a certainly correct and

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“By definition, a written signature implies the actual or empirical nonpresence of the signer. But, it will be said, it also marks and retains his having-been present in a past now, which will remain a future now, and therefore in a now in general, in the transcendental form of nowness (maintenance). This general maintenance is somehow inscribed, stapled to present punctuality, always evident and always singular, in the form of the signature. This is the enigmatic originality of every paraph. For the attachment to the source to occur, the absolute singularity of an event of the signature and of a form of the signature must be retained: the pure reproducibility of a pure event.”

Jacques Derrida, “Signature Event Context” in *Margins of Philosophy*, tr. Alan Bass, pp. 307-330

This specimen derives from the project “Signature Event Context” by Janez Janša, Janez Janša and Janez Janša.

more: www.aksioma.org/sec

Janez Janša, Janez Janša,
Janez Janša
Signature Event Context
(*Specimen, 2nd page*),
Berlin, 2008
Print on paper,
29,7 x 21 cm
Courtesy: Aksioma

valid explanation, in my view it is insufficient to explain the reserve of Janez Janšas about what remains one of their main trumps. It is as if, by putting a mute on this element and emphasizing other projects' attitudes and intentions, Janez Janšas wanted to challenge the public to discover and interpret a more covert and secret meaning, a less obvious and banal reason for the strange signature that he attaches to his works. In short, Janez Janšas, if we are allowed this irreverent comparison, presents himself as *Deus absconditus* of Isaiah and Luther: but unlike the latter, who invites the believer to distrust any rational approach and lean exclusively on his own faith, the Janez Janšas expect their public to use every possible instrument – rational as well as intuitive – to answer questions like: “Why is Janez Janša called Janez Janša?” “Why do the persons called Janez Janša do what they do?”. While one of the most evident (and sometimes unbearable) characteristics of contemporary art is the incorporation of the communication strategy into the work of art, thereby making it an intrinsic element of the work in this project, that characteristic is reversed: the communication strategy certainly has a prominent place in the Janez Janšas' actions, but it reveals and really explains nothing. At most, it signals a void or a white space, a space filled by a name that, paradoxically, for the very reason that it is well-known – the name of a public figure, loved and deprecated in Slovenia, obviously – seems to mean nothing or, on the contrary, to mean too much. In short, the embarrassing actions of Janez Janša refer to a just as embarrassing problem of logic and philosophy of language regarding (what a coincidence!) proper names.

2. MINIMUM EXTENSION, MAXIMUM INTENSION

In the 20th century logic and philosophy of language, the proper name occupies a central position and has a strategic role in the attempts to give clarity and stability to language. What is the logical and linguistic status of words designating individuals or singular objects (persons and things)? What is the relation between proper and common names? Which of the two logical-linguistic categories has a priority? What is the difference between describing an individual and determining a concept? We can better approach this problem if we consider that the fundamental inspiration of formal or mathematical logic, since it was founded by Gottlob Frege, subordinates the *intension* of concepts, or predicates, to their *extension* (i.e. the definition of a concept, the properties defining a predicate, are dependent on the whole of the individuals to which these predicates refer): the reason is, to put it simply, that dealing with predicates through the set of individuals to which the predicates refer is supposed more useful for clarifying the definition itself.

This is, therefore, as pointed out by Virno, a *denotative* conception not only of logic, but also of language in general.²

At first sight, it seems that this is not how things are. Frege actually started from a critique of what could be called “referential conception” of the proper name. Such a conception – defended by the likes of John Stuart Mill – asserts that the only “meaning”

of the proper name is the object, or the individual, to which that name refers. The only possible meaning of

² Within the terminology prevailing in logic after the *System of Logic* by John Stuart Mill (1843), we say that a predicate denotes its extension while it connotes its intension. Cf. Kneale and Kneale 1962.

“Aristotle”, for example, is the individual that bore that name, the individual to whom that name refers. Let us see Frege’s critique of this formulation:

$a = a$ and $a = b$ are obviously statements of differing cognitive value; $a = a$ holds *a priori* and, according to Kant, is to be labeled analytic, while statements of the form $a = b$ often contain very valuable extensions of our knowledge and cannot always be established *a priori*. (...) Now if we were to regard equality as a relation between that which the names ‘*a*’ and ‘*b*’ designate, it would seem that $a = b$ could not differ from $a = a$ (i.e. provided $a = b$ is true). [But if equality referred to the relation between signs and not between objects], the relation of equality would by its nature result in something arbitrary. Nobody can be forbidden to use any arbitrarily producible event or object as a sign for something. (Frege)

So, according to Frege, equality cannot exist as a pure relation between names nor as a pure relation between objects. The solution he suggests is to distinguish between the *intension* and the *extension* of a sign, according to the above: it is for this reason that Frege introduces the distinction between *Sinn* (sense) and *Bedeutung* (reference). Sometimes, more simply, meaning):

It is natural, now, to conclude that, thinking of a sign (name, combination of words, letter), we have to connect it with two different things: not only the object to which the sign refers, which may be called the ‘reference [*Bedeutung*] of the sign,’ but also the ‘sense [*Sinn*] of the sign,’ which denotes the way in which that object is given. (...) It is clear from the context that by ‘sign’ and ‘name’ I have here understood any designation representing a proper name, which thus has as its

reference a definite object (this word taken in the widest range). The designation of a single object can also consist of several words or other signs. For brevity, let every such designation be called a ‘proper name’. (Ibid.)

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We can therefore see from this how this conception of the proper name – which could be called “descriptive” – does not really succeed in finding a way out of the difficulties of the referential conception. Frege himself admits this in the succeeding paragraph:

The sense of a proper name is grasped by everybody who is sufficiently familiar with the language to which it belongs; but this serves to illuminate only a single aspect of the reference, supposing it to have one. Comprehensive knowledge of the reference would require us to say immediately whether any given sense belongs to it. To such knowledge we never attain. (Ibid.)

Frege’s programme emerges very clear here and elsewhere, and it is also obvious why the “proper name” had such a strategic position within his thought. In his quest for clarification and maximum transparency of the language that would make it suitable to be formalized (or quantified or algorithmed), the German logician is led to assume as a paradigm of “signs” that function well those which have minimum *extension* (i.e. refer to one single object) and a maximum *intension* (the richness of properties, qualities, specifications that define univocally that single object): a well delimited and specified *Bedeutung* and a vast and rich *Sinn*. However, he knows full well that in the natural language this situation is almost never attained; the division of tasks between signs referring to individuals and signs referring to concepts is always unstable and the referential conception of the individual

sign leads to a dangerous circularity, because on one hand the possibility of appreciating the nuances of the “sense” of a given sign depends on the certainty of the reference (the “meaning”) to which the sign refers, on the other hand, the latter (i.e. the meaning) should be determined by the description, that is by the sense. This is the case in the example quoted by Frege in a note regarding two possible senses of the name “Aristotle”: “the pupil of Plato and teacher of Alexander the Great” and “the teacher of Alexander the Great who was born in Stagira”.

Bertrand Russell, who substantially shared Frege’s goals, was well aware of this difficulty, so well aware that, in certain cases, he drastically restricted the category of proper names. The “Theory of Descriptions” expounded in Russell (Russell, 1905) essentially aimed at safeguarding the possibility to use singular terms in every case, even when they do not apparently have any referent. For example, every assertion containing the phrase “the present King of France” would be obviously false (“the present King of France is bald”), but its negation would be false as well (“the present King of France is not bald”): since there is no king of France at present we are driven to regard such assertions as being devoid of sense. Russell considered this situation risky and therefore tried in every way to build a theory of proper names that would allow us to regard the two propositions from the previous example as false and not as nonsense. What he calls “definite description” does not have any “meaning” for him and can always be split into an “assertion of existence” and an “assertion of uniqueness”, and if at least one of these assertions does not have verification in the state of things (e.g. if there is no “present King of France”) the

complete assertion can be regarded as false. However, such strong restrictions on the logical form of these descriptions led him, some years later, to paradoxically assert that “there are only two words which are strictly proper names of particulars, namely, ‘I’ and ‘this’” (Russell 1918). The first person singular personal pronoun and the demonstrative pronoun would thus be the only two verbal signs whose referent is certain and devoid of ambiguity.

Such a privileged position of the proper name in the theories of Frege and Russell points to the evident aspiration to make stable the relation between language and reality, identifying its transcendent rootedness. This is what the Italian philosopher of language Paolo Virno says about the subject:

Each time we discuss a failed reference, but also a successful one, we suppose that to the grammatical subject there always appertains a referential function or intentionality. Irrespective of the fact whether there is or not an actual denotation, what appears ensured in advance is, so to speak, the denotativity of the singular term, i.e. its aptitude to stand-for-something. Now, it is due to this implicit assumption that the noun is given a privileged position. And on its presupposed intentionality depend both the possibility of judging an assertion true-or-false (if denotativity is manifested positively as denotation) and the ruling that it is nonsense (if denotativity remains unrealised). Because it allows or precludes its validity, the noun is never subjected to truth-values. As the holder of the referential function, the noun is the transcendent foundation of the sentence it is also part of. (Virno, pp. 31-32)

The theory of descriptions is subject to much criticism, and the most widespread one concerns the difficulties that arise when, in an assertion containing a proper name, we want to replace the name with a description³.

³ The canonical example is the description of Otto von Bismarck as “the first Chancellor of the German Empire” discussed in (Russell 1918).

This possibility of substitution was obviously essential, in Russell’s theory, to be able to determine the meaning to be

attributed to an assertion containing a proper name. But let us suppose, to refer to the example quoted in the note, that Bismarck died as a child. In that case the assertion “Otto von Bismarck was the first Chancellor of the German Empire” would be false, and the description “the first Chancellor of the German Empire” could not be used any longer to designate Bismarck. In other words, descriptions can change referents (or, which has the same consequences, referentiality is not ensured any longer) when we shift from a modality of the “actual” or of the “necessary” to a modality of the “possible”. One solution would be to link the referentiality of the name to possibility, to a single possible world in which a given assertion is uttered, but that would have the unpleasant consequence of no longer being able to give the name the role of the “transcendent foundation of the sentence” that Virno talks about.

In the 1960s, this was one of the reasons that led the American philosopher Saul Kripke to formulate his conception of “rigid designators”. This conception stems from Kripke’s dissatisfaction with any descriptive theory. According to him, the demand to pick out the referent of a proper name through a “definite description” (Russell) or an “agglomerate of descriptions” (Strawson) leads into an unbearable circularity (when we

presuppose the existence and the knowledge of that certain individual in order to be able to attribute to him the properties defining him), or into the impossibility of determining the individual if there is a change in our knowledge of the properties used in the individual’s description. 141

If we say Einstein was the man who discovered the theory of relativity, that certainly picks out someone uniquely. One can be sure, as I said, that everyone *here* [Kripke refers to the participants of the conference at which he speaks] can make a compact and independent statement of this theory and so pick out Einstein uniquely; but many people actually don’t know enough about this stuff, so when asked what the theory of relativity is, they will say: ‘Einstein’s theory’, and thus be led into the most straightforward sort of vicious circle. (Kripke)

On the other hand, when we define Einstein as “the man who discovered the relativity theory”, or Nixon as “the President of the United States that resigned in 1974 to avoid impeachment”, we run the risk of indicating some other person, in a case where things went differently: for example, if Einstein had not become a scientist or if Nixon had not been elected President of the United States. That is in contrast, according to Kripke, with the fact that we would continue to think that those two persons would “be” Einstein and Nixon, even if they had not done what they have done. So, there is no other way, in his opinion, but to free the proper name of any attempt to determine it through a description, and instead to classify it as a “*rigid designator*”, or a sign that designates the same object in every possible world it exists in; if that is not the case, the

designator is “unrigid” or “accidental”. Kripke also outlines a model of the process through which we create proper names, or rigid designators, and then communicate and diffuse them:

An initial ‘baptism’ takes place. Here the object may be named by ostension, or the reference of the name may be fixed by a description. When the name is ‘passed from link to link’ [of a chain of speakers], the receiver of the name must, I think, intend when he learns it to use it with the same reference as the man from whom he heard it. (...) Notice that the preceding outline hardly *eliminates* the notion of reference; on the contrary, it takes the notion of intending to use the same reference as a given. (Kripke)

What does a theory on proper names like Kripke’s involve? In spite of the preoccupations of concreteness with which it presents itself (“but what is true is that it’s in virtue of our connection with other speakers in the community, going back to the referent himself, that we refer to a certain man”, Kripke, the conception of the rigid designator emphasizes the metaphysical character of the language–reality relation. The same author quotes, with favour, the saying of Bishop Butler: “Everything is what it is and not another thing.” If “everything is what it is”, language has no other task but to reflect the things “as they are”, and “possible worlds” are nothing but self-consistent universes, separated from each other and rigorously alternative. The possible does not mix with the real. The existence of “invariant” objects with regard to possible worlds reassures us of the stability of the world. The “rigidity” of Kripke’s conception extends, through designators, to all of reality, but, on the contrary, it is reality itself that sometimes

reminds us how unstable it is and what role possibility plays within and around it.

3. EVERY CONTEXT IS OPAQUE, NOT EVEN GOD CAN DO ANYTHING ABOUT IT

We have seen how the aporias, in which the earlier examined theories on proper names flounder, are to be associated with a denotative conception of language that – as metaphysically as the idealistic philosophies it tends to surpass – has pretence to construct a transparent, regular, fluid, and almost mechanized relation between language and reality. The difficulties in stabilizing a certain and determined relation between linguistic signs and their real referents – difficulties that evidently indicate the existence of limits in language (as in any representative dimension) – are never connected to biological, perceptive, operative, and effectual origins of language itself: they are exorcised and fought because they are considered a “deviation” of the use with respect to a logical underlying structure in which those difficulties would magically disappear. The dream, which is typically human, of a transparent and omnipotent language able to express reality in an orderly, complete, and exhaustive manner – a symbolic structure able, at the same time, to preserve the richness of sensory experience and to correct the disorder by organising it impeccably – is transformed into a scientific programme that postulates the existence of such a structure. If natural language expresses imprecision, ambiguity, shadows, contradictions, it is because concrete use degrades, or weakens, a structure that would otherwise have in itself all the instruments to realise the perfect bi-univocal correspondence between linguistic expression and actual facts. The

Saussurian distinction between *langue* and *parole* is totally unbalanced here, and *langue* becomes an ideal and omnipotent expressive instrument that *parole* is not able to fully utilise. But art (or more modestly the innovative, curious and experimental use of languages and representations) is there also to criticise the delusion of omnipotence of philosophies, as well as the high-handedness of politics and the pretences of economies to guide every other sector of human experience.

The starting point of the Janez Janša project was very simple: three persons thoughtfully and determinedly played a game that has always destabilized the correspondence between individuals and the linguistic labels that designate them, namely, the game of *homonymy*. Homonymy is a linguistic and social condition common in every language and in every culture and has never created more than a few limited administrative problems in the most complex societies, neither has it ever prevented the persons “affected” by it from preserving the sense of their individual identity. In traditional cultures, there was the custom (quite widespread still today) of naming first-borns after their grandparents. In many languages, the combination of a very common first name and a very common surname can even be used to indicate “anyone”, the “average man” (“John Smith” or “Mario Rossi”). Nevertheless, cases of homonymy force individuals and communities into a series of particular measures (official and everyday) intended to preserve the different identities of homonyms recognizable and distinct. The sense (at least) of surprise that overcomes us when we run into a person that has our same name shows that we are facing something that we

all perceive as something bizarre – if not as an irregularity, we cannot resist at least a moment’s questioning of how we might distinguish ourselves from the other. In short, homonymy represents a potential menace for the individual identity of persons. 143

In August 2007 when three Slovenian artists decided to change their names and assume a common one, they naturally had to choose one that was already known, and they chose it in relation to a series of intentions of social and political criticism that were already characteristic of their work. The decision was: Janez Janša. The choice of the name is certainly not indifferent; I do not ignore this dimension and I do not want to negate it at all, but others have dealt with this aspect and will do so in the future. As for me, I have decided, within the limits of this intervention, to take interest in the purely linguistic aspect of their operation, which in my opinion exists and is particularly relevant. So, my considerations, if they have any value, are in relation to the choice of changing the name as such and not to the particular name that was chosen for this operation. That, I think, is also confirmed by the organizational and communicational characteristics of the operation that are mentioned also in the first part of this essay. It is obvious that when three artists decide to assume the same name it may recall other operations of “collective names” assumed by groups of artists or writers during the 1900’s (the most recent being that of Luther Blissett – now Wu Ming – in the 1990’s in Italy). Nevertheless, Janez Janša, Janez Janša, and Janez Janša did not operate in this way; they did not assume a collective name and use it to sign their joint works and actions while keeping secret their real names that remained legally unchanged. They changed their names legally, following

all the procedures allowed and prescribed by the laws of their country, and they did it individually and without any statement that would link this event to a joint artistic action.

