

MIHA COLNER IN PETJA GRAFENAUER

Sašo Vrabič
Ne-bo



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Drugi katalog Galerije Vodnikove domačije Šiška nastaja v okoliščinah, ko vsak kovanec obrnemo dvakrat, da bi še naprej pripravljali program, kakršnega smo si zastavili. Galerija od leta 2015 predstavlja projekte, v katerih se na različne načine spletajo vezi med vizualno umetnostjo in literaturo, med podobo in besedo. Posegli smo na polja ilustracije, stripa, tipografije, vizualne poezije, video poezije in pripovedovanja zgodb. Tokratna razstava je ambientalna postavitev. Ne-bo vizualnega umetnika Saša Vrabiča smo k sodelovanju povabili tudi zato, ker ustvarja 'podobe iz besed.' To je gotovo eden od zanimivejših načinov zlitja podob in besed v lokalnem prostoru zadnjih let, saj se podoba in beseda v njih medsebojno povežeta v nedeljivo celoto na inovativen in izrazno prepričljiv način.

Razstava in katalog sta prva produkcija samostojne razstave vizualnega umetnika, ki jo samostojno pripravlja Zavod Divja misel v Galeriji Vodnikove domačije. Zato, da bi si začrtali način in pogoje sodelovanja z umetniki pri produkciji samostojnih razstav, smo skušali zagotoviti način dela in produkcijo, kakršno bi si želeli zagotavljati ob vsakem projektu. Finančni programski manko smo izkoristili za čas, ki ga je umetnik lahko posvetil nastajanju projekta in situ – v galeriji. Čas, ki je prav zares denar in smo ga zaradi krčenja programa pridobili kar nekaj, nam je dovoljeval tudi, da smo se lotili projekta kataloga, ki prinaša fotografije postavitve

razstave Ne-bo – ko v nacionalnih institucijah katalogi izhajajo z večmesečnimi zamudami ali celo obležijo v predalih, se z nami nasmehnite ob cinizmu, da je manko sredstev Galeriji Vodnikove domačije Šiška omogočil fotografije postavitve v katalogu ob otvoritvi (finančno stisko v vizualni umetnosti nekateri v galerijah rešujejo tako, da pripravljajo razstave iz zbirk, mi pa smo lahko naše delo namenili novi produkciji in času, ki je bil zanjo potreben).

Uživajte!

— Za Galerijo
Vodnikove
domačije Šiška
Miha Colner
in Petja Grafenauer



Uz srce prepustim se slobodni imaginaciji
da slobodno leti u bezgraničnoj imaginaciji

Ostali se spijaju
Figure ne eksplodiraju
Bijela i crna pi
Prvo mene vidiš
Anđelica

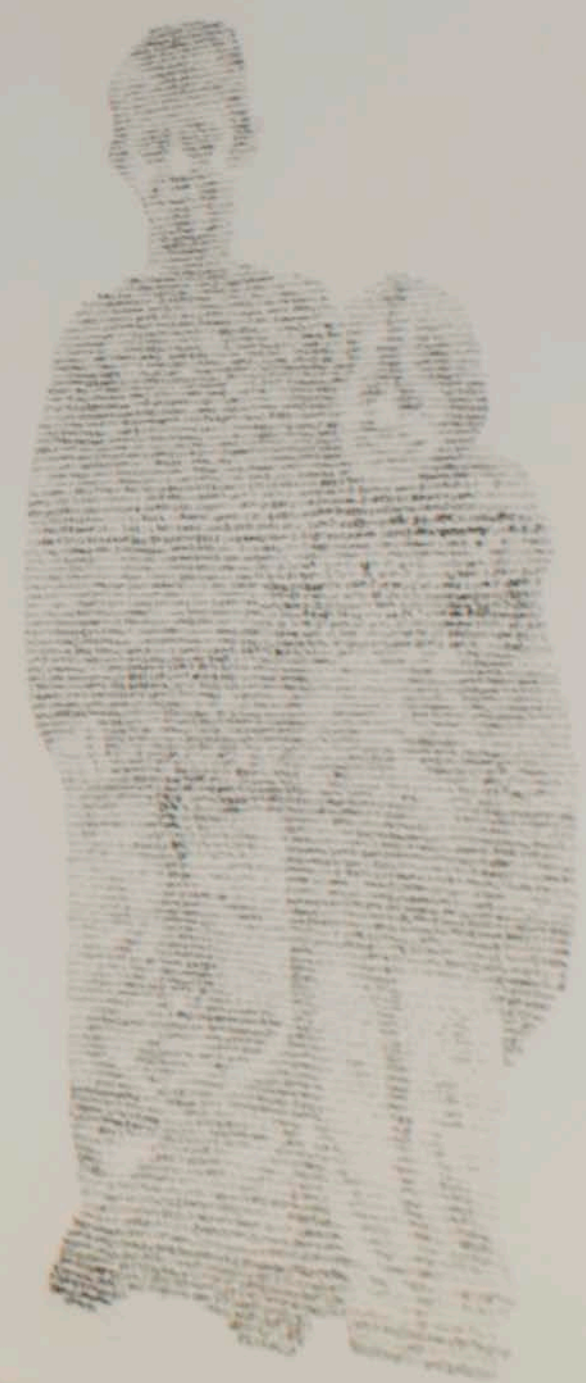
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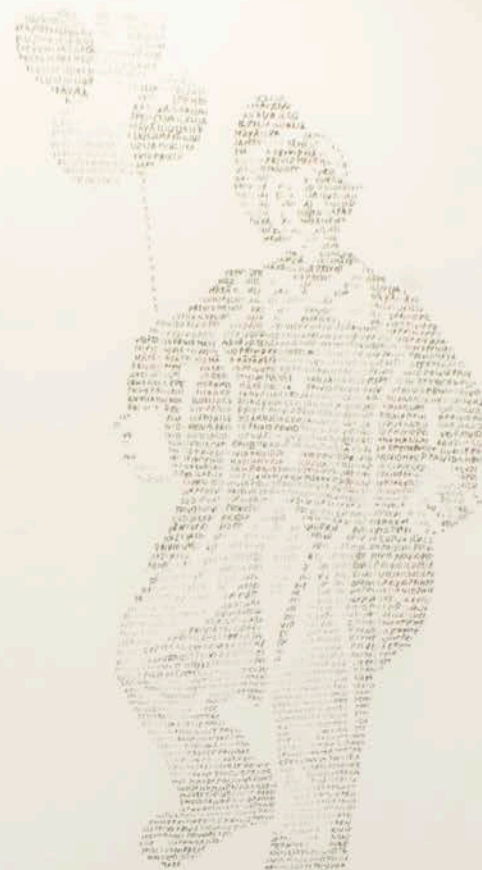






SMS





Ostali že spijo, radio igra.
Figure na ekranu svoj ritem tolčejo,
široka in ravna polja poleg plešejo.
Preko mene vleče se tema.



