METRO PICTURES

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PALAIS

David Maljković's exhibition "In Low Resolution" is a temporal staging of individual memory and the collective imagination, just as much as it is of the temporal nature of experience and of its representation. From the starting point of a work on the difficulty of the heritage of the past, questions are then raised about how the artist may MONOCHROMES [2013] (DE subsequently develop a far broader reflection

about time conducted by an extended use of the colla

SPATIAL RESOLUTION AND TEMPORAL DISPLACEMENT

by Julien Fronsacq



DAVID MALJKOVIĆ

NEW REPRODUCTIONS [2013] COLLAGE 150 × 100 CM Courtesy de l'artiste / of the artist & Sprüth Magers (Berlin, Londres / London)

David Maljković explores the effects of time. The time of history, of technology and of work are set in situations. In such relationships and gaps, the erosion of memory and the corruption of information are exposed, thus confronting the visitor with the wearing down of meanings as well as the destabilisation of senses. For his exhibition at the Palais de Tokyo, entitled "In Low Resolution," David Maljković has conceived an ambivalent set-up. Two plinths have been expanded in order to become actual platforms. While only partly revealing the works that have been integrated inside them, the larger of the two platforms is accessible to the visitors. The point here is to remove from the exhibition two of its usual properties: information and a clear presentation.¹ The platforms obstruct the spaces as much as they reveal them, evoking at once excavation and burial.

The critical reception of David Maljković's work generally focuses on its modern allusions, in particular to the architecture of the 1960s. Over and above these references, the question of history is essential to this artist's work. The film *Scene for a New Heritage* (2004-2006), set in a modern ruin, is one of the premises of his artistic itinerary. David Maljković was born in 1973 in Rijeka, Croatia, and experienced as a child the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, before its break-up. Along with *Glasnost* and German reunification, David Maljković's work was born during the crumbling of Tito's national project, founded on resistance against Nazism and the construction of a socialist federation to guarantee the country's autonomy from the USSR.

September 8th, 2007 - Last night I dreamt that I was tired.2

Linked to a loss of political perspective and a historical memory that has become problematic, David Maljković's project cannot be boiled down to modern nostalgia. The film *Scene for a New Heritage*, with its title suggesting the staging of an inheritance, is set in a monu-

MONOGRAPH David Maljković



DAVID MALJKOVIĆ

DISPLAY FOR SOURCES IN THE AIR AT MUSAC, LEÓN, 2011 [2011] MACHINE FUMIGENE, CAPOT PLEXIGLAS, TRÉTEAUX / FOG MACHINES, PERSPEX COVER, TRESTLES VUE 0'EXPOSITION / EXHIBITION VIEW, EXHIBITIONS FOR SECESSION», 02-12 2011 05-02 2012, SECESSION (VIENNE / VIENNA) Courtesy de Traitise / d'Itee artis & Metro Pictures (New York)

> ment. According to Luc Baboulet, monuments are associated with the principle of memory, and of its transmission. In a tradition going back to the building of temples and saints' legends, a monument "stages" a memory. "The (...) 'monumentary' value, or 'what needs to be read' thus means the way in which a monument should be interpreted: what needs to be seen, i.e. the event that it commemorates, and which it evokes only by allusion, or as a symbol."3 The film tells the tale of some young men's journey to address certain peculiar canticles to Petrova Gora, a gigantic memorial to partisans who were victims of Nazism. Their attempt to enter into a relationship with this edifice ends in failure, that of a monument which does not deliver up its memories. Speaking of the location of the film, the artist says that he was led by his unconsciousness on a retro-futuristic journey.4 If he will not submit to nostalgia, and yet a mysterious force has led him to the location of an edifice which suffers from recent collective amnesia, what relationship with time has David Maljković entered into?

August 1", 2007 I collect pictures that have lost their owners, pictures that are not anybody's emotional support any more, and that are now on the market. It reminds me of the film, Blade Runner, where replicants possess photographs from the past that is not their own...