Joint actions obviously came – before and after the change of name – but the change of name was the individual, legitimate, and official (from the administrative point of view) premise of these actions. So, it seems clear to me that their action contained an explicitly linguistic intent that is absent in the case of Luther Blisset and similar operations. By deliberately choosing to create a triple case of homonymy, Janez Janša, Janez Janša, and Janez Janša therefore reminded us that even the zero grade of language, the most elementary denotative operation, the nomination, that should, according to Russell, refer to the act of ostension – which connects language with sensible knowledge, the *knowledge by description*, if we use his own concepts, with the *knowledge by acquaintance* – that even this operation is not only arbitrary, but it preserves its arbitrariness also after the “initial baptism” (according to Kripke’s terminology) and continues to depend on the context, like the entire language. This condition is very clearly recalled also by Derrida in his essay that also gives the title to the action of Janez Janša, Janez Janša, and Janez Janša at the Denkmal für die ermordeten Juden Europas in Berlin in January 2008, *Signature Event Context*. Here Derrida particularly refers to writing, but his considerations can be extended, with due precautions, to any linguistic act:

It seems to go without saying that the field of equivocality covered by the word *communication* permits itself to be reduced massively by the limits of what is called a context (...) Is there a rigorous and scientific concept of the *context*?

Does not the notion of context harbor, behind a certain confusion, very determined philosophical presuppositions? To state it now in the most summary fashion, I would like to demonstrate why a context is never absolutely determinable, or rather in what way its determination is never certain or saturated. This structural nonsaturation would have as its double effect:

1. a marking of the theoretical insufficiency of the *usual concept of* (the linguistic or nonlinguistic) *context* such as it is accepted in numerous fields of investigation, along with all the other concepts with which it is systematically associated;
2. a rendering necessary of a certain generalization and a certain displacement of the concept of writing. The latter could no longer, henceforth, be included in the category of communication, at least if communication is understood in the restricted sense of the transmission of meaning. Conversely, it is within the general field of writing thus defined that the effects of semantic communication will be able to be determined as particular, secondary; inscribed, supplementary effects.

The “nonsaturation” of context, to continue to use Derrida’s terminology, means that the relation between language and the world is inevitably opaque; language remains an attempt – generous but destined to fail – to master the surplus of matter and sensible intuition with regard to the concept, or the symbolic dimension. As pointed out by Virno in his discussion of a famous passage from Kant’s *Critique of Judgement*, it is “the gap dividing intellect and sensibility” that destines to failure any attempt to absorb the reality of things into language and therefore

makes the possible, rather than the necessary, the founding dimension of language itself. And there are no denotations, definite descriptions or rigid designators that can save us from our fate of “animals of possibility”. But if there are still any doubts, it will be enough to remember the form of the *Signature Event Context* performance that was mentioned before. Certainly, the object that it evoked – the outcome, the result of the performance – was a totally abstract and virtual signature, visible only to a potentially remote spectator who connected to the website in question. In fact, the different routes of the three Janez Janšas drew their name on the image of Denkmal in Google Maps.

This was a matter of virtual writing, then, “the pure reproducibility of a pure event”, a presence that has already been “in the transcendental form of nowness”, as Derrida asserts. However, the walk of the performers was not silent: the three took the word, repeating at every step the inevitably rhythmic mantra “*Jaz sem Janez Janša, Jaz sem Janez Janša, Jaz sem Janez Janša... (I am Janez Janša, I am Janez Janša, I am Janez Janša...)*”. “I am Janez Janša” is the most elementary of statements, the only one, according to Russell, that is fully denotative and as-such not subjected to analysis in terms of truth-values. It only indicates who it is that is speaking and is consequently neither true nor false, because it does not predicate anything about any subject, it just connects language in its more potential form (“I am speaking”) – not in the abstract or metalinguistic one – with the sensible evidence of the existence of a speaking subject. If memory serves us right, this is also the way in which God presents himself to Moses, only that he has no name to exhibit, no linguistic sign with which to

designate himself, and so he limits himself to using the most intimate and most powerful of tautologies: “I am that I am.” So, *Deus absconditus* eventually reveals himself to be obviously, an earthly and material god and only the planner and executor of a performance. He has a name – or better still, to be economical, only one name for three – and he repeats that name to us quietly and a little anxiously, reminding us that, against the paradoxes of language, even gods fight in vain.

Translated by Denis Debevec

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Lev Kreft

Name as Readymade

An interview with Janez Janša, Janez Janša and Janez Janša

919661200



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Spoštovana, spoštovani!

Pred Vami je nova osebna izkaznica, za katero ste zaprosili na Vaši upravni enoti. Prosimo Vas, da dokument temeljito pregledate in kakršno koli nepravilnost takoj sporočite upravni enoti, ki Vam je izdala osebno izkaznico.



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Dragutin Mate
MINISTERJanez Janša, Janez Janša,
Janez Janša
002199341 (Letter),
Ljubljana, 2007Print on paper, 29,7 x 21 cm,
attached print on plastic,
5,4 x 8,5 cm
Courtesy: Aksioma

Dear Sir or Madam,

This is your new Identification Card, for which you have lodged an application at your local Administrative Unit. We request that you carefully review the document and, in the case of any mistakes, notify the issuing Administrative Unit immediately.

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Dragutin Mate
MINISTER

ON THE UNCANNY AND THE SUBLIME

Lev Kref: *Usually, we use our names to distinguish ourselves from other people. Your names are very clear, yet, they are also indistinct; they cannot be told apart. Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten defines aesthetics as something that operates in the field of clarity and indistinctness. The clear and indistinct is what appeals to the senses. Do you think this aesthetic effect of indistinctness is important for an (artistic) choice of name?*

Janez Janša: The fact that three people are using the same name, that they have the same name in the same time and space, hacks the analogue mode of the administrative system, for personal names are usually used precisely to distinguish one person from another. In our case, the media, our friends, and even public servants feel the need to add something to our names when they introduce us in public. This means that, in this case, the very concept of the personal name is cracked, that it no longer functions without an addition of some sort. It no longer functions without an addition, such as date of birth or place of residence or profession. I find this an important consequence of this virulent gesture. A virus breaks into the system, and the system no longer works. There are no preventive measures already present within the system to prepare it for such cases.

Janez Janša: What interests me within contemporary art is the question of how to produce a gesture which, in some way, cuts into the regime of comprehension, looking, perception, etc. Such a gesture puts the spectator in a position where he needs to negotiate – above all, with himself – his relationship to this gesture, how to

understand it. There is no prior moment of comprehension; the spectator first needs to ask himself, that is, he needs to negotiate with himself, how he is going to understand the gesture. This is what happens if the gesture involves something sublime, which is very close and at the same time very remote. What I find interesting in art is that which draws the spectator radically close and, at the same time, pushes him far away.

Lev Kref: *We are dealing, then, with a relatively clear identity – what becomes indistinct is identification. Now that you have acquired some experience with how this works, and given the contemporary (also artistic) obsession with identity, do you find interesting such an interrogation of identification as the only reliable proof of identity?*

Janez Janša: The personal name is something that puts a person into public circulation. If you enter a certain public situation, you enter it with and through your own name. Since this is so, the question immediately arises: how personal is the personal name if its basic function is, after all, predominantly public? It belongs to you, but it is used by others to distinguish you from others. If there is confusion regarding the names, there is confusion regarding identities, a case of mistaken identities ...

Lev Kref: *... we'll get back to that issue ...*

Janez Janša: ... What happens is a shock to the system of perception, for others must distinguish you from others by using a new name. But the new name means that they must also distinguish you from yourself. In this sense, it is perhaps possible to talk about

the change of projection, the change of the projected part of identity, that is, the part which is projected onto you by the others – they call you neither “Žiga Kariž” nor “Janez Janša” but rather “the guy who’s changed his name”. In my view, the act of changing one’s name is akin to the act of dying: the change of name affects others, that is, the people who actually use my name, far more than it affects me – or us. It is the same with death – one always dies for the others; you have died and you have nothing to do with it, as you are dead, but the others have to deal with it.

Janez Janša: Every person who comes into contact with us knows, of course, that we are the same people – we have not changed. Yet the change of name renders communication very unstable, and this is so in the professional and artistic spheres as well as in the private ones.

Janez Janša: In a way, I am in a permanent reality show of sorts, since the change of name brings with it an additional fictionalization – a parallel reality of sorts. And reality resists the prospect of this parallel reality becoming part of it.

Lev Kreft: *At the beginning of the interview, Janez mentioned the effect of the sublime – safe conditions are required for the sublime to manifest itself. In this situation, I think, that the others do not feel quite safe, meaning that the sublime is foreclosed here in the sense that it remains – at least, in part – not so much in the domain of horror but rather in the domain of the uncanny (Unheimlichkeit). The response to this uncanniness can, in my opinion, give us insight into the significance of this sort of identification.*

Janez Janša: This uncanniness is obvious. At the beginning, people avoided addressing us

with our old names as well as with our new ones – they refrained from using any names at all when they addressed us.

Lev Kreft: *– but let’s not limit the uncanny just to the others. Of course, we can maintain that having a name is a convention. Given what we have talked about thus far, a name is just an externally functioning convention, which has no consequences for the person carrying the name. Yet, the name can also be conceived of in a different way, as something essential, even ritual, this is where the act of naming comes from. If you choose another name, you become another person, you become this other name. Don’t you find this at least a little bit dangerous?*

Janez Janša: What we are dealing with here is the fact that this gesture actually intervenes into the relationship between art and life; it locates itself at the intersections of the public, the private, the political, the artistic, the administrative, the judicial, the mediated ... You cannot avoid the consequences of changing your name in any of these spheres. Janez Janša: What is the basic paradox? Why does this gesture produce uncanniness? Precisely because it has really taken place: had we used the name as a pseudonym, the whole thing would have been immediately clear as well as distinct: “Ah well, this is just the name they use in public.” But now the question is: “Why did they do this for real? It would be more or less the same thing [if they only used the pseudonym] and we would understand it.”

Janez Janša: We also need to point out the difference between this gesture and the existing forms of multiple names. Usually, the latter are collective pseudonyms. The case of one of the most famous multiple names,

Luther Blissett, was similar to mine in that it involved the assumption of the name of an actually existing person (Luther Blissett was a black football player with AC Milan); however, I assumed my new name not only as a pseudonym but also administratively.

ON THE CHANGE OF NAME AND IDENTITY

Lev Kreft: Well, we have recently seen Mehmed Pasha Aurélio, who plays football for Turkey. He is the Brazilian who changed his name to be able to play for Turkey (he not only became a Turkish citizen, he also changed his name); he retained Aurélio and added Mehmed, which helped, and then the public added Pasha, for he is an excellent player. There are other such examples. Therefore, I suggest that we take this debate further as far as the true effect of the name is concerned.

The avantgarde artistic gesture is defined as a descent from art into life (Peter Bürger), but here we are dealing with a descent in the opposite direction: a descent from life into art. We are interested in this irruption of the true in art. If it is true that, in the art world, something – say, Duchamp's Fountain – can happen as an artistic act (as Danto claims) only in a certain space, at a certain time, then the change of name of this kind can also happen as an (artistic) act only in a certain space and at a certain time. Not all legislation is the same: the Slovenian legislation is more liberal than many others. We also know why: because there has been the desire to be able to change one's name so as to avoid being identified as non-Slovenian. I was wondering if this – the liberal nature of the Slovenian legislation – was something that you had in mind when you set forth to change your

names? This is the post-1991 political context of name changes in Slovenia.

Janez Janša: We carefully studied the Slovenian legislation as well as the potential reasons why our applications might be rejected. The Personal Name Act was passed by the Parliament on 1 February 2006, that is, during the mandate of the Prime Minister Janša's government. The Act includes two articles on the basis of which an application for the change of name can be rejected: the first article states that the application would be rejected if the applicant is subject to criminal proceedings, and the second article states that "the right to freely choose one's personal name can only be limited if this is essential for the protection of public safety, morality, or the rights and freedoms of other people". This is the flexible part of the Act, which made us ponder the possibility of our change of name applications being rejected.

Janez Janša: We knew that there have been 11 people with this name in Slovenia before the three of us decided to change our names, so we thought, "If they can have it, why couldn't we?"

Janez Janša: Our change of name is not a direct reflection or a commentary on the – conditionally speaking – liberal circumstances concerning name changes in Slovenia, although it does entail this dimension.

Lev Kreft: ... *So it has nothing to do with the changes aimed at making the names sound Slovenian?*

Janez Janša: That's right.

Lev Kreft: *Didn't you know that somewhere else this might have been impossible?*



Janez Janša, Janez Janša, Janez Janša
002199616 (Identity Card), Ljubljana, 2007
Print on plastic, 5,4 x 8,5 cm
Courtesy: Aksioma

Janez Janša: I did enquire about how these things are done in Italy, because I am also an Italian citizen, and the public servant at my Italian municipality told me that I am Davide Grassi for the Italian administration and that they do not care under what name the Slovenian administration manages my information. At present, I have valid Italian documents issued in the name of Davide Grassi and equally valid Slovenian documents issued in the name of Janez Janša.

Janez Janša: The change of last name is not permitted in Italy if the name is historically significant or if it belongs to a person who is very important or very famous in the place where the applicant was born or where he lives at the moment – such a change could create confusion.

Janez Janša: As a Croatian citizen, my experience is similar to Janez's in Italy. I am Emil Hrvatin in the Croatian records.

Lev Kreft: *But, probably, in this procedure of applying for the change of name that you have started, there still exists the requirement to state the reason for wanting to change one's name? Or is the procedure pure formality?*

Janez Janša: Not in Slovenia, no, but in Italy and in Croatia you do have to state such a reason. The Slovenian form only requires you to state your former name and your new name and to list your family members, but you do not need to state any reasons or rationale for the change.

Lev Kreft: *The next points of our discussion are the very documents that you have acquired. On the one hand, you have acquired a name which, in itself, is not a document; it is, however, your identification. On the other hand, though, the name is a document that authenticates the change. It proves that you*

are not using a pen name or a pseudonym; if you say, "I am Janez Janša", this is absolutely accurate and you can prove it with your identification cards. A name is obviously something that one can pick for oneself: it is not just something that the others choose for you, you do have a say in this. What does this gesture of baptising yourself, so to speak, mean? It is an unusual gesture after all, isn't it?

Janez Janša: American artist Kristin Sue Lucas had her name officially changed on 5th October 2007 to the exact same name – the same as the one that she had had before. This was obviously a matter of agency, the fulfilment of her desire to determine her own first and last name.

Lev Kreft: *Let me clarify: we have all experienced a stage – perhaps during puberty – when we wanted to change our names because our parents had given us something that we were not pleased with. Some of us pondered this possibility very seriously and if anyone went ahead and really did it, the first people to be offended by this would be his parents. Which is to say, this act obviously means something more – not only identification and the change of identification; it means a specific personal problem: it is you who has made the decision. How do the people who gave you your former names feel about this change?*

Janez Janša: My father understands the change of name, above all, as a renunciation of the name that he gave me and which is part of the family tradition. Somewhere deep in his heart he is probably also wondering whether or not I have renounced him as well. He is very hurt.

Janez Janša: I see this connection: traditional baptism is an enforced act; your parents baptise you, and you unwittingly become a soldier of God. Someone else makes this decision for you – they give you a name that you have not chosen for yourself. Anabaptists, for instance, perform baptism only on adults, for a person should not become a soldier of God unwittingly; for them, this is a conscious gesture, when you say, “I want to belong to this and therefore I will be called such and such.” We know that Anabaptism also entails the renunciation of your parents and the acceptance of belonging to the community.