Kopeljo. Ezer noli





Kot otrok prepušчам se spokojni praznini,
da našel bi ritem v brezhibni modrini.



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Sašo Vrabič:
Ne-bo

Miha Colner

Danes živi človeška vrsta v svetu več hitrosti in nešteti paralelnih univerzumov. Družbe (t. i. razvitega sveta) se utaplja v količinah vsakršnih vsebin, ki jih mora posameznik filtrirati in osmisлити z lastno sveto nazorsko in izkustveno perspektivo. Posledično se tudi meja med zasebnim življenjem in javno pojavnostjo vse bolj briše. Od posameznika – zlasti tistega, ki deluje v kreativnih poklicih – se pričakuje nenehno storilnost in agilnost. Vizualno onesnaženje in obilje sporočil, s katerimi se ljudje vsakodnevno soočamo, puščata neizbrisljive sledi v družbenih in medosebnih odnosih, v socialnih pravilih in načinu življenja.

Vse to se obilno odraža tudi v umetnosti Saša Vrabčiča, enega tistih ustvarjalcev, ki se v svojem delu posveča omenjenim pojavom na način opazovanja in upodabljanja svoje neposredne okolice tako intimnega družinskega kot družbenega okolja. Danes se ti dve plati (lahko) nezadržno povezuje. Umetnika po večini zanimajo majhne in navidezno nepomembne zgodbe, drobni intimni utrinki vsakdanjika in fragmenti življenja, ki na način *pars pro toto* pripovedujejo univerzalno zgodbo o sodobnem stanju duha.

Na eni strani ga pritegne generičnost sodobne komunikacije in nenehna podvrženost novim vsebinam, ki jih posameznik samovoljno spremlja in se pusti biti spremljan. Današnje življenje je v veliki meri postalo virtualno, (komunikacijski) mediji pa so prav zares podaljšek človeka. Zato umetnik že vrsto let upodablja skupine ljudi, ki so popolnoma okupirani z brskanjem po svojih mobilnih napravah.

Ta vidik sodobne družbe je le eden izmed sestavnih delov pričujoče prostorske instalacije z naslovom Ne-bo, ki je večplastna in večpomenska, takšna kot je današnji čas. Nič ni namreč bolj spremenilo načina ljudske komunikacije kot pojav prenosnih telefonov in nato ostalih pametnih naprav, ki so postale nepreklicno najpomembnejši aparati v življenju slehernika. Danes skoraj vsakdo poseduje mobilno enoto, ki je prvenstveno namenjena hitri komunikaciji, hkrati pa tudi preganjanju dolgega časa. A ravno dolgi čas, torej tisti čas, ki omogoča potopitev v lastne misli, je najbolj kreativen trenutek, iz katerega se rojevajo nove domislice in ideje. V situaciji nenehne motnje in popolne izpopolnjenosti ne ostane časa, prostora in energije za kakovostno kreativno snovanje, domislice, analize in premisleke.

Postavitev celostnega dela Ne-bo je zastavljena mnogo širše in bolj univerzalno, saj izhaja iz številnih avtorjevih premišljanj, zamisli, obsesij, spominov in hotenj – stvari, ki definirajo posameznikov status v družbenem kolektivu. Ne-bo je vizualni dnevnik, ki brez pretirano linearne narativne formulacije, ampak le z vizualnimi sredstvi priča o avtorjevem osebnem odnosu do sveta. Naslanja se na banalnosti in absurde sodobne medijske krajine, na asociativne podobe, ustvarjene po (vselej nezanesljivem) spominu, na travmatične življenjske preizkušnje v vselej nedognanih medosebnih odnosih in ne nazadnje na pojave, kot sta voda in modra barva, ki v umetnikovem zasebnem svetu predstavljata občutek pobega iz rutine vsakdanjika, razmisleka in osebnega miru.

Večmedijska in večplastna prostorska instalacija, ki vključuje sliko, risbo, poezijo, gibljivo sliko, prostorske elemente in glasbo s svojo celostnostjo predstavlja

eklektičnost sodobnega trenutka. Predstavljene podobe so običajno skrajno ambivalentne, saj so vzete iz svojega izvirnega konteksta, ki je tesno povezan z njihovo fotografsko predlogo. Slike in risbe Saša Vrabčiča namreč po pravilu nastajajo na podlagi posredovanih podob, bodisi posnetih s strani avtorja bodisi najdenih v obilju medijskih podob, ki so nato kombinirane v enovito celoto. Mestoma so videti kot zvesta reprezentacija zamrznjene stvarnosti, mestoma pa kot imaginarni kolaži.

Povezovalno nit razstave v prvi vrsti stke modra barva, ki se utelesi kot voda, nebo, oblaki, kopališča in kopalci. Avtorjeva obsedenost z bazeni in ljudmi, ki se v njih namakajo, izhaja iz osebne fascinacije in iz širokega spektra implikacij, ki jih le-ta ponuja. Bazeni so prostori sprostitve, ležernosti, radosti in počitka, ki jih ljudje običajno povezujemo s počitnicami in preživljanjem prostega časa. Vrabčič je na eni strani fasciniran z voajerskim potencialom podvodnega pogleda na lebdeča telesa v gibanju; pogledu, ki je v veliki meri lasten današnjemu času. Na drugi strani ga pritegne element vode in njena navidezna modrina, ki vselej implicira globino in skrivnostnost, ki je v popolnem nasprotju z banalnostjo in lahkotnostjo sodobnega bivanja.