David Maljković often uses documents to produce graphic works, books and even installations, but it is collage that sheds most light on his conceptual ambition. As an answer to a defective memory, the use of collage is a formal principle behind a "missing archive." The point here is not to adopt a historical interpretation, setting his work in a collagist tradition going back to the beginning of the 20th century, nor yet a formalistic view which would reduce this artistic project to a formal principle. Beyond the modern collagist tradition, David Maljković's work uses operations of dislocation, subtraction and juxtaposition to move towards new conceptual horizons. In one of his graphic works, associated with the film *Scene* for a New Heritage, we can read: "New possibility: dislocation." "Displacement," "perturbation" and even upheaval are synonymous with new possibilities.⁵

DISPLAY FOR

Against mute monuments and the erosion of memory, the artist opposes the principle of reworking. His older works are subjected to transformations, giving rise to bloodless, spectral versions of themselves. As revenants of his own productions, these reworkings are certainly not devoid of power, nor of a muted discourse offering fresh promises.

The exhibition "In Low Resolution" is the successor to a long cycle of exhibitions, begun two years ago. Entitled "Sources in the air,"6 this cycle consisted in a set of works leading to the coexistence, for example at GAMeC, of reproductions of a pavilion or exhibition partition walls, taken from the history of modernity, a studio lamp, a floodlight on its stand, the tripod of a slide projector, or in other words, the equipment used for showing, seeing and reproducing. Trestles, glass cases, plinths, shelves, cubes... a large collection of museographical furnishings which thus echo the two platforms in the exhibition "In Low Resolution." In "Sources in the Air," Monochromes (2013) adopted the formal language of a museum so as to produce a work: the branch of a palm-tree dried in a showcase. On this branch were attached fragments of old paintings produced by the artist. These coloured fragments on leaves thus evoked the reflections of Robert Smithson's Yucatan Mirror Displacements which, by blinding a camera lens, dotted the Mexican vegetation with holes of light. In this work by Smithson, the mirrors placed in the landscape forced its photographic documentation to fail, as though by polluting nature. This criticism of progress was applied as much to industrial entropy, as to the museum project itself, split between time and space in its desire to depict chronological evolution. Such fragments of old paintings appeared as metonymies for archives, that principle so dear to museums, and temples that transform anything and everything into a witness to time. Nothing can resist the propensity of museums to produce archives. Even the branch of a palm-tree, no matter how simple or common it might be, is necessarily protected and encapsulated until it suffocates. For "In Low Resolution," David Maljković has once again returned to older works that he reinterprets according to strict protocols. The only elements that the series entitled Display for keeps from the reactivated works are their means of presentation. Two ghostlike pieces of Display for are on show at the Palais de Tokyo.

MONOGRAPH David Maljković

MONOGRAPHIE DAVID MALJKOVIĆ

In 2009, David Maljković produced a small-scale reconstruction of the American pavilion, which had been made in 1956 for the market complex at the Zagreb fair. This model of an exhibition pavilion was like a shell. And, from this sounding board of the past, there emerged a soundtrack akin to the hissing of interference "snow" on a TV screen. In *Display for Lost Pavilion at Metro Pictures, New York,* 2009 (2011), the sculpture was removed from its plinth, in which was then placed an amplified microphone. From reconstitution of architecture, the artist then moved to reworking his own productions. The white noise of history gave way to a vain attempt to capture the sound of a piece of museographical furniture. *Display for Sources in the Air at MUSAC, León, 2011* (2011) consisted of a museum showcase, showing nothing but fog. David Maljković's metaphor here expressed the

DAVID MALJKOVIĆ

UNTITLED (OUT OF PROJECTION) [2009-2012] MPRESSION JET D'ENCRE / NKJET PRINT Courtesy de l'artiste / of the artist & Sprüth Magers (Berlin, Londres / London)



impossibility of depiction. It was a stripping-down, a deconstruction or a structural analysis of a work reduced to its presentational elements, thus producing muted sounds and mist. In such minimal sets of nestled contents, David Maljković does not proceed by a successive stripping-away to arrive at an elementary state of the work, or at its essence. He is not an artist who is attached to modern traditions that require a basic, formal simplification. In the words of the artist, this is not a subtractive process, but one which aims at "accentuating the art practice itself."⁷ By exploring the limits of a work, and of anything that distinguishes it from the museographic furnishings used to present it, the artist thus privileges interpretation. Rather than any fixed, stable, material or durable definition of a work of art, he prefers the idea of a musical score that gives rise to ephemeral interpretations.