Lev Kreft: *This is it, this is the original Christianity of the first and the second century A.D. When you enter a community, all members become your brothers and sisters, but you have to renounce your biological parents, since you will, thereafter, belong to the community.*

Janez Janša: God's child.

Janez Janša: Anabaptism is one of the most radical movements; God's word becomes one against one, which is why this movement was considered undesirable by the Catholic Church as well as the Reformists. We know that Anabaptists were killed en masse and it has even been claimed that Anabaptism constitutes an early germ of communism.

ON THE ART OF RENAMING

Lev Kreft: *This proves that the matter is not devoid of danger, that it is not pure formality, and that it has a certain background and meaning, which can be dangerous, for the act of self-naming is typical only of specific*

types of sects. If we set aside personal reasons and private lives and turn to art, the ritual of choosing one's own name is probably connected above all with art, because in art – at least metaphorically – one has to make a name for oneself. Is this a significant effect of the name change? 157

Janez Janša: If we are dealing with a personal name within the art system, this can be read at various levels. One such way is through the conditions under which the artists live, in this case the conditions of neoliberal capitalism where you are what you do, you are your name, you are making a name for yourself and your name is your work.

Janez Janša: A brand.

Janez Janša: That's right, you are a brand, and you are recognised as such, you are creating this brand name ...

Janez Janša: ... and you are doing this slowly, in contrast to the act of renaming ...

Janez Janša: ... you are making a name for yourself slowly and, in the moment when you decide to change your name, you stake ...

Janez Janša: ... your name ...

Janez Janša: Not only do you renounce your name, but also, when several authors with the same name appear, your work is automatically indistinguishable. Our change of name is still a novelty, but from a certain distance – particularly in the international context – all our works, individual ones included, will be seen as the works of a collective.

Janez Janša: However the whole thing figures in the public sphere, it nevertheless greatly affects us. This is a gesture that you cannot perform and remain unscathed. What is most painful about the whole business, however, is this: if the public is experiencing a certain uncanniness, the authors are living a certain



Janez Janša, Janez Janša, Janez Janša
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Courtesy: Aksioma

uncertainty. Yet again, this uncertainty is something conscious. If we were to talk about how much is lost... This is the uncertainty that follows you: Where is this whole thing going? What can I anticipate? ... We have confronted a lot of precedent-setting situations, where we cannot appeal to any sort of established practice. Uncertainty is part and parcel of this, and it is what renders the whole situation extremely risky.

ON SAMENESS AND DIFFERENCE

Lev Kreft: *In Slovenia, there exists a group that worked anonymously for years while people kept asking who its members were ... I am talking about Laibach/NSK, their anonymous collective statements, a group of people without personal names – which is extremely difficult in Slovenia, where everybody knows everybody. If I look at your biographies in the past two years, I would say that the change of name has not burdened you, for you are all still doing what you were doing before the change, and you also do things together. Am I wrong? Do you bring your individual projects into line with one another or do you keep doing your own things – your individual artistic careers – while there is also a space in which you are creating something together?*

Janez Janša: You have already answered your own question; we all changed our names individually. We have not become one person, one group, or one collective. We have not changed our modes of working, we have not changed the ways we function in the society, and we have not changed our interests, views, or strategies. We have created some works together, but we had

done so before as well. I collaborated with Janez on *Miss Mobile*, he collaborated with Janez on *Problemarket* and *Kača na nebesnem svodu* (The Snake in the Sky). Laibach appeared as a group of anonymous and unknown individuals; in our case, the opposite is the case, we have all been active for more than a decade, we have all established ourselves publicly under our former names, therefore, our change of name has different consequences. We have never concealed our identities, my CV is still the same, only the name has changed and everybody knows exactly who I am. If we talk about names as brands in the art world, we must see this as a counter-marketing gesture; a brand must be pushed forward, it must become more and more visible, whereas in our case, the appearance of the new name is necessarily connected with the gradual disappearance of the old one ...

Janez Janša: We are dealing with a paradox here, which I would describe as visible disappearance, that is to say, Grassi, Hrvatin and Kariž have disappeared, but in a visible manner, their disappearance has rendered them even more visible than before. This is the point where we must consider the gesture of renaming in connection with the thesis about withdrawal as a political strategy, that is, withdrawal not as a romantic act of escapism but rather as a withdrawal from the logic and pressures of the art market. With Laibach, the assumption of the name is more important, for the name represents a certain traumatic historical point that was topical at the time; their name hit the traumatic core and produced uncanniness in the public.

Lev Kreft: *What about your names, don't they produce uncanniness in the public?*

Janez Janša: I think they produce a lot of uncanniness, but the difference is that, today, you do not need to legally classify someone as the enemy of the state, but you can characterize them as a terrorist in the military sense.

ON THE RIGHT TO ERASE ONE'S FORMER NAME

Lev Kreft: Never say never ... Under the new media law, the safeguarding of the name and the reputation of the state is considered a good enough reason to interfere with the autonomy of the journalists. Yet again, it is just like during socialism. But what does this safeguarding entail, and does it involve the legal protection of a person who performs a state function? This is a whole new issue, but it is all coming back slowly ...

Janez Janša: I was going to say that the conditions under which we live today demand a certain public trading in names. Our change of name shows how you can step into a certain anonymity precisely by revealing yourself so drastically. The uncanniness emerges in a very broad spectrum: in the political, the collegial-professional as well as in the private.

Janez Janša: Let's take Mladinska knjiga's book *Leksikon osebnosti* (Who's Who directory), for instance. The editors and the authors insisted – for a very long time – that the three of us should appear as entries under our former names. They rationalised this demand by saying that the public knows us better by our former names than by our new ones.

Janez Janša: This gesture conceals a certain kind of uncanniness, for everybody who knew me by my former name knows me

by my current name as well, and in the meantime I have been introduced to many other people who did not know me before. This means that the argument conceals another reason, which the editors and the authors did not want to reveal ...

Janez Janša: ... to have four Janez Janšas listed in the directory one after another ...

Janez Janša: – or something else.... Again, this incredulity that has been a constant feature of all reactions: "But this is just a game, while we are serious, we are putting together a directory. This is a lexicographical publication. This is a publication based on facts, we cannot play games here ..." It is precisely the fact that we have really changed our names that produces incredulity and uncanniness.

Janez Janša: If we follow the story about the directory to its end, the fact that I have changed my name means that I no longer want to use my former name. This means that I have the right to rename my former works – if copyrighted work is bound to the author as a person, the person is the same, only the name has changed. If I did a project called X ten years ago, I am still the author of this work, and if my name is now Janez Janša, then Janez Janša is the author of X.

Janez Janša: Under the Personal Name Act, the citizen is obliged to use a personal name.

ON THE PERSONAL DOCUMENT AS A READYMADE

Lev Kreft: Here, I want to reiterate a story recounted by George Dickie in his book, on the institutional theory of art. In a museum, there is an exhibition that features 100 metal plates. A plumber comes in to fix the toilets – for even museum toilets break down occasionally – and he walks through the

museum and straight over the metal plates. Everyone is watching uneasily until someone points out, "Watch out, you are trampling all over a work of art!" He asks, "What work of art, for God's sake? This is where the plumbing needs to be fixed!" An art work that is a readymade of sorts is quickly confused with an ordinary thing by the uninitiated. The opposite is the case with names: people confuse your readymade, which is a perfectly ordinary name, with an art work, and then they experience uncanniness when they find out that this is not an art work but rather a perfectly normal real name. The institution of art cannot bear something that is real; if that is the case, then we must be dealing with a Roman amphitheatre and not fine art. Therefore, I want to end this matter, which concerns the name itself as a readymade. It is obvious that this readymade works. It is obvious that your new name represents no problem for those who do not know that you are artists. Even the police are fine with it, otherwise your applications would have been rejected. The problems, then, only arise in the world of art. This kind of readymade – one that is real – is, of course, fundamentally different from Duchamp's or Warhol's readymades. If we take Fountain as an example, Duchamp's readymade was not an ordinary thing at all, unchanged and merely transported; he signed it, he turned it around. In short, in order to make an ordinary thing a work of art, he transformed it. Andy Warhol actually did not make readymades at all, what he did was paint portraits of ordinary things – commodities, such as Brillo Boxes that contained no Brillo soap. You, however, are contained in your name! This "box" contains precisely what it says, and to contemporary art – despite all the changes that occurred throughout the twentieth

century – it is still scandalously disturbing that this is real.

I suggest we move on to the other aspects of the readymade. In addition to the personal name being a readymade of sorts – because it can be moved or changed and because, transplanted into the field of art, it appears uncanny to the others – the documents themselves are also ordinary things, readymades. Everybody has identification documents. You have decided to exhibit yours. This is your decision, but it is not a personal matter; you have decided to exhibit your documents as art works. I believe there are two types of readymades present here; one is the name as a readymade, and the other are the documents as readymades. The status of documents is serious. In any given society – not necessarily just contemporary society – these documents prove your identity to everybody with the right to ask for your identification. These documents assume and facilitate certain procedures; in short, they are not just any odd ordinary thing – they are not a urinal turned into Fountain. How and why have you decided to jointly exhibit your personal documents?

Janez Janša: In the history of art, such readymades did not exist. Personal documents such as personal identification cards, passports, health insurance cards, credit cards etc. cannot "simply" be bought in shops, recontextualized, turned around, exhibited and produced as readymades. To obtain them, you have to initiate a process: you have to initiate an administrative process to obtain them. In our case, all the documents that we have state the same name. For this reason, these documents are unusual and have a different status, even though they are the exact same kind of documents as every other personal identification card

issued in Slovenia. We consider them works of art precisely because they contain the procedure through which they were produced.

ON USEFUL AND USELESS READYMADES

Lev Kreft: If we follow the trail of logic: these documents are your personal documents and also a proof of your change of name – which was done for entirely personal reasons – and this triggers uncanniness in the world of art. This is one level. As the documents confirming your change of name, these documents are not works of art, for the change of name as such was not an art work either.

There exists a second level, where these documents are already recognised as works of art, at least some of them, for their designers won the Prešeren Award, the highest state award in the field of artistic creation in Slovenia. The documents themselves can thus have the status of art works from a different perspective than the one you have tackled. The passport, for example, has the status of an art work; it has been exhibited before, together with coins and bank note. Yet, it was exhibited anonymously, that is, without the name of the owner of the passport in question, only the name of the designer-author was stated. This is certainly a new situation, which could not have been possible a few decades earlier.

The third level, however, involves testing personal documents as readymades, that is, as art works, and this is the level that is probably most interesting here. Readymades are supposedly all about transposition, a gesture (this is another recurring thing in this conversation), namely, the gesture through which an ordinary object becomes a work of art, as Duchamp claims, "I am the author

who made the gesture, I have discovered that this is a work of art, because I have chosen this object." You, of course, chose these documents as documents and not as art works; but then you have selected them as art works through an additional gesture, by putting them in glass cabinets, even though this second gesture has not stripped them off their status as ordinary things. This is a unique situation: in this case, these documents can be used for their usual purpose at any moment, they remain valid. They are as valid in glass cabinets as anywhere else. If someone had pissed into the urinal labelled Fountain at the exhibition, he would have done so wrongly, for the urinal was turned upside down. Things like this have actually happened – albeit not intentionally but rather as mistakes – but Fountain cannot, in fact, be used for the usual purpose as a urinal - it is not even connected with the infrastructure that would enable this. In your case, however, these readymade documents – even when they are placed in the art world – are so strongly "ordinary objects" that they have retained their everyday function even in the world of art. What is interesting here is not the fact that anything can become an object of art – we have known this for a quite a while now, anything can be a work of art – but some things are intruders in the world of art: they become art works, yet, they do not shed their usual function.

Janez Janša: I believe this is the key thesis here: in contrast to all other readymades, the validity and usefulness of this readymade in the physical reality is bound to only one person, and this is what we call specificity. This validity has a clearly-stated expiration date. Our gesture is completely driven by reality, and because everything happened in a certain administratively verifiable reality, it

seemed logical to exhibit the documents as such – without any further aestheticization. What emerges here, then, are yet more levels: on the question of the series, the multiple, reproduction. Namely, the works that we are exhibiting here are mostly labelled with numbers; these are the only distinguishing elements. Personal identification cards have the same standard shape, size, design, and – in this case – also name; the only difference between them are the photos, the signatures, and the numbers. Moreover, in a purely administrative sense, it is only the numbers that serve as a criterion of differentiation.

Janez Janša: This is about the production of a series. The personal document, which we use as a means of differentiation, is part of a certain series, which is what we are underscoring here, that is, we are making the series more explicit by using the same name. The moment of seriality is, in this way, further emphasized. This is an interesting question and many dystopian scenarios have been written about societies where everyone has the same name and where only numbers are used to differentiate between people. To conclude on the question of why we selected the documents, this is an example of reality producing something that shakes the foundations of art perception.

Janez Janša: We are going to live these few weeks of our lives in reality while the documents of these lives – which are also our administrative documents – will be locked up in the gallery.

Janez Janša: If you have documents but you do not carry them on you, then you cannot function normally. The exhibition places you within the relationship of power between the spheres of art and administration. As a readymade, a personal document is a work of art, but as an administrative document it

serves to identify a certain person in public. When these objects become exhibited works of art, you cannot function as a citizen, because you lose certain basic human rights. Janez Janša: You are literally *sans papier*.

ON THE ALIENATION EFFECT AND SANS PAPIER

Lev Kreft: *Now we have come so far that we must give a name to this phenomenon. Brecht uses the term "alienation effect" to express the phenomenon when a personal document becomes almost more important than the person carrying it. Brecht mentions the example of the eviction notice, when the postman delivers the document announcing the cancellation of lease because the rent has not been paid in three months. He says that this seems perfectly normal to everyone nowadays, yet, this scenario has only been possible for the last fifty or sixty years; the post as we know it did not exist before then, and neither did apartments for lease. Documents are similar in this sense, of course. A hundred years ago, even as late as just before the First World War, documents were not as significant as they are today where you are hardly a person without your papers. Borders were not as protected as today and migration was less of a concern; in short, personal documents have acquired their current level of significance fairly recently. This happened first in the totalitarian regimes, and, documents – or rather, the lack thereof – have become generally more important over the past two decades. This fatal significance of documents is what you are challenging here.*

Janez Janša: We are going to be temporarily deprived of our documents; we are going to be *sans papier*. We are aware of the luxury:

we are doing this voluntarily while so many people are forced into such a situation. We are also aware of the possibility that the whole thing could turn against us and that the situation could become subject to legal procedures and no longer be merely a temporary socio-political experiment. We do not want to be cynical and we do not want to exploit the safety of the artistic/academic position by putting ourselves into the position of the subjects *sans papier* and thus pointing out the difficulties of the people without personal documents. But we do also want to problematize the so-called “leftist art world”, where there are a lot of projects, debates and actions happening exploring the topics of human rights (the problems of migration, the erased, and so on) to no real effect. We are now doing something that can have real effects, and we are doing it by using reality to challenge art. This is the turn that we are making.

ON THE ROMANTIC

Lev Kreft: *This is rather romantic, isn't it? To risk your life to create a work of art?*

Janez Janša: The truth about the majority of politically-engaged contemporary art is that it entails challenging reality through artistic measures. In contrast, we are using the real, or more precisely, the administrative, the legal, something that transpires in the sphere of law, to provoke art itself, like you said before. Art finds it difficult to accept something that is real, and today the real resides in the sphere of law, which deals with facts. We are today prepared to accept something as real only if it is backed up by facts. This is an additional reason for our use

of documents – they are judicially verified.

Lev Kreft: *I was thinking about the fact that people are ready to support human rights (since we have already mentioned the supporters of human rights) as long as this support does not entail any risks. People are happy to worship art, do art, and be known as artists, as long as this does not require taking any risks. The artistic situation, as I know it, is such that people are not willing to risk anything for their art. You, however, are risking something for art, which is why, in this sense, I can see this as a “romantic gesture”. Being prepared to take risks as an artist – I find this exceptional nowadays, and this is what, I think, the art world will not appreciate at all.*

Janez Janša: I would nevertheless like to emphasize that this is not an act motivated by any kind of sacrifice; this is an interrogation of some fundamental questions: the status of fact, the status of truth, the status of perception, the status of the political in art ...