Prav tako ga okupira potreba po analizi medijskih podob, ki neizbežno krojijo javno mnenje in postavljajo estetske telesne ideale. Ta segment je bil podrobneje obdelan v ciklusu Vogue (2002), v katerem je Vrabčič izpostavil blesk (in bedo) poželjivega medijskega spektakla. V sliki Mala smrt (2017) upodobi ekstatično figuro priletne ženske med doživljanjem orgazma, a vendar bi lahko njen spačen izraz na obrazu razumeli

kot trpečega, izmučenega ali celo umirajočega. Za njo se nahaja poželjiva podoba mladenke v spodnjem perilu, ki izgleda, kot da je ušla z reklamnega panoja. S tem se Vrabčič dotakne danes vseprisotnega tabuja staranja in starosti, postaranih teles in spolnih naslad, ki jih le-ta še vedno potrebujejo. Zanima ga telesno nelagodje ob samozavedanju, da stvarno telo ne ustreza poželjivi podobi idealnega telesa. Na drugi strani ga pritegne skoraj neizrekljivo psihofizično nelagodje, ki se pojavi ob prešuštvu, družbeno stigmatiziranem dejanju, ki predstavlja bolečo izdajo ljubljene osebe. Travmatično situacijo prešuštva aplicira nase s tem, ko upodablja prizore iz družinskega albuma, ki so videti povsem običajni, in s tem, ko gradi asociativne slikarske kolaže, ki vsebujejo delčke intimnih pisem, ki si jih je umetnik izmenjeval s svojo partnerko. Delčki rokopisov v delu Vse mi povej (2017) tako ne razkrijejo intence in podrobne vsebine kratkih, iz konteksta vzetih sporočil, ampak izdvajajo le posamezne pomenljive in iskrene fraze.

Vizualni postavitvi se pridružuje tudi zvočna instalacija, kjer se avtor posveča vprašanju ustvarjanja glasov in tonov, kar je del njegove vsakodnevne prakse. Vrabčič v svojih delih ne more zaobiti vprašanj o aktu ustvarjanja, o povezavi med zasebnostjo in profesionalnimi obvezami, med intimnim družinskim življenjem in javnim delovanjem na področju umetnosti. Tako kot profesionalna kariera umetnika neizbežno posega v intimno sfero, se tudi zasebno življenje nenehno prestavlja v področje ustvarjanja. Avtor tako analizira delovanje v različnih disciplinah, kot sta glasba in likovna umetnost, in povezave med njima. Glasbena kulisa instalacije je sestavljena iz umetelnih in sintetičnih zvokov, skoraj brez intervencije človeškega

glasu, kar je v nasprotju z njegovo siceršnjo prakso vokalne glasbe in vokalnega ritmiziranja. V nasprotju z ambientalno in vsebinsko nevtralno zvočno kuliso je moč razumeti performans, v katerem avtor obsedeno napihuje modre balone in s tem opravlja dihalne vaje za vokaliste oziroma, kot pravi sam, »jogo za vokalne perkusioniste«. Princip je sicer podoben petju, vendar je napihovanje balonov pravo Siziſovo delo, saj namesto ustvarjanja zvokov proizvaja na videz banalne vizualne elemente. A prav s tem Vrabič v enovito celoto poveže različna področja svojega dela, ki se sicer v javnem prostoru le redko soočijo, medtem ko na osebni ravni vseskozi sobivajo. Celostna umetnina Ne-bo tako postane zvočno-vizualna alegorija avtorjevega ustvarjalnega mikrokozmosa, njegovega življenja in dela, ki sta tesno povezana in praktično neločljiva.



Modra je za fante, 2017,
olje na platnu, 30 x 80 cm

Iz arhiva:
1997–2017

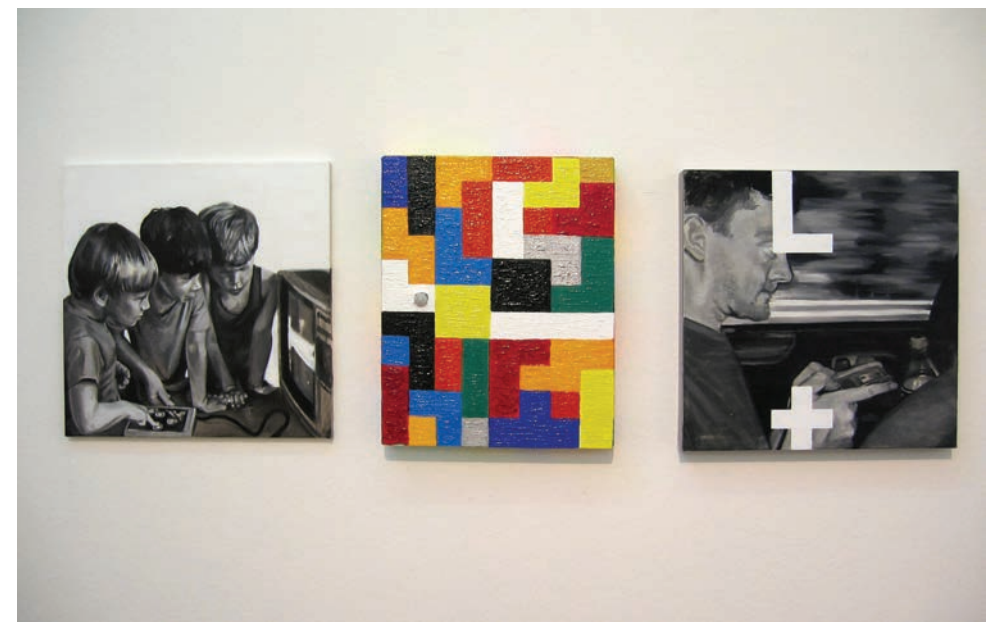
Petja Grafenauer



Zvočne slike, 1999, instalacija s tremi slikami, fotokopija, papir in zvok, Muzej Ernst, Budimpešta, kurator Gregor Podnar, del razstave Young and Serious: Recycled Image