> August 14, 2007 - Wandering the Brussels airport, I entered a magazine shop to kill some time while waiting for my flight. First, I tried my luck with art magazines, but the selection was poor and I moved to other sections. What caught my eye was a car magazine, with the caption "Special Future" on the cover.

SOCHAUX

If David Maljković has for many years been exploring the set-ups used in museums and exhibitions, then this is to rework indistinctly historical forms, just as much as his own productions. From reworkings to permutations, he has created a constellation of forms connecting the masterpieces of Yugoslavian monumental sculpture to personal pieces, industrial projects and individual testimonies. Two films, initiated in an interval of five years (one of which is a trilogy produced over two years), have in common temporal and historical displacements. In Scene for a New Heritage I (2004), it should be noted that the monument of Petrova Gora is the subject of numerous historical dislocations. This monument, which is part of a long commemorative programme started by Tito, was produced in 1982, two years after its initiator's death, in memory of the freedom-fighting partisans of the Second World War. Another film, Out of Projection (2009), made in the industrial region of Sochaux-Montbéliard, has many points in common with the former. It juxtaposes the retired workers of the Peugeot factory with car prototypes. To this is added a series of testimonies, whose soundtrack is missing, fantastical sequences, and choreographies of the retired as bodies in contrast with the scenery of a trial circuit. In Scene for a New Heritage I, the young people belong to a generation that did not experience the era of Tito, and even less so the tale of a Yugoslavia which was con-



DAVID MALJKOVIC

OUT OF PROJECTION [2009] (EXTRAIT DU FILM / FILM STILL) FILM NUMÉRIQUE, ÉCRAN / DIGITAL FILM, SCREEN Courtesy de l'artiste / of the artist, Annet Gelink Gallery (Amsterdam), Metro Pictures (New York) & Sprüth Magers (Berlin, Londers / London)

> structed on the basis of its resistance to Nazism. In *Out of Projection*, the retired can still remember an industry free of the first oil crisis in 1971 and they do not seem to form any connection with these futuristic prototypes. They observe them, walk round them, but at no time do they seem to enter into contact with them, as though a separation still lingered. In both films, bodies are used to fill in or make up for temporal division. In the series *Display for*, the reinterpretations of his own work, by David Maljković, cannot be perceived as being symptoms of a shift towards egocentricity. By placing personal productions and historical heritage on the same level, these liaisons' ambition is to

index a history which has been abandoned by political discourse, and so give it back its narrative value and reintroduce it into daily life. By bringing together personal and collective productions, as well as individual and political stories, the artist ranges around within the temples of history. Monuments then recover their narrative strength, and their relics the use value.

The starting point of the exhibition "In Low Resolution" is the film Out of Projection (2009). By exhibiting an industrial objecta prototype vehicle produced in 2004 by a young designer for the Peugeot car manufacturer-alongside his film, David Maljković is joining a critical tradition to which Robert Smithson and Charles Baudelaire contributed. The former, in his criticism of the principle of progress, made famous Nabokov's aphorism: "the future is but the obsolete in reverse."8 The latter, concerned about the worship of progress during the previous century, and in particular the proximity of works of art and industrial productions at the Exposition Universelle of 1855, wrote: "There is another error much in fashion today, which I propose to avoid like the plague. I refer to the idea of progress. This smoky beaconlight, a creation of current pseudo-philosophy (...)".9 Out of Projection (2009-2014) has here been reedited and presented alongside Undated (2013), two films whose common point is that they work using collages of time and heterogeneous techniques.

> August 24¹⁰, 2007 – For twelve days already, my ears have been buzzing, which makes me irritable, but, in a way, also especially sensitive to images.