ON THE STATE AS THE AUTHOR

Lev Kreft: *This gesture is so important that it is worth the risk. This is more than what the majority of contemporary artists do for their art. Even this must be somewhat uncanny. The other question, however, concerns the author of the documents. For, at some level, the author is the state. The task of performing this sort of authorial duty in the state belongs to the executive power, and the leader of the executive power represents the author of the documents. In a way, this is a case of “homecoming”. Thus, it is perfectly appropriate that the labels at the exhibition state that*

the author of these documents is represented by Janez Janša. Indeed, the election will have taken place before the exhibition, but perhaps we won't yet have a new Prime Minister in October.

Janez Janša: We have already talked about the difference between material and moral rights once, and we have established that the state has material rights: these documents are not our property, we are only using them. However, we do have moral rights, if these documents are readymades, if they are works of art.

Janez Janša: We are the authors of the gesture that transforms the documents into works of art.

Janez Janša: One day, we will have to return these documents to their legally rightful owner, who possesses the material rights but will never be able to deny that he now possesses a work of art and that the moral rights belong to someone else. This is where a paradox emerges: we will have to hand over these documents one day, and perhaps they will be destroyed. If they are destroyed, a work of art will be destroyed; if they puncture them, they will need to take responsibility for this gesture ...

Janez Janša: We had to have these documents made, after we had changed our names.

There was no choice here, only civic duty. In this sense, the documents were the products of state violence: the state demands that its citizens have personal documents that correspond to the person's administrative status.

ON LIMINALITY AND AUTHENTICITY

Lev Kreft: *The use of personal documents as exhibition items is certainly a liminal case; it probes certain boundaries. It is liminal in that it is not clear whether or not such a use of personal documents respects the rights that you acquired when you were issued these documents. You cannot burn documents as this is a criminal offence, but what about the use of documents for artistic purposes? To be sure, this is not something that serious people would use to justify persecution in the name of the state; yet, this does mean that everybody knows that you are not carrying your documents, that is, that you are not using them in compliance with the conditions under which they were issued to you. Even a bank can cancel your cards if they find out that you are using them in an inappropriate way. You are walking a line that I would not call "dangerous", but I do, however, consider it suspicious. This is precisely part of the risk that I mentioned before. Here, we can see various things that could develop from this. After all, you have to make a special effort to find out how security is going to work at the exhibition. It is an entirely different thing if you exhibit graphics numbered 1 to 100 that are insured through an insurance company. I doubt that an insurance company would issue an insurance policy for the everyday functional value of the exhibited documents in the same way as they would issue tourist insurance – such insurance would require the issuance of new documents. Furthermore, it is also interesting that these documents are art works, readymades. The original of Fountain has been lost, nicked, so Duchamp made new ones, signed them anew, he even made a miniature version for his little suitcase; you, however, cannot make new*

documents, they can only be made by an authorized organization called the state and its Ministry of Internal Affairs. Yet the Ministry itself cannot function illegally and, for example, reproduce these documents as art works. Now what? These are works of art only insofar as they are also authentic documents. Here we reach a contradiction – the very contradiction of the world of art. A readymade as a work of art is something inauthentic; it is the proof of inauthenticity: with a readymade, the “aura” disappears. In your case, however, the precondition for this readymade is its authenticity in everyday life – its credibility and authenticity. If somebody bought this work of art, they would be buying it as authenticity, together with its functional “readymade” value.

Janez Janša: Literally the aura ...

Janez Janša: ... An excellent thesis ...

ON THE STATE AND AUTHENTICITY

Lev Kreft: *But this is the authenticity owned by the state. You are not the owners of this authenticity. This is where a problem occurs: what should the art collectors do? If I were a curator in Graz, I would say, “We would like to buy this piece. For that one, we can put you in touch with a bank that wants to buy it, and a furniture company wants that personal identification card, and so on.” But they can’t! Regardless of your position that what happens here constitutes a gesture, this is in fact a “gesture on display” – this is ultimately the true work of art, that which cannot be collected. One of the main goals of the avantgarde artists was to produce something that could not be collected by the museums. Everybody can see the documents*

at the exhibition, but they cannot make them part of a collection; in fact, no one but you can claim these documents without stealing them or rendering them invalid. If you sold them, you would be taken to court, and if the state nullified them, the collectors would be left empty-handed - they would not get the authentic documents but merely a document of an art project that took place once upon a time. Duchamp’s passport could also be exhibited in this manner - so we could see whether he was really Marcel Duchamp, or maybe R. Mutt, or Rrose Selavy. This, then, is a historical document, but it is no longer an art work or an authentic valid personal document.

Janez Janša: That same document, that same readymade, will change with time, it will change its relationship to the circumstances. For me, this is an additional advantage of the new readymade that we are creating, an “authentificational” readymade ...

Janez Janša: It seems to me that another paradox has become apparent here. On the one hand, Lev is saying that, once the validity of the document expires, its authenticity ceases. On the other hand, this object will absorb its former story, the story of it being an authentic document, once it becomes a document of a document and changes its status. I argue that something is indeed lost, that something has changed, but something has also been gained: the object contains the history of its former and present shape, and I can only consider that an advantage.

Janez Janša: I cannot see anything contradictory here; if an exhibition features documents as readymades, I believe it is perfectly legitimate to confirm their artistic nature with documents rather than with the aura or the gallery context; here, everything

is officially determined in black and white by the authorized people, not by the critics.

ON THE MULTIPLE AND EARLY CHRISTIANITY

Lev Kref: *The fact that the documents are going to appear in an exhibition does not nullify them – that much is clear – but, at the same time, the fact that they are going to be exhibited – I am not saying that this is a unique event, it could happen again somewhere else – this is unique in that all these kinds of authenticity converge here. A classical authentic work is authentic only in a certain environment. Once it becomes part of a museum collection, it loses its authenticity; this is the first phase. Once it can be reproduced, its authenticity is lost even further; this is the second phase. These kinds of documents, the substitutes that would be issued to you to enable you to go about your business as usual and which you would have to return once you had your old ones back after the exhibition, can basically be reproduced, but yet, they are authentic as long as they are issued by the state: they are not copies, you are not asking for duplicates because you have lost the originals, for a duplicate is not a copy, it is a duplicate, it is always authentic. This is where the authenticity of a work of art and the authenticity of a document converge. If you are granted permission for this, if your application is accepted, then it is a unique experience to go to the exhibition and see this double authenticity, which is in fact just a readymade. This is truly an absolute paradox. One of the objections expressed by one of the jurors of the Association of the Independent Artists of New York immediately after*

Duchamp had submitted Fountain under the pseudonym R. Mutt, was that this was not an original art work. Yet, this was precisely Duchamp's ploy: not to prove that he had or had not made Fountain, but rather to show that there is no such thing as independent art or independent artists, that what the avantgarde claims is bullshit. Not even the avantgarde allows an individual gesture; such a gesture unsettles the avantgarde. This is what Duchamp wanted to prove and he succeeded. The main argument against Fountain, however, was that the item was obscene (we, here in the art world, are not going to address the question of whether or not the name Janez Janša may be obscene), while the other key argument was that it was not original. We know what Duchamp's response was: what could possibly be more original than to dismantle something that is a true original product of American art, for there are no other arts in America apart from the art of plumbing? In your situation, the gesture that you are performing actually intensifies this effect: the authenticity of the gesture of a readymade. The gesture of a readymade is truly authentic if it works, and this is what I find crucial. Obviously, you are interested in how the world of art reacts to all these moves. If you want to get involved in prostitution, they say, you need to hand your documents over to the pimps.

I think we have reached the end. The multiples are the only thing that we have not yet touched upon. Pseudonyms are not multiples, the multiples are real people with different identities and identical names (this is why the first and the last name are not perfectly reliable as a means of identification, and the documents need to contain pupil scans and DNA records, for instance); multiples happen when it becomes fashionable

to be called Iosef Vissarionovich or Stalin and then there are masses of Stalins or masses of Jovankas. When Jovanka married Tito, people wanted to be Titos as well, of course, but the name was protected, or else there would have been hundreds of thousands of Titos in Yugoslavia – everybody would have changed their name. These are multiple names. As for multiple names and last names, now this creates an additional problem, for what emerges here is the problem of identification. There are many Janez Novaks in Slovenia, but this is a different case, which results from the fact that there are a lot of Novaks here and that many children are called Janez. You, however, have chosen a multiple name and you have made it multiple by choosing it. I cannot think of an appropriate comparison.

Janez Janša: We have chosen a name that already exists, a name which is a readymade, and we have thus, of course, raised the following question: what is the difference between what we have done and the scenario in which one assumes a certain name, say Luther Blissett, in the public artistic life, while in one's private life one is still called Lev Kreft? In my view, the difference can be explained as such: if a sculptor in 1917 made a cast of a urinal and exhibited it as a classical sculpture called *Fountain*, this would appear somewhat problematic and obscene, but it would not constitute the gesture of a readymade, which really is a gesture, the gesture of interrogating the status of the object in the artistic context. We have transposed the urinal, while Luther Blissetts have merely made a cast of it.

Lev Kreft: Well, the fact that this is not a pen name or a pseudonym is crucial for multiples. This is why this is a readymade,

for it enters art from life. A pen name exists, at first, only in art and then becomes part of life, for in the end no one remembers the real name. This is a common situation, there are plenty of examples like this – Andy Warhol is not Andy Warhol ...

Janez Janša: Madonna is not just Madonna, and not even the Primer Minister Janez Janša is really Janez Janša (his official name is Ivan Janša).

Lev Kreft: *Ivan Janša cannot be real, he loses out in the competition of multiples ...*

Janez Janša: It needs to be stated, once and for all, what this is all about: this is about the difference between traditional and contemporary art. Ivan Janša, the Prime Minister, is a traditional artist, that is, he takes the name as a metaphor and assumes the name Janez to underscore his "Slovenian-ness" in a certain public segment of his life. He does not want to hurt his parents, who have given him his name, he does not want to give the original name up, but he uses Janez, and not Ivan for his public function. In this case, he is the traditional artist who understands art as the field of representation and metaphor.

Lev Kreft: Janez Janša could say – though he probably lacks the imagination to do so – that his parents were prevented by the communist powers-that-be from calling him Janez, for this would have sounded too Slovenian then and therefore problematic, hence, he had to become a Russian Ivan. This would be a very good interpretation, and I am happy to offer it to him.

Janez Janša: With multiple names, there are also the tactics and strategies of anonymity, that is, the erasure of individuality, which is somehow dictated by the logic of neoliberal capitalism: this is an individual name and last name, which conceals an unknown number of individuals. We have retained our individuality.

Lev Kreft: *If we go back to the starting point of early Christianity: one of the main problems of early Christianity was how to prove, in monotheism, that God had three personal dimensions, and the only possible proof is that a God, who could exist outside these three personal dimensions, does not exist at all; rather, these three personal dimensions*

together comprise God. There is no real Janez Janša; this is the explanation that prevailed in Christianity, and only in this way could monotheism with God in three personal dimensions come about. In short, there is no unified God from which three – additional but subordinate and derived – persons would emanate: God is always really human, when He is Christ; at the same time, He is really entirely the Trinity when he is personified; and He is also really entirely the Holy Spirit, when He is the Holy Spirit. Janez Janša is really within each of you; outside of you there is no actual real Janez Janša from which to draw your identification.

Translated by Polona Petek

Ali je Janez Janša kreten?



Ivo Sanader

V normalnih okoliščinah – če bi poznal hitro naravo Janeza Janše in njegovo nagajenje, da že zaradi veliko manjših stvari kliče svoje odvetnike in piše tožbe zaradi obrekovanja – se človek ne bi mogel z lahkoto odločiti, da javno postavi gorjše vprašanje. Uredniki Dnevnika bi se posvetovali s pravno službo in bi besedilo verjetno vrgli v koš, še preden bi prišli do tistega dela besedila, kjer pravim: da, Janez Janša je kreten, kot ga svet še ni videl. Da pa ne bom ostal le pri imenovanju Janše za kretena brez kakršne koli obrazložitve, naj še rečem, da je njegova ideja o mejah, ki jo pridiha po Evropi, ena prav velika traparija.

namreč letni festivali ali razstave, na katerih bi politiki pokazali, kaj vse so delali prejšnje leto.

Ta paradoks je Janez Janša s svojim dejanjem simbolično uničil, ko je javnosti dopustil pogled v vse, kar Janša počne. Saj je bistvo umetnosti ravno v postavljanju vprašanj, ki se jih v dejanskem življenju ne postavlja, v prehajanju meja, na katere se v dejanskem življenju pristaja brez dodatnih vprašanj. V dejanskem življenju meje niso izzivi, temveč administrativno dejstvo. Prav tako kot na primer ime Janez Janša.

Zato, vidite, je Janez Janša kreten.

Ivo Sanader

Is Janez Janša an Idiot?

In normal circumstances—that is, if one knew Janez Janša's impulsive character and his propensity to call his lawyers and sue people for slander even in cases of much smaller proportions—one could not easily decide whether or not to ask the question in the title. The editors of Dnevnik would consult their legal services and the text would probably end up in the wastebin before they even got to the point where I say: yes, Janez Janša is the biggest idiot in the universe. However let's not limit ourselves to simply calling Janša an idiot without giving any reasons; so I will add that his concept of borders, which he has been preaching all around Europe, is an exemplary piece of idiocy.

So what has changed that one can freely write in newspapers these days that Janez Janša is an idiot? Somebody might say that there has been a sensational discovery, but as it turns out, Janez Janša is actually a Croat, born in Rijeka. And since one of the benefits of our independence is the fact that it has become socially acceptable, in Croatia, to call Slovenians cretins, and in Slovenia, to refer to Croats as idiots—and if you know my innate reflex to denigrate everything Croatian—the fact that Janez Janša is actually a Croat has enabled me to say everything I think about this idiot in a Slovenian newspaper.

But Janez Janša being a Croat is only a half of this story; for he is also something much worse—he is an artist. I am of course talking about Emil Hrvat, my peer and fellow compatriot, born in Rijeka, who nowadays enjoys the reputation of an established and well-known Slovenian conceptual artist, director, and editor of the performing arts journal Maska. Hrvat in officially changed his name to Janez Janša a few days ago. Under his new name, he appeared at the Berlin festival Tanz im August, where he interrogated the relationship between liberal capitalism and the concepts of border and border-crossing through a series of experimental actions and performances.

Since we are dealing with a conceptual – albeit administratively-valid – artistic act, I am more than

willing to participate in this splendid performance in the way in which I, myself, understand it; that is, to take it as an opportunity to respond to the artist's call, to publicly cross the imagined borders in a newspaper, and to write that Janez Janša is a common fool. This can be done because it is perfectly legitimate to call artists—but not politicians—idiots and to call their work idiocy. Artists are harmless beings who do not have powerful lawyers. Unlike politicians, they do everything publicly and they offer their work to be judged by the public, despite the fact that their mandate is strictly personal and their responsibility is only to themselves. Politicians, on the other hand, have our mandate and they are accountable to us; and yet, no politician has ever publicly presented their work. There are no annual festivals or exhibitions in which politicians would display their achievements of the past year.

This is the paradox that Janez Janša symbolically destroyed when he offered the public an insight into everything that Janša does. For the gist of art is precisely to ask questions that are never asked and to cross boundaries that are never crossed in everyday life. In everyday life, borders and boundaries are not a challenge—rather, they are an administrative fact. Just like, for instance, the name Janez Janša is an administrative fact.

This is why, you see, Janez Janša is an idiot. If for no other reason than because we have no way of knowing who we are dealing with when the name is mentioned, even if everyone reading this text knew exactly which Janša is an idiot for me and which one is not. On top of this, Janez Janša, just like Janez Janša, has also changed his name. He was born as Ivan. And this it not all: Janez Janša and Janez Janša are not the only Janezes Janšas. Another couple of Janša's friends and collaborators, alternative artists Žiga Kariž and Davide Grassi, have also changed their names to Janez Janša. The confusion is now perfect. And what if I wrote that three Janezes Janšas are pure geniuses and only one of the lot is an idiot? But if we recall the incident from a few months ago with the dog on YouTube whose name was also Janez Janša, there is no way of telling who is an idiot and who is a scoundrel.