V domačem digitalnem arhivu vsestranskega vizualnega umetnika Saša Vrabiča (1974) domuje 261 besedil, ki so jih o njegovem delu v dvajsetih letih, odkar se je pričel predstavljati javnosti, spisali kustosi, kritiki, novinarji in galeristi. Iz zapisov se tvori skorajda popolna podoba Vrabičevega vizualnega ustvarjanja, le malo pa izvemo o glasbi – Vrabič jo ustvarja z instrumenti in računalnikom ter vokalom, poje in »beatboxa«, vokalno ritmizira – solo in v raznih zasedbah, med katerimi verjetno najbolj izstopa več kot 15-letno sodelovanje s skupino Perpetuum Jazzile. Glasba je posebnega pomena tudi v njegovih galerijskih projektih, saj so skorajda vsi prežeti z njo, Vrabič pa je ustvaril tudi nekaj slik, v katere je vključil zvok, ali pa so nastale kot glasba – s semplanjem.

Tetris (triptih), 2004, akril, olje na platnu, zvočni modul, senzor, Moderna galerija (danes MG+MSUM), Ljubljana, del razstave 7 grehov: Ljubljana – Moskva, kuratorji Zdenka Badovinac, Viktor Misisano, Igor Zabel



Za sprehod po Vrabičevih razstavnih projektih, predvsem tistih ambientalne narave, ki po ovinkasti poti pripeljejo do projekta *Ne-bo*, je arhiv besedil navdušujoča zbirka, saj nam pokaže, da se temeljna izhodišča Vrabičevega ustvarjanja kljub raznolikosti izpeljav skorajda ne spreminjajo. Zaradi tega, pa tudi zato, da ohranimo množico glasov in misli, ki so se v dveh desetletjih zaustavili ob njegovem ustvarjanju, je prelet po avtorjevem opusu sestavljen iz fragmentov in podob preteklih projektov od leta 1997 pa vse do danes.

O sliki Saše Vrabiča je bilo med mediji, v katerih ustvarja, napisanega največ, a o njegovem ustvarjanju je potrebno, kot počne sam, razmišljati celostno in upoštevati celo ne le tisto, kar je na koncu vidno gledalcu, ampak razumeti, da je temu skladen tudi način Vrabičevega razmišljanja in način ustvarjanja, da prepletanje zasebnega in javnega, prežetost življenja s tehnologijo ter refleksija čustvenega preživetja v sodobni, k storilnosti naravnani družbi, prežemajo celoto življenja in ustvarjanja dela tega umetnika.

Vrabič slika, riše, sklada pesmi, programira, montira, snema, oblikuje, tiska tisto, kar v trenutku ustvarjanja živi, čuti in misli v vsakdanjem življenju. Gre za ustvarjalnost, ki je kljub navidezni vezanosti na množične medije in tehnologijo globoko osebnoizpovedna. Neverjetno, a tak razmislek nas vodi skorajda do načinov avtomatičnega slikanja (snemanja, komponiranja, pisanja ...) kakega surrealizma. Vrabičev vizualni način vzorčenja, čeprav podoben sestavljanju glasbe, oblikovanja, videa v sodobnosti, je zelo oseben in hkrati skorajda avtomatiziran ter tako ne do konca prevedljiv v jezik besede.

Ob vizualnem arhivu razstav in spremljajočih besedilih se pred nami razpre mreža pomenov, ki jo gledalci – večinoma strokovnjaki – vidijo v praksi Saša Vrabiča. Tisto, kar je zanimivo, je to, da se ta mreža z leti skorajda ne spreminja, morda jo včasih bolj zanese v smer tehnologije (predvsem v 90. letih prejšnjega stoletja, ko se je zdel *Photoshop* bolj tuj kot danes), drugič bolj v smer osebnega, intimnega, družbenokritičnega ... Kljub temu, da skoraj vsak izmed piscev doda k opazovanju tudi svojo osebo, želje, potrebe, prepričanja, je osnovna struktura, na kateri domujejo dela Saša Vrabiča, precej enotna: podoba, zvok, beseda v vseh možnih pojavnih oblikah, z nerazrešenim ljubezenskim odnosom do tehnologij, ter prehajanja med analognim in digitalnim, vedno na meji med osebnim in javnim, intimnim in družbenim:

»Pravzaprav se je vse zgodilo zelo postopoma: ko me je varovala babica, mi je kdaj pa kdaj potisnila v roke svinčnik ali barvice in papir, naj rišem, da je zmogla ob meni opraviti še kaj drugega. Babica je bila s kuharijo tudi kakor umetnica: kadar je delala pito, jo je oblikovala kot obraz, knjigo, srce ... Ko sem bil malo večji, mi je dala koruzni zdrob za oblikovanje hlebčkov in štruc, največkrat pa je rabil za scenografijo za igre z avtomobilčki: vse to me je navdušeno veselilo. Užival sem. Pravijo, da je dedek imel umetniško žilico: bil je dimnikar, glasbenik, imel je posluh za jezike, rad je slikal, ohranilo se je le malo del. Mati je vrsto let prepevala z ansamblom Fantje treh dolin, člana kvinteta sta bila tudi dva njena brata oziroma sta še zdaj, oče pa je strojni tehnik; rad sem ga opazoval pri delu. Druženje s Petrom Murkom, vrstnikom iz naše ulice, nama je burilo sanje o likovnem poklicu: dostikrat sva skupaj risala ali izdelovala unikatne tekstilije, največkrat kot dodatno nalogo, ki nam jo je

¹ Tone Turičnik, »Tudi nepomembno ni vedno nepomembno«, intervju s Sašom Vrabčičem, Tone Turičnik, Pogovori, Cerdonis, Slovenj Gradec, 2004, p. 143.