UNDATED

David Maljković conducts round-trips between the reduction and enlargement of components used in the conception of installations and exhibition set-ups. A camera's diaphragm is enlarged so as to act as the setting for a projection screen.¹⁰ A sculpture indeterminately evokes an empty museum

showcase, or an outsized TV screen.¹¹ The table for a 16 mm projector becomes the support for a minimal sculpture. For the exhibition "Temporary Projections" at the Georg Kargl gallery (Vienna) in 2011, David Maljković took over the entire exhibition and office spaces so as to display both public and private zones, which could all be visited by the spectators. In the exhibition space, a 16 mm projector was turned on, but with no film turning inside it. Surprisingly enough, the sound of a unreeling film still invaded the room thanks to loudspeakers broadcasting a recording. While camera-less cinema is certainly one of the chapters in the history of experimental filmmaking,

MONOGRAPH David Maljković we should not overlook image-less cinema as another part of this history.12 Guy Debord contributed to it with his first film, Hurlements en faveur de Sade (1952), in which he alternated sequences showing a blank screen, during which quotes are read out as a voiceover, with silent sequences of a dark screen. "The spectacle in general, as the concrete inversion of life, is the autonomous movement of the nonliving," declared the author of Society of the Spectacle.13 His cinema, devoid of images, attempted to make an inversion of the future spectacle of life. Walter Ruttman was one of the pioneers of this iconoclasm. In his investigations of the world of abstract and musical cinema, he transcended the play of correspondences between chromatic and musical vibrations. A revolution took place in the summer of 1928, when the first sound film was projected. Two years later, Ruttman decided to use a camera with a simultaneous sound recording to make Wochenende [Weekend], an "unsighted" film with an incredibly realistic soundtrack. In David Maljković's exhibition "Temporary Projections," the spectators could observe "in darkness," from behind a window, the behaviour of the other visitors in the projection space. People visiting "Temporary Projections" were thus as much actors as they were spectators. By providing nothing else to see but the set-up of a projector, the simulacrum of a projection produced a distancing effect.

If, via a reduction of means, Walter Ruttman replaced the visual representation of reality by a sonic presentation, David Maljković reveals how our artistic perceptions are determined and oriented by the techniques of reproduction and diffusion which underpin such works. His 16 mm film, *Undated* (2013), presents the hands of the Croat sculptor Ivan Kožarić manipulating a ball of aluminium. Kožarić's hands are, for David Maljković, just as much a stereotype of individual creativity as they are witnesses to the Yugoslav avantgarde. Born in 1921, Ivan Kožarić was a member of the famous artistic collective Gorgona (with Mangelos, Julije Knifer and Radoslav Putar), which was active in Zagreb during the 1960s, and part of the international conceptual art scene. On the surface of the image,

DAVID MALJKOVIĆ

UNDATED [2013]

FILM 16 MM, MICROPHONE, AMPLIFICATEUR, ENCEINTE, ÉCRAN / 16 MM FILM, MICROPHONE, AMPLIFIER, SPEAKER, SCREEN Collection Neda Young. Courtesy de l'artiste / of the artist & Metro Pictures (New York)



MONOGRAPH David Maljković

several "glitches" appear: accidents typical of digital images but anachronistic in a 16 mm film. David Maljković reconstitutes and sublimates these errors which usually characterise the transfer of content between two media from different generations of technology. More than just a simple projection, Undated is a genuine installation. The sound of the projector is modified and broadcast using an amplification set-up (microphone, vocoder, amplifier, loudspeaker). Thus the film and the installation Undated multiply optical and sonic perturbations, like feedbacks produced by the loop of a signal between its emitter and its receiver. The contextualisation of forms from the past is, for the artist, a means to reveal the circumstances of present time.14 The same effects of anachronistic superimposition characterise the film Afterform (2013), also shown in the exhibition "In Low Resolution." The effects are tiny, but allude to an aesthetic history, ranging from flicker to feedback. With The Flicker (1965) Tony Conrad reduced film to an alternation between black and white frames. Consisting of a play of pulsations, this cinematographic experience transcends the optical-auditory senses, so as to excite the entire neural-optical system and become fully embodied. In Performer/Audience/Mirror (1975) Dan Graham introduced a use of loops and displacements gradually into the thread of the performance. In his filmed performance, Dan Graham stood between a mirror and the audience. While turning alternately his back and then his face to the public, he apparently described the audience objectively. The descriptions by Dan Graham, and the temporal shifts he introduced, disappointed the audience in its desire for a shared experience with the performer. Dan Graham turned once again to this principle of feedback¹⁵ in Time Delay Room (1974), an installation whose division into two parts by a window recalls the one used by David Maljković in "Temporary Projections." From the series of Display for to the film Undated, David Maljković has been dwelling on an experiment that he has repeatedly carried out, just as a musician interprets a score. But he also stages the techniques of presentation, reproduction and distribution, in a migration of