Janša's artistic act has a practical side as well. Just like in the joke about Mujo and his four kids, (Croatian Prime Minister) Ivo Sanader is going to call Janez Janša and say, "Janša, give us a beer!". And suddenly, there are going to be four beers on his table. This is definitely less dangerous than, if Hrvatín, Žiga and Davide had changed their names and surnames a couple of years earlier, and Sanader ordering, instead of a beer, a smaller border incident.

I have, thus been inspired to use a pen name for this issue of Dnevnik. No, not Janez Janša. As we can see, everybody is called Janez Janša these days. I could be called, say, Ivo Sanader. Yes—Ivo Sanader. As Ivo Sanader, for instance, I could come to a few agreements with Janez Janša about a few border issues, without involving the International Court of Justice in The Hague. For starters, we could deal with those borders and boundaries that exist only in human minds and which

can be crossed without documents issued to Janez Janša or Ivo Sanader. We could deal with borders and boundaries that do not separate but rather bring together and whose sole purpose is to be crossed.

The boundaries of decency? Indeed, where is the line separating an acceptable way of saying "Janša is an idiot" from an unacceptable one? In the middle of the Gulf of Piran? Somewhere along the Mura? For there is, indeed, a line, a limit—in human minds, in limited human minds.

Of course, if you disagree with me, you can always say: what a cardinal idiot this Ivo Sanader is!

Originally published as "Ali je Janez Janša kreten?" in *Dnevnikov Objektiv*, 1st September 2007.
Translated by Polona Petek

Nisem kreten in ne ena navadna budala

V

članku z naslovom »Je Janez Janša kreten?«, objavljenem v Dnevnikovem Objektivu dne 1. septembra 2007 na str. 9 avtor Ivo Sanader zapiše naslednje trditve:

»Janez Janša je kreten, kot ga svet še ni videl.«

»Janez Janša (je) ena navadna budala.«

»Zato, vidite, je Janez Janša kreten.«

Te z ničimer dokazane trditve grobo žalijo mojo čast in dobro ime. Zato od gospoda Iva Sanaderja zahtevam, da se

mi javno opraviči na vidnem mestu v vašem časopisu, in to najpozneje do 22. septembra 2007. V nasprotnem primeru bom svojo pravico in zadoščenje poiskal po pravni poti.

Lep pozdrav

Janez Janša

I'm Neither an Idiot nor a Common Fool

In the article entitled "Is Janez Janša an Idiot?", which was published in Dnevnik's *Objektiv*, page 9, on 1st September 2007, the author Ivo Sanader writes:

"Janez Janša is the biggest idiot in the universe."

"Janez Janša is a common fool."

"This is why, you see, Janez Janša is an idiot."

These statements are completely unsubstantiated, deeply offensive, and detrimental to my honour good reputation.

This is why I demand a public apology from Mr. Ivo Sanader to be published in a visible place in your

newspaper no later than 22 September 2007. In the case that no such apology is offered, I will seek justice and legal satisfaction.

Regards,
Janez Janša

Originally published as "Nisem kreten in ne ena navadna budala" in *Dnevnikov Objektiv*, 8th September 2007.
Translated by Polona Petek

Jela Krečič

Janez Janša as Media Phenomenon



Janez Janša, Janez Janša, Janez Janša
interviewed by Suzana Lovec, journalist
of the *POP TV*, Ljubljana, 2007
Photo: Borut Peterlin

What is the nature of a media phenomenon? Usually, this is a phenomenon that the media bring into the public and then, over a certain period of time, analyse it from various perspectives, explain it, interpret it, etc.

Two examples of notorious media phenomena are last year's abduction of British girl Madeline McCann and this year's case of Josef Fritzl from Austria, who kept his daughter and their five children locked in a cellar for a quarter of a century. In Slovenia, two such examples are the death of three girls in the throng in front of the discotheque Lipa and the case of the killer Silvo Plut, while in the sphere of art and culture the Janez Janša has emerged as a similar sort of media phenomenon. What we have in mind here are the three Slovenian artists, who changed their names to Janez Janša in June and July 2007.

The print and electronic media in Slovenia and abroad, as well as some more specialized publications, have dedicated a lot of attention to this change – they have dissected it, interpreted it and analysed it. However, while the aforementioned media phenomena, in principle, have an expiry date – they disappear from the front pages and

slide into oblivion after a certain period of time – the three Slovenian artists have kept drawing the attention of the media, in small and large doses, throughout the year. Thus, we can establish that Janez Janša constitutes a media phenomenon and, at the same time, it constitutes a phenomenon among media phenomena, not only because it has kept appearing in various media over the period of an entire year but also because of the following, more complex reason. If the most notorious media phenomena result from the assumption – or rather, the deception – that the phenomenon already exists somewhere out there and that all the media does is mediate it to the public, then the Janez Janša media phenomenon has been a media construction from the very beginning. It does not exist outside the media at all.¹ Lukan

takes as his starting point the fact that: the three artists still stick to their new names, that this bureaucratically demanding decision was an intimate act that has nothing to do with art, and the three artists deny that they now constitute a new art collective.² To be able to talk about a project by the three renamed artists, we must first show that the Janez

Janša project constitutes an artistic gesture. Yet, not even this is enough, for the artistic dimension of a project is present or formed in the media. In other words, the existence of this art project – which, according to its authors, does not exist, while Lukan explains why it can be understood as such – depends on its appearance in the media.

The Janez Janša media phenomenon reveals the nature of the Janez Janša art

¹This is the thesis argued in detail in Blaž Lukan's article "The Janez Janša Project" (in the journal *Amfiteater*, July 2008, see also in this book, pp. 11-28).

²Incidentally, the news about their name change was spread in public by word of mouth by their friends and acquaintances, who have attended the wedding of one Janez Janša, where the other two Janez Janšas appeared as best men.



Manipulator / The Fledgling Janez Janšas

»Janez Janša Got Married. The mixed-media artist says "I do", instead of the prime minister«

Article from weekly *Mladina*, Ljubljana,

25th August 2007

phenomenon by parasitically infiltrating the media; the media is the space of artistic performance, that is, the space of the project by the three artists, and they cannot be severed from the artistic creation of the Janez Janša project. The project also reveals the nature of the functioning of the media, which never reports on reality as such, rather, they construct such a reality by reporting about it and by choosing a way of reporting about it. The media, which co-creates the art project, induces a certain split in the journalist who is duty bound to report about the project, and in the process of reporting about the three Janez Janšas, the journalist understands

– at least, instinctively – that s/he is not merely a recorder of a neutral event but that s/he is also dealing with an event that constantly evokes a series of meanings (and their interconnections) that cannot be done away with, regardless of how precisely or dispassionately the journalist treats the event. By inadvertently producing a whole series of meanings or several coexistent semantic fields, the reporting about the Janez Janšas often creates confusion and appears comical. Even though – or, perhaps, precisely because – the journalist as a professional remains faithful to the rules of reporting and commenting, s/he cannot shake the feeling

that s/he participates in the creation of the Janez Janša media phenomenon and, by extension, the Janez Janša art project.

One example which could serve to substantiate this claim is the case of the tabloid newspaper *Direkt* (13th October 2007) which reported about the exhibition *Triglav* at Mala galerija, where the project *Mount Triglav on Mount Triglav* by the three Janšas was also on display. A short article was published in the Back Side column on the last page of the newspaper, which elaborated on the reporting about the Janšas affects journalism. The article reports that the *Direkt* editorial board first assumption was that the project of human cloning has finally succeeded. "So, we were relieved to find out that this was a new enterprise by the artists Davide Grassi, Emil Hrvatini, and Žiga Kariž, who decided to assume the name of our famous Prime Minister", goes on to say. What we have here is the gist of the problem of the Janez Janša media project. The editorial board was alarmed because they saw the name of the Prime Minister – this was the first association upon seeing the name Janez Janša – or, more precisely, they saw the name of the Prime Minister written three times in a row, which surprised and confused them; but then they were relieved to find out that this was "merely" an enterprise by three artists. Yet, even though this is "merely" an art enterprise, the editorial board felt compelled to note the accumulation of Janez Janšas in the newspaper confused and surprised them, and they were counting on the fact that this "piling up" was likely to confuse and attract their attention of their readership, as well.

In the same spirit, the Back Side column also reported the news that Janša was dancing in Berlin; again, the article started by saying that the editors first thought that Urška (the Prime Minister's partner) could do

wonders, that is, that she had persuaded the Prime Minister to dance. But then the editors found out that the news referred to the artist performing in Berlin. Nonetheless, the column featured a photograph of the Prime Minister Janez Janša.

The journalist who reports about the Janšas always gets the feeling that s/he is somehow, willingly or inadvertently, of service to the Janez Janša project; because the author of the present discussion has often

found herself in the role of the reporter, the commentator, or the interviewer of the three Janez Janšas she finds that she must reflect upon this split position for the present text to retain its credibility. Further more, even in the current piece, whose purpose is an analysis of this media phenomenon, she will not be able to avoid the emergence of a whole palette

of meanings and their interconnections and nor will she be able to avoid participating or being of service to this art project.

Incidentally, the journalist always co-creates the event about which s/he reports, however, while this aspect of the journalist's creativity usually remains hidden and unthematized, it becomes explicit in the case of the Janšas' project.³

THE CHRONOLOGY AND MEDIA GENRES

The media dimension of the project by Janez Janšas also requires reflection, that is, it

³ On a purely personal level, my experience of the effects of co-creating the Janez Janša project was most immediate when I interviewed the three artists and asked them about the meaning of the statement "The more we are, the faster we will reach the goal!", which was allegedly uttered somewhere by one of the Janšas. Because I thought this was one of the most striking statements in the entire interview, I chose it as the title of the text. Rok Vevar chose the same title for his article in the daily newspaper *Večer* (1 September 2007). It was only later that I found out that Janez Janša, the president of the Slovenian Democratic Party (SDS), ends his letter to every new member of his party with this uplifting sentence.





Janez Janša, Janez Janša, Janez Janša
Wedding, Ljubljana, 11th August 2007
Ceremony

From left: Janez Janša, best man, Marcela Okretič,
bride, Janez Janša, bridegroom, Janez Janša, best man
Photo: Nada Žgank/Memento
Courtesy: Aksioma

needs to be shown how the Janez Janša art project appears in the media and what kinds of effects it produces; how these appearances create the art project and how they affect the broader socio-political space.

A survey of the media texts concerning the Janez Janšas firstly indicates that they received most attention on two occasions: first in August of last year, when the news about their change of name spread, and then secondly at the beginning of 2008, when their performance *Signature Event Context* was banned from the international festival Transmediale in Berlin. A fair share of attention was also given to the exhibition *Triglav* at Mala galerija, which opened in October last year and where their project *Mount Triglav on Mount Triglav* was also on display.

However, as already mentioned, the Janez Janša project remained on the pages of newspapers throughout the year mainly through the texts about the individual artistic activities of each Janša; the majority of these texts are reports and news announcements. Even though it was precisely these articles that kept the Janšas' project in the public eye – in fact, every single piece of information about their artistic activities generated questions about which Janša we were dealing with and stirred up imagination (with titles such as “Janša dances in Berlin” or “Janša shakes hands with Helga”) – we are going to put these texts aside.

We will, rather, be interested in those texts and the appearances of the Janšas in the media (in various columns), which thematize and comment upon the three artists' change of name in a broader context. Academic texts will be of interest mainly from the point of view of how they relate the Janšas' phenomenon to the artists' appearances in the media. We will also be interested in what

we could tentatively call the “exceptional cases” of the three Janšas appearing in the media, that is, in those appearances in which art and politics or art and media genres interconnected in interesting ways.

THE FIRST RESPONSES IN NEWSPAPER COLUMNS

If we start with the commentaries and columns concerning the Janez Janšas during the first appearance of the news about their name change, we can identify at least two serious articles dealing with this topic: the famous columnists of the two most important daily newspapers, *Delo's* Peter Kolšek and *Dnevnik's* Tanja Lesničar Pučko, both attempted to elucidate the phenomenon. What is significant about these columns is, above all, the fact that the name change prompted such an immediate response, an attempt to reflect upon and locate this gesture, which is unique and appears highly unusual.

Both columnists thought about the change of name in the context of art. In the column titled “Is Being Janez Janša an Art Form?” (28th August 2007), Tanja Lesničar Pučko lists various examples of art which, at first, do not appear to be works of art, and some even seem to make a departure from art to show that these examples do concern the sphere of art. She draws on Nicolas Bourriaud's thesis that art constitutes an activity in which relations to the world are forged. It is precisely in this sense, in the sense of forging relations to the world, that Lesničar Pučko understands the name change. In turn, Kolšek's text “The Multiplication of Janez Janšas” (15th September 2007) is concerned predominantly with the inflation of the name Janez Janša. The accumulation renders the name Janez Janša profane, which, for Kolšek,

constitutes an attempt to undermine the authority of the leader. He considers the multiplication of the Janšas important, for it is a rare example of an artist's attempt to forge a more active relation to politics.

THE RESPONSES IN SPECIALIZED PUBLICATIONS

The three artists have received more detailed treatment in specialized publications. The majority of the authors swear by the thesis that the change of name constitutes an artistic gesture, and, as already mentioned, Lukan's text offers the most comprehensive analysis and reflection in this regard.⁴ Lukan

⁴ While Lukan's text does offer the most comprehensive analysis of the Janez Janša project, another text needs to be mentioned, at least in a footnote. In his article "The more of us there are, the faster we can achieve the goal!", which represents one of the first critical responses to the artists' change of name, Rok Vevar defines the action of Janša, Janša, and Janša as an act of subversive affirmation. This is a concept developed by the German author Inke Arns in her analysis of some contemporary art practices observable in the countries of the former Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union. It is based on the concept of over-identification, which was developed by Slavoj Žižek in his analysis of the work of the group Laibach, where Žižek shows that excessive identification with something or someone does not produce an affirmation of the latter but rather a radical critique of it.

contemporary multimedia scene, which draws on conceptual art. The fact that we are dealing with three artists produces a series out of the name Janez Janša. The production of the series is inscribed into the

sphere of the social and the political, and it implies the disappearance of the subject – the disappearance of the artists as well as the referent itself, that is, the Prime Minister. This is the so-called subversive affirmation, the re-nomination.

Lukan's central insight is, "furthermore, we note that the artists achieve this effect in an almost passive manner, for the plan carries itself out by itself, by producing new meanings solely by appearing spontaneously in the media, with no additional special or planned activities. Since the name change, all three artists have been doing what they have always done, in the same way, and there is no evidence to the contrary; mean, while their new names, in connection with their actions, produce new meanings."

At this point, it is worth mentioning two other texts that assume a more critical stance towards the Janez Janšas. The criticisms are based on the assumption that the gesture of changing one's name operates within the sphere of art, and the key question concerns the real subversive political effect of this gesture. In her text "The Construction and Re-Staging of (the) Slovenian(-ness of) Art: The Endless Triglav", which was published in *Reartikulacija* (No. 2, December–January 2007/2008), Petra Kapš also describes the media as central to the Janšas project, however, she is critical of both the project itself and its appearance in the media. Her critique of this project is part of her critique of the exhibition *Triglav* at Mala galerija. She discusses OHO's action *Triglav* and its reappropriations by the group Irwin and the three Janšas. While the original action constituted a daring artistic and political gesture related to the national identity as it is constructed against the symbol of Triglav, highest Slovenian mountain, the other two actions have failed. If we simplify the

argument a bit, Irwin failed because they manipulated the original phenomenon, whereas the Janšas' action represents an initiation into the Slovenian-ness of art.⁵ Even more: "The next step was to trigger media frenzy. Considering the usual protocols, the expert public responded quickly and offered commentaries, analyses, contextualizations, and theorizations of the artists' renaming as well as of their 'three-headed' act on top of Triglav. (The swiftness of this interaction partly clouded the issue of who is producing whom.)"