naložil profesor Milan Unkovič, učitelj likovne vzgoje. Nanj imam lepe in prijazne spomine, saj je znal odstirati likovne poglede enostavno in razumljivo, še bolj pa prepričati, kako imeti rad umetnost. In prijateljski sklep je bil, da oba s Petrom greva v Ljubljano in se vpiševa v šolo za oblikovanje in fotografijo. In to se je zgodilo. Poleg sošolca Marka Zoroviča je tam vplival name profesor Janez Močnik, odličen pedagog, široko razgledan človek in ves prežet z ljubeznijo do strokovnega dela. S pretehtanimi prijemi je poglobljal znanje, vlival samozavest in spoštovanje do sprotnega izpopolnjevanja v risanju. Ob vsem me je usmeril in prepričal, da sem se vpisal na Akademijo za likovno umetnost. Tam sem študiral v razredu profesorja Andreja Jemca, diplomiral in nadaljeval s podiplomskim študijem grafike, opravil magistririj pri profesorju Lojzetu Logarju, se začel posebej zanimati za video, ki ga predava videast in profesor Srečo Dragan, in spoznal, da so nekateri grafični pogledi prisotni v slikarstvu, se naučil računalniškega programiranja, ki je bilo uporabno v grafiki, in nazadnje me je vse to pripeljalo do računalniških povečav, gibljivih slik in multimedijskega eksperimentiranja, vključujoč tudi zvok, slikarske tehnike, možnosti oblikovanja in računalniško animiranje.«¹

Sašo Vrabčič je eden tistih umetnikov, katerih slikarstvo je bilo sprejeto v okviru t. i. sodobne umetnosti že s prvo, inavguracijsko razstavo *Trienalom sodobne slovenske umetnosti*, ki jo je leta 1997 kuriral Peter Weibel. Vrabčič se je nenadoma in zelo vidno pojavil na slovenski slikarski sceni, obkrožen s skupino kolegov (sprva Žiga Kariž in Miha Štrukelj, nato še Viktor Bernik, Gorazd Krnc, Arjan Pregl ...), prav tako slikarjev, ki so reagirali na spremenjeno podobo realnosti svojega časa:

»Stroji in mediji so docela spremenili naše dožemanje sveta. Mediji so predvsem telemediji. Stroji za gledanje, od televizije do teleskopa, poudarjajo predvsem občutek oddaljenosti. Slikovni stroji, od fotografskega aparata do računalnika, so ustvarili nove vrste slik. Tabela, oljna slika ni več edini tip slike. Fotografija, film, video, računalnik so novi, tehnični nosilni mediji slike; slika je torej prešla od svojega historičnega nosilca do ekrana. Prišlo je do eksplozije vizualnega. Danes imajo slikovni umetniki na voljo na stotine oblik in na stotine tehnik. Ta eksplozija vizualnega, ta poplava podob bi lahko pripeljala do razvrednotenja slike. Proces proizvodnje slik postaja pomembnejši od samega proizvoda, slike. Tehnične preobrazbe in širitve so spremenile tudi tradicionalno slikarstvo. To zdaj uporablja tudi stroje in tehnične medije, kot sta fotografija in televizija. To mediatizirano slikarstvo z novimi produkcijskimi in kompozicijskimi postopki poudarja strojno pogojene spremembe našega gledanja.

Slike kot ekrani, 1997, slikarski cikel, Moderna galerija (danes MG+MSUM), Ljubljana, (del razstave U3, kurator Peter Weibel)





Slike z razstave "Nedelja za Bežigradom", 2001, Bežigradska galerija, Ljubljana, kuratorja Miloš Bašin in Maja Šuštaršič



Vrabičeve slike (razstavljena so dela *Izbrani ekrani*, 1997, *Sanje diamanta*, 1997 in *Nočna vožnja*, 1997) izhajajo iz fragmentov, posnetih s televizijskega zaslona, in zavestno evocirajo tradicijo rabe heterogenega polja in podobja množičnih medijev v slikarstvu (Rosenquist, Salle, Rauschenberg).²

V Bežigradske galeriji je Vrabič leta 2001 postavil razstavo *Nedelja za Bežigradom*. Značilnost njegovih projektov je že od samega začetka, da razstave pripravlja projektno, celotno. Za predloge slik so mu včasih služile fotografije, različne tiskovine, internet, ali pa so podobe nastajale 'na pamet'. Tudi multimedijske razstave so nastajale po načelu improvizacije, kljub temu, da so poleg drugih medijev vanje vključene tudi slike. Tak način dela mu omogoča hiter način slikanja:

»Proces izdelovanja slik je pri Vrabiču mnogo hitrejši, kot smo tega vajeni pri fotorealistih, in slike niso tako detajlno dodelane. Način slikanja, ki ga je moč opaziti tudi v njegovih predhodnih delih, sam imenuje hitri realizem. Po njegovem predstavlja le-ta logično posledico hitro bežeče realnosti, ki jo vzpostavljajo moderni mediji.«³

Nedeljo za Bežigradom so sestavljala 4 velika platna – na enem je bil upodobljen mobilni telefon, na drugih dveh nogometna tekma in na zadnjem prostitutka na spletu in interaktivni CD-rom:

Mobitel, spolnost in nogomet predstavljajo tudi fenomene sodobne (predvsem moške) družbe. To pa poudarja tudi naslov razstave *Nedelja za Bežigradom*, ki ponazarja njihovo udeležbo na nogometnih tekmah na bežigradskem stadionu. Hkrati s temi reprezentacijskimi

² Peter Weibel, Igor Zabel, »Mediji, stroji, slike«, *U3 - 2. triennale sodobne slovenske umetnosti*, Moderna galerija, Ljubljana, 1997 [sprememno besedilo k razstavi].

³ Maja Šuštaršič, *Javno : zasebno*, Bežigradska galerija, Ljubljana, 2001, p. 3.