> forms across historically different techniques. These plays on dislocation upset the contingencies of the exhibition, as the theatre of a sensorial experience which is being played out in the present time of the visit. Concerning the techniques of reproduction and distribution, dear to David Maljković, Vilém Flusser¹⁶ also uses the term feedback. The photographer, reduced to the state of a programme operator, informs the designers and manufacturers through the use of feedback. No formal innovation initiated by the operator escapes from the programme.

November 17th, 2007 – I was walking through the cityscape of Novi Zagreb, the well-known bedroom communities and their sleepers changing slowly. The quietness was disturbed only by new shopping malls and new stories on private lots. From Savski gaj I drove to Utrine and visited an old acquaintance, Hof, who generously gave me some old issues of ČiP (an architecture magazine). 23

AFTERFORM

In his film Afterform (2013), David Maljković succeeds in outlining a situation in which different points of view about modernity are reconciled. The title "Afterform" can be interpreted as "according to form," and thus standing for the formalist tradition: the reduction of form to its primary constituent parts, excluding any other psychological, social or political notions. But "Afterform" could also be seen as meaning "after formalism," a title which would then be a call to break with the formalistic heritage. In the animated film Afterform, David Maljković reuses cartoons published in a Yugoslav architectural magazine in the 1960s. One recognises for instance the architecture of the collective housing, the grids of the city planning, and the technocrats in their office suits. These drawings can also be seen as absurdist and ironical depictions of modernism, its architecture and urbanism. But the film and its installation are made up of elements taken from different periods. The projection screen on its tripod evokes analogic projection, but its 16/9 format is characteristic of the digital age. Afterform juxtaposes drawings from the press with reproductions of the artist's works. A liveried waiter serves on a tray first a tower block, and then an alarm clock with its LED display. By their very digital nature, the visual and sonic effects contrast with the historical subject matter and extend, in turn, the irony of the original illustrations. By including his own works in the film, David Maljković becomes just as much a contradicter as an object for criticism.

DAVID MALJKOVIĆ

AFTERFORM

AFTERTURIT [2013] ANIMATION NUMÉRIQUE, SON, ÉCRAN DE PROJECTION SUR PIED / DIGITAL ANIMATION, SOUND, FREE STANDING SCREEN 5 MIN - 5 SEC-Courtesy de l'artiste / of the artist & Metro Pictures (New York)

June 24^a, 2009 – It seems that the more we visually envision the future, the less we have left for tomorrow.

The titles of other works also evoke a later time, a transitory event, a long duration, or a hazy historicity: Temporary Projections, A Long Day for the Form, and Undated. Far from a romantic attitude, a presentation of the ruins of modernity is an opportunity for shedding light on the erasure of memory and the absence of history, and thus of any project for completion. David Maljković confronts individual, collective and national historical levels, so that we can wander amongst the shadows cast by history. Flusser has perfectly described how we are now in a technological era that has dematerialised knowledge. Content, which can be moved around on a whim, is then distributed and connoted by various channels, whose mark it will then bear. David Maljković desynchronises content from its techniques of reproduction and distribution-as vectors of corruption, of information loss and of a loss of the aura. In the exhibition "In Low Resolution," he presents their dislocations, playing on such temporal and spatial perturbations to act against historical amnesia, the dematerialisation of works and generalised irresolution. Translated by Ian Monk

1 Typewritten explanatory note by David Maljković, January 2014. "I removed two essential properties: the presentational one, because the artefacts should be immersed in it, giving only partial information, and the second removed element is cleanness, because the visitors could walk on it and create a tactile surface with their footprints.

2 This text is punctuated by extracts from David Maljković's fictional journal. See "David Maljković,

2005–2007–2009, Peep-Hole Sheet, No. 20, spring 2014. **3** Luc Baboulet, "Du document au monument, *Communications*, No. 71, 2001, 435-463.