In Kapš's opinion, due to the absence of the artists' commentaries or interpretations

⁵ The purpose and scope of this text do not allow a detailed discussion of the exhibition *Triglav*. Hence, we are merely referring to the article by Katia Kitamura in the British journal of visual arts *Frieze*, which offers a perspective on the exhibition that is entirely different from Kapš's text. The closing statement of the article illustrates this, "Triglav' presented a repeated attempt, across three artistic generations, at undermining a single stratified emblem. It also revealed the possibility that the simple task of subversion was never at the core of OHO's original performance, but rather the proving of a national symbol's robustness, in different hands and through different times." (*Frieze Magazine*, 1s. 113, March 2008)

of their own actions, the Janšas project produces the impression that it is "essentially a politically subversive and critical response to the state of affairs in a specific *milieu*; yet, it is also perfectly and precisely aware of the fact that it is constructed in such a way that it neither disturbs nor threatens anyone. It amounts solely to the solicitation of (media) attention." The project

only appears subversive, while in fact it subverts nothing and nobody.

Kapš also writes that the project exposes the reality of Slovenian media, while at the same time it does not critique this reality but rather exploits it for profit, "The project is an insult to the spirit and the inspiration of the avant-garde through a media sale." The latter can be understood as a statement that

the continuing appearance of the three Janšas in the media is not based on the journalists' opinion that the artists' actions are something worth thinking about but rather on the journalists' perception of this media project as something sensationalist that might increase the paper's sales. The Janšas, however, have not seized the opportunity to use the media space to bring it to self-reflection; rather, they have exploited it for self-promotion and profit.

Even harsher about the project by Janez Janšas is Marina Gržinić in her text "On The Dark Side of the Alps" (*Maska*, Nos 113–114, Spring 2008).⁶ The text is dedicated

to the analysis of a special issue of *ČKZ* [Journal for Critique of Science, Imagination and

⁶ Let me mention that the most critical text was published in the journal *Maska*, where Janez Janša is director of the organization.

New Anthropology] The Story of an Erasure as a Bright Light on the Otherwise Dark Side of the Alps. Before clarifying what constitutes the subversive power of this issue, Gržinić singles out two foreclosures, two recent acts that simultaneously occurred in the artistic and political context. These acts, which signalled an attempt to cloud the situation in the sphere of contemporary art and culture, were completely at odds with the "expectations of vitality and prosperity in the art and cultural environment in Slovenia". The first foreclosure was the act when three artists changed their names to Janez Janša and the second one was the production of mythologies following the death of the former President of Slovenia Janez Drnovšek. Here, we are only interested in the first foreclosure and the arguments that have led Gržinić to such an understanding. In her opinion, the name changing of Janšas clouds the current socio-political situation in Slovenia, that is, it clouds the right-

wing capital power of the Slovenian Prime Minister Janez Janša. In contrast to Laibach who, twenty years ago, used the method of over-identification to destabilize the hegemonic discourse of socialism, a similar gesture by the three Janšas today appears as parodic exhibitionism. Not unlike Madonna, the artists sell their own brand and make money. Gržinič also finds it objectionable that the Janšas are wasting money on new and legal identification documents at a time when there are thousands of “erased” in Slovenia, who have been left with no documents at all.

Gržinič also addresses the issue of the artists’ appearances in the media. The frequency of these appearances raises the question of the support that they are getting from the government and the ministry. She mentions the fact that all three artists have been given financial support by Slovene Ministry of Culture for nearly all projects. According to Gržinič, the change of name, which resulted in the increase in the frequency of their appearances in the media, has yielded results – in the form of state money.

An even greater sin, according to Gržinič, is the fact that the three Janšas have been invited to contribute to the *Epistles* column in the weekly supplement of *Dnevnik* newspaper, “For a few weeks, the three Janez Janšas used a very important public space to amuse the readers. The ‘Janšas’ did not give any criticism of the present state of things, just their speculations on their travelling and the reminiscent sentimentalism about their different places of birth and origins. Today in Slovenia, the most fearful censorship is conducted through mass media, journals, and television therefore there is no place for a relevant, critical analysis to be published.” She continues, “Why the opportunity of

getting access to the public and the possibility to argue publicly on topics of control, overt disrespect of human rights, fascistic biopolitics, laws against asylum seeking and migration, and many other issues was not used?” What we can extrapolate from this is that, if the three Janšas are so spendthrift as to change their names and receive the tax payers’ money for their project, they should at least use the media space that they have been given to offer a critique of the hardly idyllic situation in Slovenia. In contrast, Gržinič concludes, the right-wing option needs such a spectacular, multiplied branding of nothing as it is the same nothing that is being produced by the government and the ruling parties.

If we leave aside the question of whether or not the spendthrift associated with the change of name should be justified by the authors’ artistic activities or critique, and the question of whether or not the fact that they have received state funding – it would be fair to point out that two of Janez Janšas received no funding for their projects from the Ministry of Culture in 2008 – means that their art is worthless and uncritical, another question arises, namely, should the artists use the space that they are given in the media to mount a critique of the government, media censorship, politics, etc.? And what kind of critique should this be? Would it have to point explicitly to the concrete mistakes made by the government? Both Kapš and Gržinič see the Janšas’ appearances in the media as an apology of the existing situation and a sign of the artists’ political conformism.

As we have already attempted to show, the Janša project is more complex precisely because it emerges and is maintained in various media to a large extent without the intention of the artists themselves, which means that its effects in the socio-political

spheres are varied and can also be subversive. The “media sale” that Kapš writes about and the inefficient use of the media that Gržinič comments upon are part and parcel of these effects and responses; they are part of the artists’ media appearances and thus also a creation (albeit a negative one) of the project by Janez Janša. It seems, then, that the Janša project and their media presence cannot be reduced to one single interpretation. In the remainder of this text, we will attempt to show that the media sale of the Janšas is much more complex than it seems and that it does have sufficiently subversive – albeit often very subtle – (socio-political) effects.

THE ART OF THE MEDIUM: DEŽULOVIČ

Among the more exceptional cases of the Janšas’ appearances in the media, the article “Is Janez Janša an Idiot?” by the columnist of *Dnevnikov objektiv*⁷ Boris Dežulović (1st

⁷ *Dnevnikov objektiv* is a weekly supplement of the national daily newspapers *Dnevnik* September 2007, see also in the book, pages 172-173) should be singled out.

The article starts with the statement that, in normal circumstances, the author of the article would think twice before choosing such a provocative title, for he – as well as the newspaper – would fear the possibility of being sued by Prime Minister Janša. The writer then goes on to say explicitly that the first association upon seeing the name Janez Janša is the Slovenian Prime Minister. And then he abruptly proclaims that Janša is an idiot, which he justifies by saying that the Prime Minister’s understanding of borders is idiotic. This argument then leads us to a discussion of tensions at the Slovenian-Croatian border(s). Dežulović gradually goes on to explain that Janša is actually a Croat, even worse, that he is an artist, and therefore,

it is much easier to call him an idiot. It is then that the writer reveals that he is talking about the former Emil Hrvatin, conceptual artist, director and the editor of *Maska*, who’d recently changed his name to Janez Janša and appeared as such at the Berlin festival Tanz im August. In Janša’s performance, he interrogated the relationship between liberal capitalism and the concepts of border and border-crossing.

If we summarize the course of the column thus far: the writer starts with a speech about Janša and his politics as regards Croatia, while at the same time he hints at the possibility of this not concerning the Prime Minister Janša but rather someone else, and then he eventually reveals that his text is actually about the artist Hrvatin, who had recently explored some other borders and boundaries. Concurrently with this series of associations, however, another boundary becomes visible and is then blurred through Dežulović’s constant evocation and transgression, namely, the boundary between the genre of the newspaper column and the spaces of art and politics. The columnist sees the artist’s decision to change his name to Janša as an artistic act and, at the same time, as an invitation to the journalist to participate in it – precisely by way of publishing a column in one of the more prestigious print media sources. He understands this act as “an opportunity to respond to the artist’s call, to publicly cross the imagined borders in a newspaper, and to write that Janez Janša is a common fool”.

There is no danger either, he writes, that the artist might sue him, for he has no resources for this. Besides, artists do everything publicly and they offer their work to be judged by the public. Politicians, on the other hand, have our mandate and yet, they do not display their achievements publicly,

say, at an exhibition or a festival. This is what Janša destroyed when he offered the public an insight into everything that Janša does; he raised the question of boundaries – this time, those boundaries that are regularly transgressed by art. The writer adds, “In everyday life, borders and boundaries are not a challenge, rather, they are an administrative fact. Just like, for instance, the name Janez Janša is an administrative fact.” The thesis of the text, then, is that the Janšas’ artistic act of changing their names has raised questions that are not commonly asked in everyday life, for we consider them self-evident administrative facts. The article thus interrogates these commonly accepted boundaries.

The author then reiterates his statement that Janez Janša is an idiot and he adds that, if for no other reason, because it is impossible to tell who we have in mind when we mention his name. In other words, Dežulović can say this because the label can refer to any of the Janšas – not just the Prime Minister. He reminds us that the Prime Minister himself has changed his name, for he was born as Ivan, while there are also two other artists called Janša. It is also confusing if we say that three Janšas are geniuses while the fourth one is an idiot. Dežulović also refers to the affair of “Janša” the dog: in July 2007, a radio journalist and host reported that the first hit on You Tube, if one types in “Janša”, is a dog that goes by that name. The journalist got suspended for commenting upon this. Dežulović concludes that, since this incident, it has not been clear who is a genius, an idiot, or a scoundrel. Again, there is no way of telling which Janša we have in mind, since obviously Janša is also a dog.

In the next paragraph, the writer introduces Ivo Sanader, the Croatian Prime Minister, into his discussion, stating that,

from now on, Sanader will have to deal with not one but four Janez Janšas. Not only Janša the artist but also Janša the politician will be unable to avoid being confused with one of the artists. And then follows the spectacular twist: “I have thus been inspired to use a pen name for this issue of Dnevnik. No, not Janez Janša. As we can see, everybody is called Janez Janša these days. I could be called, say, Ivo Sanader.” Thus, Sanader can now discuss with Janša the issue of borders without involving the International Court of Justice in The Hague. They can debate the boundaries that exist only in human minds, the transgression of boundaries, such as the boundaries of decency – say, the line separating an acceptable way of saying “Janša is an idiot” from an unacceptable one. “Of course, if you disagree with me, you can always say: what a cardinal idiot this Ivo Sanader is!”

In the final part of the column, Dežulović, as the person who has accepted the artistic challenge and got involved in the Janšas’ performance, renames himself and now, as Sanader, addresses other border disputes he has with Janša - the boundaries that constitute a certain social community. These boundaries, however, are transgressed precisely by being discussed by Sanader the columnist and Janša the artist. In other words, the column “Is Janez Janša an Idiot?” was written by Ivo Sanader, which reinforces the political dimension of the column. A whole new spectrum of meanings and readings emerges here, from those that see the column as Sanader’s way of settling accounts with Janša the idiot, to those that read it as a polemic between Ivo Sanader and Janša about the boundaries (of art). With the act of assuming the name of Ivo Sanader, Dežulović performs what he discusses. This could be summarised as follows. The

boundaries that are discussed in the column and which, first and foremost, concern the boundaries of the socially acceptable or desirable, are usually not interrogated. But the column in which the writer plays with the meanings of Janez Janša as well as Sanader ultimately shows that these boundaries are in fact very porous and that they cannot be drawn once and for all. When Dežulović assumes the name Sanader, he further blurs the boundaries – all meanings become slippery. We can see this as an artistic gesture which is supported by the relatively free genre of the newspaper column, while at the same time Dežulović's act also offers a sophisticated political critique of the two leading Slovenian and Croatian politicians. With the multiplication of the identities of both, the writer questions their status as referents – as the authorities that cannot be appealed to – which is only a step away from interrogating the boundaries raised by the two politicians, in both the literal as well as metaphorical sense.

Yet, the story of Dežulović's column is not over yet. Its artistic potential becomes apparent with Janez Janša's response entitled "I'm Neither an Idiot nor a Common Fool" (8th September 2007). Janša claims that none of the accusations – that he is an idiot and a fool – are based on facts, therefore, he demands an apology from Mr Sanader, or else, he will sue him. If this response is read against Dežulović's column, we can see how the Janez Janša media phenomenon is being reproduced. We should not miss the fact that such a response, which appears comical, relativizes the status of the Letters to the Editor column. The latter is a serious feature of a newspaper, where people concerned about serious issues can start a polemic or enter into a debate. Due to the artist's offence, Janša's response to Sanader – even if it is

meant to be utterly serious – establishes a certain distance towards this column. In other words, it could be argued that Janša abuses the space not only to initiate a polemic with Sanader but also to continue the artistic performance, which Dežulović with his text has become part of. Political connotations remain present all along.

EPISTLES

In a similar vein, the column *Epistles* in *Dnevnikov objektiv* also becomes the space of artistic performance. The column is usually used for correspondence between two known Slovenians, but this time, the three Janšas exchange letters among each other. As Gržinič observes, this can be a space for famous people to criticize current affairs or to draw attention to other problems. As far as the Janšas' correspondence is concerned, two things need to be mentioned: first, the newspaper itself, by having invited three artists with the same name to correspond with each other, has created a media space where the artistic project by the three Janšas unfolds (incidentally, the three Janšas can be told apart solely on the basis of their photographs and signatures). Secondly, the artists, in their letters, create the impression that they do not notice this public media dimension of their correspondence and they write to one another purely as friends, completely immersed in their own artistic and domestic pursuits.

In the letters, we thus encounter details from their family lives, above all, descriptions of where they have been with their wives and children. They describe the cities they have visited, their specificities, sights, etc. In his very first letter, Janša recounts how he visited Italy, including his hometown, with his family, and Janša responds with a

letter about Istanbul. In one of the letters, for instance, Janša reflects upon why the people in Vienna's art circles always seem to take their guests to a sushi place or another exotic restaurant, even though all he wants is a Wiener Schnitzel. The Janšas talk about their change of name and joint projects, mainly from an intimate perspective. In a letter dated 2nd February 2008, Janša ruminates about his signature, the old and the new one. When they were signing catalogues at the Transmediale festival, he had to sign his name numerous times and in the letter he describes how he felt during this endless repetition. The other Janša then responds by describing his experience of repeating mantras. He used mantras in his performance *Slovene National Theatre*, in which he critically explored the case of the Strojjan's family eviction from Ambrus⁸,

⁸ In the fall 2006 the Roma family Strojjan has been deported from there living site after the pressure of local population and after the decision of Janša's government.

as well as in the joint performance *Signature Event Context*, in which all three artists walked

among the concrete slabs of Peter Eisenman's Holocaust Memorial in Berlin repeating the sentence "I am Janez Janša." There are numerous artistic references in the Janšas' correspondence, from literary ones (such as Pamuk, whom Janša was reading before he went to Istanbul) to filmic ones (in Vienna, Janša remembers a controversial film of Liliana Cavani's *The Night Porter* to which other Janša responds with an association of Visconti's provocative film *Death in Venice*).

Janša's reflection about Marcel Duchamp's *Fountain* is significant (2nd February 2008). Tate Modern decided to put the *Fountain* in a glass case to prevent people from using it as a urinal. Janša relates this to his thoughts about comic books featuring Donald Duck where there are no toilets. In this letter, we

can discern a critique of the institution of contemporary art, which does not shy away from fetishizing those objects that attempted to destroy fetishistic approach to works of art.

Another interesting critical reflection is offered in Janša's letter dated 9th February 2008, where the writer points to the prominence of art in contemporary economic theories, in which they consider art an important trigger of economic growth, whereas Slovenian, economic theorists like Mičo Mrkaič understand art in a very stiff, pre-modern way. In a letter dated 22nd February 2008, the same Janša develops his own – we could say "utopian" – idea of a just society based on the establishment of a new royalism. We can see here a critique of social inequalities, which are the necessary corollary of the logic of the capital.