4

Polona Lovšin, »Mobitel, spolnost in nogomet«, *Finance*, št. 164, Ljubljana, 13. 9. 2001.

poudarki (mobitel, svetovni splet in nogomet) opredeljuje tudi sam Bežigrad kot mikrokozmos, kjer se prepletajo prej omenjeni fenomeni: osrednji ljubljanski stadion z nogometom, mobilni telefon s komunikacijo povsod in kjerkoli (za Bežigradom pa je tudi sedež Mobitela) in virtualna pornografija, ki je dostopna v zasebnih stanovanjih. To, da slike apelirajo na sociološko-urbano značilnost predela, dopolnjuje tudi CD-rom.⁴

Reklamni plakat *Veliko pričakovanje* je nastal za MGLC, ki je v tem času, podobno kot umetnik, razvijal idejo o umetnosti izven galerij. Reklamni plakat teh velikosti je bil tedaj v slovenskem prostoru še relativna novost, ki jo je umetnik s pridom izkoristil proti njej sami in na javno, medijsko površino umestil podobo, ki je tam ni bilo pričakovati, ki je prikazovala nič drugega kot tisto, kar smo vanjo vložili – lastna pričakovanja:

»Komur spomin seže vsaj dvajset let nazaj, si lahko obudi občutek nekakšne vizualne tesnobe, ko se je vrnil čez tedanjo slovensko oz. jugoslovansko mejo z Zahoda. Poglavitna razlika je bila v dejstvu, da je bil – recimo temu »likovnost«, vizualni vtis Slovenije – do skrajnosti zadržan, lahko rečemo siv v primerjavi z razigrano živopisnostjo tujine. Kot marsikaj pri nas se je tudi to sprevrnilo v nasprotje; tako po mojih izkušnjah danes najdemo res redko katero mesto v EU, ki bi bilo bolj pisano, okinčano in nastlano z vsemi mogočimi »billboardi«, jumbo plakati, navadnimi plakati (ti delujejo že nekako passé), elektronskimi displeji in, če ne gre drugače, vsaj z grafiti. Nekdanja sivina se je pod pritiskom kapitalske logike oglaševanja in marketinga ter občutka svobode sprevrnila v medijski prostor, ki mu brez dvoma gospodari princip horror vacui. [...]



Veliko pričakovanje, 2002, plakati na reklamnih površinah v javnem prostoru po Sloveniji, produkcija MGLC, Europlakat

⁵ Tomislav Vignjević, »V nasprotju z logiko konzuma«, *Delo*, Ljubljana 29. 8. 2002, p. 6.

⁶ Jaka Železnikar, »Sašo Vrabič«, intervju, *Mladina* [spletna], Ljubljana 2003.

Običajni, trenutno najbolj razširjen tip oblikovanja skuša pozornost potencialnega gledalca pogosto pritegniti s kakšno vizualno-lingvistično domislico. Vrabičev pristop pa se zapre v intimni svet vsakdanjih, drobnih radosti, ne potrebuje oglaševanja in je v nasprotju z logiko konzuma, spodbujanja k trošenju, ki ga je pred nekaj leti v enem izmed svojih truisimov opredelila vidna ameriška umetnica Barbara Kruger: »I shop therefore I am.«⁵

Na razstavi Privat(e) v Galeriji na Prušnikovi 74 se je v Vrabičevem delu zgodil premik, ki je temeljil na osebni krizi ob žongliranju s sodobnostjo. Slike, video, objekti, zvok – vsi elementi so temeljili na osredotočanju na zasebno, v razmišljanju o eskapizmu zaradi naraščajočih obveznosti, ki so z digitalizacijo postajale vse bolj pospešene in hkrati na razgaljanje družinske intimne javnosti, kar je od tega projekta stalnica njegovih del:

»To je postavitev, s katero sem res zadovoljen in ki sem ji posvetil veliko časa. Po eni strani gre za vpogled v privatnost, malce nostalgичni pogled in na momente dokaj subjektiven pristop, ki ga je potrebno gledati kar precej iz sociološkega aspekta, po drugi strani pa je razstava bolj kompleksna, saj je eskapizem tisti psihološki faktor, torej pobeg, ki sicer ne opisuje vseh vrst sodobnih eskapističnih metod, ampak eno in to je pobeg v privatnost, kot pobeg od realnosti, proč od vojne, proč od javnih dejavnosti. [...] Hotel sem odmik, eskapizem s poudarjeno subjektivnostjo, nostalgijo. Želel sem tudi intimnega ne toliko direktnega odnosa in interaktivnosti z obiskovalci.«⁶

Obrigado meu amor je bil naslov razstave v Mali galeriji v Ljubljani, ki jo je Vrabič zaznamoval z veliko sliko na



Privat(e), 2003, Center in galerija P74 (prvotna lokacija na Prušnikovi 74 v Ljubljani), Ljubljana, ambient s slikami, fotografijami, videom in objekti, kurator Tadej Pogačar





Obigado meu amor, 2005, Mala galerija (zdaj Galerija Mak), Ljubljana, slikarska, zvočna postavitev, kustosinja Bojana Piškur



steni galerije, cela razstava pa se je v podobah in zvokih dotikala glasbe, jezika in ... Portugalske:

»Tako sva z Nino obiskala Lizbono ravno zaradi Wendersovega filma *Zgodbe iz Lizbone* (*Lisbon Story*, 1994) in na Portugalskem ostala kar nekaj tednov. Malo sva se dotaknila portugalskega jezika, še zdaleč pa ga nisva osvojila. Jezik me fascinira, absolutno, tako kot glasba skupine Madredeus, Gilberta Gila, Joãa Gilberta, Toma Jobima. Tudi razlika med brazilskim in portugalskim jezikom se mi zdi velika. Portugalci za Brazilce pravijo, da že v govorici pojejo. Ja, glasba in zvok sta tisto, kar me fascinira v kontekstu izbranega naslova in ozadja za njim. [...]

Pri delu z glasom sem dobil dimenzijo, ki je pravzaprav ista kot v vizualnih delih. V celoti gre v mojem delu za transformacijo digitalnega v analogno, elektronskega v akustično. Pri prevodu mojega glasu, ki oponaša elektronske ritme, gre prav tako kot v slikarstvu za nepopolno interpretacijo – v tem primeru elektronskih ritmov, glasbenih vzorcev, mešanja različnih zvokov, manipulacije frekvenc brez dodanih efektov. V teh spontanah interpretacijah je vidna in slišna iluzija, ki pa se razlikuje od klasične ravno po tem, da je nepopolna, a na trenutke zavajajoče oponaša elektronske medije, ekran, elektronsko glasbo, techno ritem. Človeška roka in glas imata svojo pripovedno moč, znanost pa je prinesla stroje in androide. Pravzaprav se že dolgo pogovarjamo s stroji.