4 David Maljković, Almost here (Kunstverein Hamburg, Cologne: DuMont Buchverlag, 2007), 29. "I don't know how I found myself in that place. Probably the unconscious again directed the course of my journey (...) I returned to the future and was in 2045, on the 25th of Mav."

5 David Maljković, Scene for New Heritage New Possibilities for the Petro Gora Memorial Park, 2004, drawing and collage. Reproduced in David Maljković, Almost here, op. cit., 37.

6 "Sources in the Air," personal exhibition by David Maljković, Van Abbemuseum (Eindhoven, 2012-2013), BALTIC Centre for



MONOGRAPHIE David Maljković



Contemporary Art (Gateshead, 2013), GAMeC Galleria d'Arte Moderna e Contemporanea (Bergamo, 2013).

7 Statement by David Maljković reproduced in the presentation text for his personal exhibition "Exhibitions for Secession, Secession (Vienna, 2011-2012). See http://www.secession.at/art/2011_maljković_e.html. The project is conceived in a way that rids itself of content and isolates the set-up itself. (...) This act of annuling the content and concentrating on the experience of presenting certain content is not equal to questioning the content or pretending to negate it. The procedure is concerned with structures of certain works, or, one could say, with accentuating the art practice itself."
8 Robert Smithson, "Entropy and the New Monuments, in Artforum, June 1966.

9 Charles Baudelaire, "The Universal Exhibition of 1855: the Fine Arts. Critical Method—on the Modern Idea of Progress as Applied to the Fine Arts. Of the Shift of Vitality, Baudelaire: Selected Writings of Art and Artists (Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 115-139.

10 David Maljković, Images With Their Own Shadows, 2008, 16 mm film, 6 min. 16 sec.

11 See "Exhibitions for Secession, personal exhibition by David Maljković, Secession (Vienna, 2011-2012). 12 My thanks to Fanny Schulmann for having informed me

about this history of an "image-less cinema.

 13 Guy Debord, "Separation Perfected, in Society of the Spectacle (Detroit: Black & Red, 1970; rev. ed. 1977).
 14 David Maljković and Julia Loeschl, presentation text

for David Maljković's exhibition at the Georg Kargl gallery (Vienna, 2014). Voir http://www.georgkargl.com/en/fine-arts/ exhibition/david-maljkovic. "This incorporation of Kožarić's work exemplifies again the artist's fundamental concern with sourcing forms from a relevant past in order to accentuate a present situation.

15 See Thierry de Duve in *Dan Graham. Œuvres* 1965-2000 (Paris: Musée d'art moderne de la Ville de Paris, 2001).

16 Vilém Flusser, Towards a Philosophy of Photography (London: Reaktion Books, 2000).

DAVID MALJKOVIĆ

Born in 1973 in Rijeka (Croatia). Lives and works in Zagreb (Croatia). Graduated from the Academy of Fine Arts University of Zagreb and from the Rijksakademie Royal Academy of Visual Arts of Amsterdam in 2004. Among his recent solo exhibitions: Kunstmuseum St. Gallen (2014); "Sources in the Air, BALTIC Art (Gateshead, 2013), GAMeC (Bergamo, 2013), Van Abbemuseum (Eindhoven, 2012-2013); Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía (Madrid, 2009-2010). Among his recent group exhibitions: "Intense Proximity, La Triennale 2012 (Paris, 2012); The Bucarest Triennial 5 (2012); "New Festival, Centre Pompidou (Paris, 2011); 29th São Paulo biennial (2010). He is the recipient of the ARCO Award for young artists of Madrid (2010) and the International Contemporary Art Prize Diputació de Castelló (2010).

"In Low Resolution, solo exhibition by David Maljković from 20/10/14 to 23/11/14 at the Palais de Tokyo.

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DAVID MALJKOVIĆ

A LONG DAY FOR THE FORM [2012-2014] BRONZE, CARTON, POLYSTYRENE ET SON BRONZE, CARDBOARD, STYROFOAM AND SOUND Courtesy de 'artiste o' of the artist & Georg Kargl Fine Arts (Wenne / Vienne)

2.5