Marina Gržinič is right to claim that the Janšas, in their correspondence, do not show an explicit political engagement. But does this mean that they have not produced any broader socio-political effect? My thesis is that the Janšas have more effectively contributed to their project and its outcome precisely by assuming a passive role in their correspondence, that is, by creating the impression that they are not aware of the fact that medium has offered them a perfect platform for actively developing their joint project. To use Lukan, what distinguishes the project is precisely the inability to determine the limits of artistic intention or purpose and to tell where the spontaneous functioning of the project, which co-exists with the logic of the functioning of a certain medium, begins. In other words, the subversive gesture of this correspondence lies precisely in this apparent or real passivity. If this were not the case, the project would lose its openness (to various meanings, understandings and

interpretations) and could risk operating as a trivial, current-affairs kind of criticism.

POLITICS AND JANEZ JANŠA

Another important element of the media phenomenon Janez Janša is the way that the three Janez Janšas entered the Slovenian sphere of current affairs. As soon as the news about their change of name appeared, there was also a rumour that all three of them became members of Janez Janša's party SDS. To this day, the artists have not confirmed this piece of information, but it has been given attention in various media. It is even mentioned in Herwig G. Höller's article "We Are the Best Model" in the Vienna weekly *Falter*. Moreover, Höller understands the change of name as an artistic symptom that testifies to the fact that there is something seriously wrong in Slovenia. In the text, Höller problematizes the main events and affairs that happened during the mandate of Janša's government, from the eviction of the Strojjan family to media pressures and censorship, to the tapping affair, and the arrogance of the current government.

The artists' "current-affairs baptism" of sorts happened in the POP TV's show *Presidential Elections* on the day of the first round of presidential elections in Slovenia (21st October 2007). On the show, the journalists Darja Zgonc discussed with her guests in detail the first unofficial results of the election, and the experts in the studio commented upon them as well as on the responses by some key politicians. The show made sure that the reporters were calling in directly from all election headquarters and the media centre, and they broadcast the interviews with all key players: presidential candidates, their wives, party leaders, the Prime Minister Janša, etc. When the show

reached the end, Darja Zgonc announced a surprise, "And now, back to Lojze Peterle's headquarters where, apparently, there are some interesting guests. Suzana." "Yes, Darja," the journalist Suzana Lovec replied, "yet another surprise of this year's election. Three multimedia artists have just entered Lojze Peterle's headquarters; all three of them have recently changed their names to Janez Janša." The reporter then turned towards the artists, "Why are you here today?" Janez Janša responded, "Well, like everybody else, we assume, we are here to congratulate Lojze Peterle and to toast to the good results." Janša replied to the journalist's question whether this was an art action with, "It might be, if you say so." The journalist then tried to ask if this was some kind of a protest, to which Janša replied, "There is nothing to add here. We are actually here to congratulate Mr Peterle. That is all."

Those who followed the show carefully would have noticed the three artists in Lojze Peterle's headquarters even before the interview, they were wearing green T-shirts featuring the logo of Lojze Peterle, keeping themselves to themselves and sipping wine. Even this seemed a bit unusual and – to those who know the artists – comical, but for this type of show, the interview with them was an event without precedent. It was unprecedented not only because commercial television makes no room for contemporary art but also because the presence of the three Janez Janšas on the show (as well as in Peterle's headquarters) was like an unidentifiable foreign object. The members of Slovenian contemporary art scene are usually reserved as regards current affairs and they hardly ever appear in the vicinity of the politicians, but this was precisely what happened, and even though the three artists publicly declared their support for Peterle,

their affirmative stance appeared more like a critique or subversion of the public image of this presidential candidate. Even more, their presence worked like an idiosyncratic interrogation of the entire Slovenian political scene and its established rules of functioning.

The role of the televisual medium was also crucial here. Of course, POP TV swallowed the bait offered by the Janšas; the phenomenon was interesting, amusing, and unusual enough to increase the number of viewers. On the other hand, however, the Janez Janša project thus appropriated a minute or two of prime time commercial television as a space of artistic activity.

ON TO THE PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS

Vesna R. Bernard and Meta Roglič's article "The May Hit: The pensioners party" in *Dnevnik* (16th May 2008) testifies to the fact that all Janez Janšas have a certain status in the Slovenian political sphere, that is, that they are recognised as at least interesting personalities. The piece offers information about where a specific politician is going to run for the parliament and it features the details about each party's list of candidates. In this perfectly serious article, there is a section titled "Janez Janša against Janez Janša in Grosuplje", where the authors report that the Social Democrats (SD), the main opposition party, allegedly wants Janez Janša to appear on their list. "Of course, they are not counting on the president of SDS but rather on one of the artists who assumed this name."

This is one of the quality newspaper articles dedicated to current affairs that refers to the three Janez Janšas. Yet, the scope of this article becomes apparent in the responses to it in the letters to the editor. There Sebastjan Jeretič from the SD's public relations office explains that the information

in the article is incorrect, or rather, that this is merely a witty "rumour that has been circulating in the party for the last few days."

All three Janšas also sent their letters to the newspaper. The first, for instance, states, "I declare that I have never participated in any discussion with any representatives of the SD party about a possible candidature on their list; I have no knowledge whatsoever of any such candidature." The second Janša writes, "I declare that I have no intention of standing as candidate for the SD party." And the third: "This is the first time that I hear about this and I strongly deny that anyone from the SD has contacted me about standing as candidate on their list in Grosuplje." Yet again, this is the case of the letters to the editor suddenly becoming not only the site of serious responses to the article (although they do function as such) but also the space of the three Janšas' artistic performance. If we sum up, Sebastjan Jeretič admits that his party toyed with the amusing idea of Janez Janša standing as their candidate; no doubt, Janša standing against Janša in a certain electoral district could confuse the voters, it could undermine both the authority of the Prime Minister as well as the credibility of the election. The Janšas' responses can be read as assurance that they persist in the sphere of art, yet, with their letters to the editor, they have also entered the voters' consciousness, that is, the sphere of daily politics.

A MEDIA CONSPIRACY

At the end of January, more precisely, on 29th January 2008, the news spread that the opening performance *Signature Event Context* by the three Janez Janšas at the Transmediale festival had been banned. According to the statements by the festival

Račjigrad brez pisarjev



Janez Janša

V londonski Tate Modern sta leta 2000 vstopila kitajska performerja Yuan Chai in Jian Jun Xi z namenom pomokniti Duchampov piscar.

Janez Janša in ekipa

Drugi Janez, in se vidi oblikovno in vsebinsko, ker je v tem času... Račjigrad brez pisarjev... Janez Janša... Račjigrad brez pisarjev... Janez Janša... Račjigrad brez pisarjev...

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in se vidi oblikovno in vsebinsko, ker je v tem času... Račjigrad brez pisarjev... Janez Janša... Račjigrad brez pisarjev... Janez Janša... Račjigrad brez pisarjev...

in se vidi oblikovno in vsebinsko, ker je v tem času... Račjigrad brez pisarjev... Janez Janša... Račjigrad brez pisarjev... Janez Janša... Račjigrad brez pisarjev...

Duckburg without urinals

Chinese performers Yuan Chan and Jian Jun Xi entered the London Tate Modern in 2000 with the intention of peeing onto Duchamp's urinal.

Janez Janša

Pogled na mesto



Janez Janša

Takoj se tudi strinjam s tvojo mislijo, da če ti surova naba ne diši pretirano, kot umetnik ne prideš daleč.

Drugi Janez, in se vidi oblikovno in vsebinsko, ker je v tem času... Pogled na mesto... Janez Janša... Pogled na mesto... Janez Janša... Pogled na mesto...

in se vidi oblikovno in vsebinsko, ker je v tem času... Pogled na mesto... Janez Janša... Pogled na mesto... Janez Janša... Pogled na mesto...

in se vidi oblikovno in vsebinsko, ker je v tem času... Pogled na mesto... Janez Janša... Pogled na mesto... Janez Janša... Pogled na mesto...

Ohvanč imam, da postojam... City view... Janez Janša... City view... Janez Janša... City view...

Janez Janša

Prav nič se ne kesam



Janez Janša

Počitnice so bilerske kot čudežno zdravilo, dobra kombinacija sladkega brezdeležja, branj in družinskih trenutkov.

Drugi Janez, in se vidi oblikovno in vsebinsko, ker je v tem času... Prav nič se ne kesam... Janez Janša... Prav nič se ne kesam... Janez Janša... Prav nič se ne kesam...

in se vidi oblikovno in vsebinsko, ker je v tem času... Prav nič se ne kesam... Janez Janša... Prav nič se ne kesam... Janez Janša... Prav nič se ne kesam...

in se vidi oblikovno in vsebinsko, ker je v tem času... Prav nič se ne kesam... Janez Janša... Prav nič se ne kesam... Janez Janša... Prav nič se ne kesam...

I do not regret anything at all

The holidays were like a miracle cure – a good combination of sweet idleness, reading and family moments.

Janez Janša

Janez Janša, Janez Janša, Janez Janša Epistles Correspondence on the weekly supplement Dnevnikov objektiv of the daily Dnevnik, Ljubljana, 2008

epistole Oploditev z loterijo



Janez Janša

Ko sem najprej pogledal v pečico, sem pomislil, da si nenamerno zgrešil stran kuharske knjige.

Draga Janez, ... želim pa se nositi solidno ... morda najbolj zanimivo ...

... prihodnosti ... žalostno ...

... poverljivo ...

... izgovor ...

Lottery fertilisation

When I looked into the oven, it crossed my mind that you might have inadvertently missed a page of the cookbook.

Janez Janša in fotografirani avtorji.

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Janez Janša

epistole Kako ekonomija in vojska ljubita umetnost



Janez Janša

Ko si obiskovalec umetniških dogodkov, ti je umetnost beg iz realnosti, ko si umetnik, ti je realnost beg iz umetnosti.

Draga Janez, ... napredni ...

... ekonomija ...

... vojska ...

... umetnost ...

How economy and the army love art

When you are a visitor of art events, art means to you an escape from reality; when you are an artist, reality provides you with an escape from art.

epistole Se še spominjaš Triglava?



Janez Janša

Iščem tiste gore, do katerih se da pripeljati z avtom, da lahko na vhu uživam, ne pa da krčmujem od izčrpanosti.

Draga Janez, ... spominjaš ...

... Triglav ...

... gora ...

... avtom ...

Do you remember Triglav?

I am looking for mountains that can be climbed in a car, so I can enjoy being on top of them, instead of dying of exhaustion.

Janez Janša in režiser avtorstva.

Janez Janša

director Stephen Kovats and the curator Nataša Petrešin Bachelez, the performance that included the walk of the artists through the Berlin moment commemorating the victims of the Holocaust, where they inscribed themselves into the virtual Google Map via satellite connection while chanting "I am Janez Janša", was banned because of "legal and judicial issues" and because of the curator's "personal ethical position". The performance was eventually included in the festival, in the exhibition section, only two days after the opening.

The news about the censorship received a lot of attention in the Slovenian as well as international media. Mostly the news was simply reported, but some authors discussed the concept of the performance (*Libération*), while others (for instance the reporter for the newspaper *L'Unità*) believed this was a case of political censorship. Apparently, the organisers were upset about the fact that the artists had the same name as the Slovenian Prime Minister. Among the most interesting perspectives appearing in the media were the ones offered by the journalist of the internet news site Vest (*Vest.si*) in an interview with the Janšas (9th February 2008) and the one offered by Domenico Quaranta in *Flash Art* (No. 269, April–May 2008), who discusses the question of (relativizing) the identity of the artist. Both journalists pointed out the fact that the ban appeared staged, particularly in light of the theme of this year's Transmediale: *Conspire*. The latter has several implications: first, in contemporary art, banning of any kind seems impossible. Art, or so it seems, is the space of absolute freedom, where subversive acts are allowed or even desired; this is why the ban was perceived as an artistically constructed conspiracy. When it became clear that the ban was genuine, many people thought that the reason for it

could only be political. Furthermore, the thought that this was a staged conspiracy as an art event seemed plausible precisely because it relied on immediate and mass media response. In other words, given that the Janez Janša art project exists in media space, it would be logical that its continuation or development would be the banning of the event as an art event, which exists again only insofar as it is present in the media.

CONCLUSION

The first conclusion we can draw on the basis of our analysis is that the nature of the Janez Janša project is parasitic. It is sustained by being able to enter every pore of the media space, be it media columns such as letters to the editor or serious specialized texts that criticise the change of name or the Janez Janša art project. Second, the media-supported art project not only parasitically inhabits the media space but also, in so doing, probes the boundaries between both spheres and transgresses the boundaries between art and politics. The constant allusion to the Prime Minister renders unstable both the sphere of art and the sphere of politics in the narrower sense of the word, that is, it renders their boundaries fragile and unstable. However, if we say that the Janez Janša art project is political, we do not intend to say that it represents a critique of the ruling powers in the sphere of daily politics but rather that it is political in that it moves between spheres and questions them all.

The project is kept alive by media coverage, yet, it is not an exclusively media-based phenomenon. In art, it manifests itself only in the rare instances of collaboration between the three artists in joint projects, which do not concern directly the Janez Janša project, whereas in (daily) politics, it is present

as an (unbecoming?) prank as well as an unpleasant shadow, cast over the identity of the Prime Minister.

To say that the Janez Janša project is a media phenomenon, then, is not enough. After one year of its existence, we can see that this is a phenomenon that relies constitutively on all possible media, yet, at the same time, it touches and enters other social subsystems and subverts them with its fairly simple operational logic. For the critics, it is a challenge, not only because they are always – willingly or unwittingly – at its service, but also because it is difficult to grasp its artistic and even emancipatory

power; it is difficult to ascribe it the ultimate meaning and interpretation, for it is in the nature of this project that it can produce, at any moment, a new (artistic) or social effect and thus acquire a new dimension. This is why it is impossible to predict the future of this project; all unpredictable effects of this art project would be produced and would become manifest, for instance, if someone decided to take on the topic of the Janez Janša Media Phenomenon, wherein they would explore the media treatment and appearances of the Slovenian Prime Minister.

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Translated by Polona Petek

Gospod Danilo Türk, predsednik Republike Slovenije
Erjavčeva 17
SI-1000 Ljubljana
Slovenija

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Ljubljana, 9. september 2008

URAD PREDSEDNIKA REPUBLIKE SLOVENIJE	
Šifra:	
Prejeta:	10-09-2008
Priloge:	Vrednotnica:
Signirni znak:	
V vrednost:	

ZADEVA: Prošnja za izdajo začasnih osebnih dokumentov

Spoštovani gospod predsednik!

Ugledni mednarodni festival Štajerska jesen (Steirischer Herbst), ki že vrsto let poteka v Gradcu, nas je povabil, da sodelujemo na festivalu s samostojno razstavo *NAME Readymade*, katere kustosinja je gospa Zdenka Badovinac, direktorica Moderne galerije Ljubljana. Razstava bo odprta od 4. do 25. oktobra v razstavišču Forum Stadtpark v Gradcu in na njej bomo razstavili svoje osebne dokumente in druga umetniška dela.

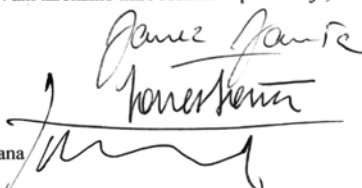
Ker so naši dokumenti obenem javne listine in umetniška dela (prilagamo strokovni mnenji direktorice Moderne galerije Ljubljana in sodnega cenilca in izvedenca za umetnine, prav tako iz Ljubljane) je Janez Janša pri pristojni upravni enoti pravočasno zaprosil za izdajo začasnih osebnih dokumentov, kar je upravna enota zavrnila (v prilogi). Ker ne vidimo druge možnosti za pridobitev nadomestnih dokumentov, ki bi nam omogočili, da tudi v času omenjene razstave, ko bodo naši osebni dokumenti razstavniki eksponati, uživamo ustavno zagotovljene človekove pravice in temeljne svoboščine, zlasti svobodo gibanja (32. člen), svobodo izražanja (39. člen) ter svobodo umetniškega ustvarjanja (59. člen), se na Vas naslavljamo s prošnjo za izdajo začasnih osebnih dokumentov.