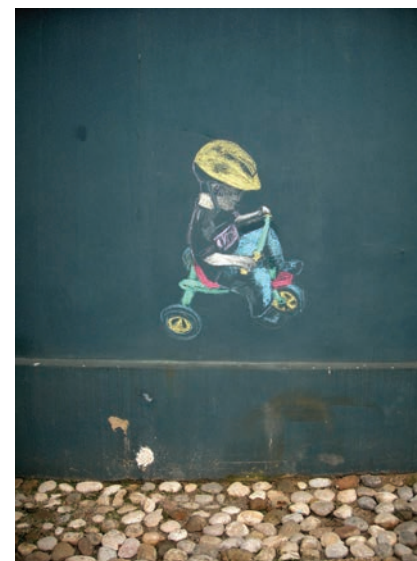
Nepopolnost ima v dobi brežhibne digitalne fotografije na sebi nekaj privlačnega, človeškega. Zato so stare tehnologije na nek način privlačne s svojimi napakami. Najbolj so se mi v spomin vtisnili filmi, ki so jih včasih

⁷ Bojana Piškur, *Obrigado meu amor*, intervju v zloženki ob razstavi, Moderna galerija, Ljubljana 2005.

piratsko presnemavali s projekcij v kinu na VHS, in sicer prav zaradi nepopolnosti slike; zato sem še bolj podrobno sledil, kaj je na temni sliki in v šumečem zvoku, ki sta ustvarjala nepopoln prevod tistega, kar si je zamislil režiser. Zato sem večkrat tudi v svojih video delih snemal z ekrana že dvakrat presneti material in tako montiral neposredno s kamero. S tem sem ustvaril efekt, ki sta ga naključno proizvedla televizor in magnetni trak sam. Tako se v fotografiji ustvari naključni efekt osvetljenega filma, v slikarstvu navidezni analogni efekt zamegljene fotografije, v zvoku efekt rezanja frekvenc, odmeva, menjave hitrosti posnetka, ki ga ustvarjam izključno brez pomoči dodatne tehnologije.«⁷



Pogrešani ekrani, 2007, Galerija Ganes Pratt, Ljubljana, ambient s slikami, videom, risbo, zvokom in objekti, kuratorja Petja Grafenauer in Primož Nemec



V treh prostorih in na zunanjih stenah nekdanje Galerije Ganes Pratt, ki si je tedaj delila dvorišče z Galerijo Equrna, je Sašo Vrabič pripravil postavitev, ki je gradila na dvojnosti doživetja. Projekt je temeljil na dogodku ugrabitve štiriletne Madeleine McCann v letovišču na Portugalskem. Razstava je s številnimi vizualnimi, zvočnimi in svetlobnimi elementi govorila o človeški fascinaciji z otroštvom, ki je na eni strani pogojena s stereotipno simboliko otroštva kot lepote, sreče, čistosti in nebogljenosti, na drugi pa z veliko temačnejšo in bolj grozljivo platjo:

»Prvi del Vrabičeve ambientalne postavitve je bolj ali manj idiličen in letnemu času primeren. Počitnice, plaže, bazeni, čas brezskrbnih radosti v mokrem elementu, sproščene, tudi avtoportretne slike iz družinskega življenja ... Vesel, obetajoči stavek 'Gremo na morje' nas skupaj s slikami in zvoki prestavi na neznano obalo, med razigrane otroke, škržate, lahkotne melodije. Na stene so izpisani odlomki iz njihovih besedil, ki večinoma obetajo užitke in nepozabna doživetja v dvoje, jih je pa mogoče brati tudi drugače, manj nedolžno, pomenljivo. Vmes vidimo nekaj na enako vižo uglašanih sličic iz arhiva različnih promocijskih sporočil, »čas pravljic« pa zaokrožita podoba in omemba Rdeče kapice, enega najbolj znanih in interpretiranih literarnih besedil za otroke. Rdeča kapica je problematična pravljica s potencialno mračno konotacijo in njena uvrstitev na razstavo seveda ni naključna. Skupaj z nekaj drugimi elementi vnese v idilo kanec nemira, temno slutnjo, ki se udejanji v trenutku, ko obiskovalec stopi v naslednji prostor.

Za s stiroporom (odličen zvočni izolator) prekritimi vrati ga čaka nizek, zatemnjen, klavstrofobičen prostor,

nekakšen brlog pedofila, ki naj bi v primerjavi s prejšnjim deloval šokantno in do določene mere mu to tudi uspe. Vsekakor nas prestavi v drugo, veliko mračnejšo realnost, ki jo, ob podobju na steni, sestavljajo še video in težki zvoki odklepanja ali zaklepanja ključavnice. Video nam kaže na zunaj povsem običajno zastrto, zarešetkano kletno okno, za katerim pa se lahko skriva marsikaj, na stenah so tudi tukaj verzi popevčic, ki zdaj vsekakor dobijo drugačen pomen. Med njimi vidimo v tem kontekstu presunljive podobe, ki pa so vendarle le elementi, vzeti iz množice podobja vsakdanjosti. V svojem izvirem kontekstu nikogar posebej ne pretresejo, zdaj pa so del zgodbe o nedolžnosti brez zaščite, povoženi brezskrbnosti, zlorabi, nizkih strasteh ...»⁸

»Sašu Vrabiču je uspelo s predstavitvijo svoje značilne avtorske zamisli pričarati izjemen ambient, ki prehaja od zvestega slikarskega fotorealizma do gibljevih slik in razstavljenih vsakdanjih objektov. Projekt Pogrešani (ekrani) je dodelan tako v formalnem kakor vsebinskem smislu, ki ni povsem enoznačen, ampak ponuja vselej nove in subjektivno začinjene ponovne interpretacije.«⁹

Samostojni projekt v Novem mestu je pomenil še korak naprej v razvijanju ambientalne postavitve, v nadaljevanju ustvarjanja risb iz besed in predvsem v ustvarjanju 'in situ', na mestu in to v hipu ter z vednostjo, da bo umetnina po zatvoritvi izginila. Razstava je nastala kot hipni, neposredni odziv na okolje, na mikrolokacijo. Ker slovenska kritika le redko seže do razstav izven glavnega mesta, je ostal le avtorjev zapis v Mladini, ki pa povzame situacijo v popolnosti:

»Pred nekaj tedni sem kar nekaj dni preživel v galeriji *Simulaker* v Novem mestu, kjer sem risal, slikal, pisal

8

Vladimir P. Štefanec, »Izmuzljivost in levitve pomenov«, *Delo*, Ljubljana 31. 7. 2007, p. 11.