V upanju na Vaš čimprejšnji odgovor Vam izrekamo naše resnično spoštovanje,

Janez Janša, Slomškova 27, Ljubljana

Janez Janša, Gestrinova 3, Ljubljana

Janez Janša, Neuburgerjeva 25, Ljubljana



V prilogi:

- Izjava gospe Zdenke Badovinac, direktorice Moderne galerije Ljubljana;
- Cenilno mnenje umetnostne stroke, mag. Pavel Toplak, dipl. um. zg., sodni cenilec in izvedenec za umetnine;
- Zavrnili odgovor Upravne enote Ljubljana z dne 5. 6. 2008

Janez Janša
Prejela dne: 10.9.2008

Mr. Danilo Türk, President of the Republic of Slovenia
Erjavčeva 17
SI-1000 Ljubljana
Slovenija

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Ljubljana, 9 September 2008

SUBJECT MATTER: Request to issue temporary personal documents

Dear Mr. President,

The renowned international festival Steierischer Herbst, which takes place in Graz, Austria, every year, has invited us to take part in the festival this year with an independent exhibition entitled NAME Readymade, curated by Ms. Zdenka Badovinac, Director of Moderna galerija, Museum of Modern Art, Ljubljana. In the exhibition, which will be on display between 4 and 25 October 2008 at the Forum Stadtpark in Graz, we are going to exhibit our personal documents and other works of art.

Since our documents are public documents as well as works of art (please find enclosed expert opinions by the Director of Moderna galerija, Ljubljana and a certified court assessor and expert for the field of art, also from Ljubljana), Janez Janša duly lodged an application with the appropriate Administrative Unit to issue temporary personal documents; the Administrative Unit rejected the application (see attachment). As we are not aware of any other way of acquiring substitute documents, which would enable us to exercise – for the duration of the exhibition, where our documents will be exhibited as works of art – our constitutionally guaranteed human rights and basic freedoms, in particular freedom of movement (Article 32), freedom of speech (Article 29) and freedom of artistic expression (Article 59), we are contacting You to request that temporary personal documents be issued.

We hope that you will respond to our request soon.

Sincerely,

Janez Janša, Slomškova 27, Ljubljana [signed]

Janez Janša, Gestrinova 3, Ljubljana [signed]

Janez Janša, Neubergerjeva 25, Ljubljana [signed]

Attachments:

- Statement by Ms. Zdenka Badovinac, Director of Moderna galerija, Ljubljana;
- Appraiser's opinion by Pavel Toplak, BA with Honours (Art History), MA, certified Court Appraiser and Expert for the Field of Art;
- Rejection issued by the Administrative Unit Ljubljana, 5 June 2008.

Janežič Mojca [signed]

Date received: 10 September 2008

About the Contributors

Zdenka Badovinac (b. 1958, Novo mesto, Slovenija) has been the director of Moderna galerija / the Museum of Modern Art in Ljubljana since 1993. She has curated numerous exhibitions presenting both Slovenian and international artists, and initiated the first collection of Eastern European art, Moderna galerija's 2000+ Arteast Collection. She has been systematically dealing with the processes of redefining history and the questions of different avant-garde traditions of contemporary art, starting with the exhibition *Body and the East – From the 1960s to the Present* (staged in 1998 at Moderna galerija in Ljubljana, and traveling to Exit Art in New York in 2001). She continued in 2000 with the first public display of the *2000+ Arteast Collection: The Art of Eastern Europe in Dialogue with the West* (staged at Moderna galerija in Ljubljana and traveling to Orangerie Congress in Innsbruck in 2001), and then a series of Arteast Exhibitions, mostly at Moderna galerija: *Form-Specific* (2003); *7 Sins: Ljubljana–Moscow* (2004; co-curated with Victor Misiano and Igor Zabel); *Interrupted Histories* (2006); *Arteast Collection 2000+23* (2006); and *The Schengen Women* (2008), staged at the Škuc Gallery as part of the *Hosting Moderna galerija!* project. Her other major projects include *unlimited.nl-3*, DeAppel, Amsterdam (2000); *(un)gemalt*, Sammlung Essl, Kunst der Gegenwart, Klosterneuburg/Vienna (2002) (traveling to Moderna galerija, Ljubljana, in 2002); *Marjetica Potrč: Next Stop, Kiosk*, Moderna galerija, Ljubljana (2003); *ev+a 2004, Imagine Limerick, Open & Invited*, different exhibition venues, Limerick (2004); and *Democracies/Tirana Biennale*, Tirana (2005). She was also the Slovenian Commissioner at the Venice Biennale (1993–1997, 2005) and the Austrian Commissioner at the Sao Paulo Biennial (2002).

Antonio Caronia (b. 1944, Genova, Italy) teaches “Design of Social Communication” in the Accademia di Belle Arti di Brera (The Academy of Fine Arts of Brera) and “Aesthetics of Media” in the NABA (Nuova Accademia di Belle Arti), both in Milan. He is the Director of Studies for online PhD courses in the M-Node program (Planetary Collegium, Plymouth, Great Britain). In the 1960s and 70s, while studying mathematics, logic, and linguistics, he was a political activist and leader in left-wing Italian groups. After 1977, he turned to the study of mass culture and communication theory, especially the relationship between science, technology, and imagination. He conducts research in philosophy and anthropology as it relates to science fiction, comics, digital images, virtual reality, and telematic networks. He writes for the left-wing newspaper *L'Unità*, and the reviews *Millepiani*, *Pulp*, *Cyberzone*. He also translates novels, essays, and articles from English to Italian.

Janez Janša (b. 1964, Rijeka, Croatia) is an author, director of interdisciplinary performances, and performer. He studied sociology and theatre directing at the University of Ljubljana in Slovenia and performance theory at the University of Antwerp in Belgium. He directed *Camillo - Memo 1.0: Construction of Theatre* at the Piccolo Teatro in Milan, Italy in 1998. *Drive in Camillo* opened *Manifesta 3*, European Biennial of Contemporary Art in 2000. His latest pieces are *We are all Marlene Dietrich FOR*, a performance for soldiers in peace-keeping missions (with Erna Ómarsdóttir), a reconstruction of the 1969 piece; *Pupilija, Papa Pupilo, and the Pupilecks – Reconstruction* in 2006; and *Slovene National Theatre* in 2007. Recently, he performed in the improvisation project *At the Table* curated by Meg Stuart, and he is currently working on a series of pilot performances, dealing with the status of performance in neoliberal societies, under the title *Program!*. Janez Janša's work also includes visual, media, and performance art works, these include *The Cabinet of Memories*, a tear donor session; *The First World Camp* (with Peter Šenk), an interdisciplinary artistic and research project; the interactive performance *Miss Mobile*; and the reconstruction action *Mount Triglav on Mount Triglav* (with Janez Janša and Janez Janša). Janša regularly curates interdisciplinary workshops around Europe and the USA and he is the founder (along with Mare Bulc) of P.E.A.C.E. - Peacekeepers' Entertainment, an art and cultural exchange organization. He has published numerous essays on contemporary theatre and art, including a book on Flemish artist and theatre maker Jan Fabre. He served as the editor-in-chief of the performing arts journal *Maska* from 1999 to 2006 and edited a reader of contemporary theatre theory, a reader of contemporary dance theory, and several other titles. Since 1999 he has been the director of *Maska* non-profit organization, based in Ljubljana, Slovenia, which oversees publishing, production, and education.

Janez Janša (b. 1970, Bergamo, Italy) is a conceptual artist, performer, and producer who graduated from the Academy of Fine Arts of Milan, Italy. His work has strong social connotations and is characterized by an intermedia approach. He is co-founder and director of Aksioma, Institute for Contemporary Art in Ljubljana. His first public artistic project was the urban installation *I Need Money to Be an Artist*, which was presented first in Ljubljana, Slovenia (1996) and then in Venice, Italy (1997). In 2001, he established (with I. Štromajer) Problemarket.com – the Problem Stock Exchange, a virtual platform on which shares of companies dealing with problems are floated. The following year, Janša produced machinaZOIS, an electro-mechanical patron that

financially supports contemporary artists and artistic productions. He then started development of DemoKino – Virtual Biopolitical Agora, a virtual parliament that, through topical filmic parables, provides the voters with the opportunity to decide on issues that are becoming the essence of modern politics – the questions of life. In 2005, Janša established the platform RE:akt!, which examines the media's role in manipulating perceptions and creating (post)modern historical myths and contemporary mythology. A part of this platform is the project Mount Triglav on Mount Triglav by Janez Janša, Janez Janša, and Janez Janša. Parallel to these socio-political projects, Janša investigated the field of virtual reality and neurofeedback technologies, and from 2000 to 2002, he developed and performed (with Darij Kreuh) Brainscore – Incorporal Communication, a performance for two operators acting in a virtual reality environment through their avatars. Between 2004 and 2007, he led the project Brainloop, an interactive performance platform that allows the subject to navigate a virtual space merely by imagining specific motor commands. Janez Janša is also co-editor (with Ivana Ivković) of the textual and pictorial reader DemoKino – Virtual Biopolitical Agora, published by Maska and Aksioma in 2005.

Janez Janša (b. 1973, Ljubljana, Slovenia) represents the younger generation of artists, who problematize the field of painting through the use of media imagery and a free relationship to various technological processes. His main interest is not so much in expanding the field of painting, rather he is more interested in the ideology of the painting itself. Janez Janša deconstructs the social role of painting and the position of the viewer. The themes of his paintings are usually connected to media, especially film, which continues to shape his perception of today. The most radical exhibition of his work took place at the 2003 Venice Biennale, when he hung his paintings in the homes of temporary owners. The paintings had built-in cameras that transmitted images to the gallery in real time. These were paintings from the series titled *Terror=decor*, which examines how both media and artistic imagery, especially modern imagery, changes into décor in the service of capitalism.

Amelia Jones (b. 1961, Durham, North Carolina, USA) is Professor and Pilkington Chair in Art History and Visual Studies at the University of Manchester. She has organized exhibitions on feminism and contemporary art. She co-edited the anthology *Performing the Body/Performing the Text* (1999), and edited the volumes *Feminism and Visual Culture Reader* (2003) and *A Companion to Contemporary*

Art Since 1945 (2006). Following on her *Body Art/Performing the Subject* (1998), Jones's recent books include *Irrational Modernism: A Neurasthenic History of New York Dada* (2004) and *Self Image: Technology, Representation, and the Contemporary Subject*. Her current projects are an edited volume *Perform, Repeat, Record: Live Art in History* (with co-editor Adrian Heathfield) and a book tentatively entitled *Seeing/Difference/Differently: Identification and the Visual Arts*.

Tadej Kovačič (b. 1978, Ljubljana, Slovenia) graduated from University of Ljubljana Faculty of Law in 2002. Thereafter, he was employed for two years as a clerk trainee at The Ljubljana Higher Court. After he passed the lawyers' state examination in 2006, he worked as a senior clerk at the Commercial Disputes Department of Ljubljana District Court, and since 2007 he has worked as a senior associate in the law offices of Nevenka Šorli, Attorney-at-Law, in Ljubljana. He is a specialist in the following areas: civil law, business law, administrative law, litigation, and human rights law.

Jela Krečič (b. 1979, Ljubljana, Slovenia) received her degree in cultural studies from the Faculty of Social Sciences in Ljubljana by defending her thesis *The Manifestos of Slovenian Avant-Garde*. She is currently working on her PhD dissertation, entitled *Philosophy, Fantasy, Film*, at the Faculty of Arts in Ljubljana. She works as a journalist for the arts and culture section of *Delo* newspaper in Ljubljana. She has also published some literary works in the magazines *Sodobnost*, *Mentor*, and *Litaratura*. Her essays on the avantgarde, psychoanalysis, and film have been published in *ČKZ* (The Journal for Critique of Science, Imagination, and New Anthropology), *Maska*, *Problemi*, *Ekran*, and *Emzin*.

Lev Kreft (b. 1951, Ljubljana, Slovenia) is a professor of aesthetics at the Faculty of Arts of the University of Ljubljana and a member of the Department of the Philosophy of Sport in the University of Ljubljana's Faculty of Sport. He also teaches aesthetics for philosophers, art historians, and designers as the Executive Director of the Peace Institute, Institute for Contemporary Social and Political Studies, which is a private research institute and NGO specializing in citizenship studies, gender studies, post-war reconciliation, genocide studies, GLBT studies, and media. He received his Ph.D. in philosophy in 1988 with his thesis *Struggle on the Artistic Left*, and served as a member of the Slovenian Parliament from 1990 to 1996 – acting as Deputy Speaker of the Slovenian Parliament from 1992 to 1996. Professor Kreft has published numerous books and articles on aesthetics, the philosophy of culture

, national cultural studies, and the philosophy of sport. He has been a member of the editorial board of Slovenian journals *Borec* (The Fighter) and *Ars & Humanitas*, as well as the official journal of the British Philosophy of Sport Association, *Sport, Ethics, and Philosophy* (Routledge)

Blaž Lukan (b. 1955, Ptuj, Slovenia) is a dramaturg and one of the leading Slovenian theatre critics. He currently teaches at the University of Ljubljana's Academy of Theatre, Radio, Film, and Television, and was the artistic director of Glej Theatre and The Slovenian National Theatre in Celje. He has collaborated as dramaturg in numerous theatre plays over the past few decades and published several books, including *Dramaturgical Figures, Essays on Today's Theatre, Gledališki pojmovnik* (Theatre Idioms), a textbook entitled *We Look for Theatre*, and an overview of Slovene dramaturgy (with a theoretical introduction) *Slovene Dramaturgy: Dramaturgy as Theatre Practice*.

Aldo Milohnić (b. 1966, Krk, Croatia) holds an MA degree in sociology of culture from the Faculty of Arts in Ljubljana. He has lectured on theatre theory and cultural politics at numerous conferences at home and abroad, and since 2001 he has been a member of the editorial board of *Maska*, performing arts journal. From 1994 to 1996 he was a member of the expert committee for theatre at the Slovenian Ministry for Culture, and since 1998 he also collaborated with *Frakcija*, a Croatian performing arts journal based in Zagreb. For three years (1994-1997), he was a teaching assistant for the module "Epistemology of Human Sciences" at the ISH, Faculty for Advanced Studies in Humanities, and from 1993 to 2000, he was the programming director of the Slovenian Open Society Institute. His primary research interests are the sociology of culture, cultural studies, the epistemology of social studies, and human sciences.

Catherine Soussloff (b. Providence, Rhode Island, USA) is UC Presidential Chair and Professor, Professor of History of Art & Visual Culture, A.B. and Ph.D. Bryn Mawr College. Professor Soussloff's general research area is the historiography, theory, and philosophy of art in the European tradition from the Early Modern period to the present. Recent areas of publication have included: Viennese art and culture in the early 20th century, performance theory and visual culture, the history of the discipline of art history, the theory of painting in Italy and France in the 17th century, Jewish studies, and theories of media. Professor Soussloff has also written on Italian Renaissance art theory as well as sculpture, film, and photography.

Miško Šuvaković (b. 1954, Belgrade, Serbia) is co-founder and member of the conceptual artistic Group 143 (1975-1980), and was co-founder and member of the informal theoretic and artistic Community for Space Investigation (1982-1989). Since 1988, he has been a member of The Slovenian Aesthetic Society. In March 1993, he received his PhD degree with thesis *Analytical Philosophy and Visual Art* (Faculty of Visual Art, Belgrade), and he now teaches aesthetics and art theory at the Faculty of Music in Belgrade, as well as art and cultural theory in the Interdisciplinary postgraduates studies program at the University of Arts in Belgrade. He also teaches art history and the aesthetics of architecture at the Faculty of Architecture in Belgrade. He was co-editor of *Katalog 143* (Belgrade, 1975-78), *Mentalni prostor* (Belgrade, 1982-1987), *Transkatalog* (Novi Sad, 1995-1998), and has been the co-editor of *Teorija koja Hoda* (Walking Theory, Belgrade,) since 2001. He has also published many books, his newest titles are: *Impossible Histories* (The MIT Press, Cambridge 2003.) and *The Dictionary of Contemporary Art* (Horetzky, Zagreb, Ghent, 2005).

Janez Janša, Janez Janša, Janez Janša

NAME

Readymade

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HERBST
www.steirischerherbst.at

AKSIOMA

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FORUM STADTPARK

4 - 25 October 2008

Forum Stadtpark, steirischer herbst festival, Graz, Austria

Exhibition curator: Zdenka Badovinac

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