9

Miha Colner, »Večznačne interpretacije«, *Dnevnik*, Ljubljana 28. 7. 2007, p. 15.



In situ, 2009, Galerija Simulaker, Novo Mesto, ambient s slikami, risbami, videom, zvokom in objekti, kurator Matjaž Brulc

neposredno na steno galerije in tam (IN SITU) delal objekte iz najdenih predmetov in »skeniral« okolje okoli sebe. Motiv razstave pa ni bil samo v aktu svobodnega ustvarjanja na »prestižni«, starodavni nosilec – steno, temveč je bila tokrat v mojem toku misli človeška želja in z njo povezana čustva. Risbe in slike, ki tvorijo nekakšen fragmentaren portret družbe, kot sem ga videl v trenutku ustvarjanja. Zadnja leta pogosto delam neposredno na steno, saj mi zadostuje po zatvoritvi le dokument, fizično delo pa izgine.«¹⁰

¹⁰

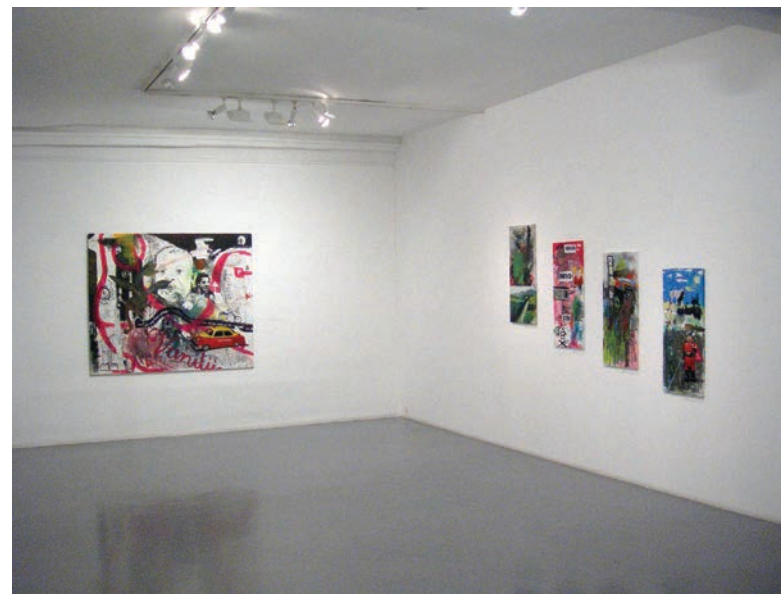
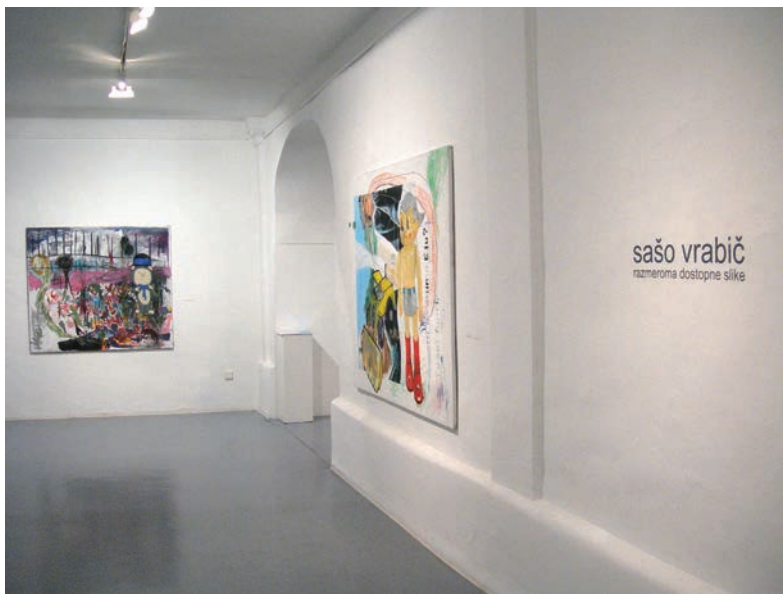
Sašo Vrabčič, »Provokator«, Mladina št. 38, Ljubljana, 24. september 2009, p. 58.





Kolaboracija s sinom,
Ljubljana, 2006

Razmeroma dostopne slike,
2010, Galerija Eqrna,
Ljubljana, slikarska razstava,
kurator Arne Brejc



Dela, ki so in še nastajajo v sodelovanju s člani družine, pa tudi širše, s kolegi umetniki ali prijatelji iz drugih strok, so stalnica Vrabičevega opusa. Z veseljem vstopa v kreativna sodelovanja in, ko se je družini pridružil sin Erik, je tudi ta vstopil v kreativni proces očeta slikarja. Dela, ki sta jih ustvarila Vrabiča, so bila večkrat razstavljena, prvič v Žalcu na razstavi Prijazno mesto (2006), na razstavi *Razmeroma dostopne slike* pa so bila v okviru samostojne razstave združena v celoto, ki je spregovorila prav o družini in njeni sodobni kompleksnosti:

»V času nastanka 'kolaboracijskih del' [2006 op. a.] sem pustil plačano službo v *Koroški galeriji likovnih umetnosti* in se posvetil svojemu otroku Eriku. Takrat sem združil tudi njegov čas za igro in moj profesionalni čas. Pravzaprav v tem delu ni kaj dosti razlike med igro in resnim delom. Razlika je samo v letih, izkušnjah in dojemanju časa.

Erikova prva platna so nastajala skupaj z mojim delom, tako da sem se prilagajal zahtevam in željam takrat malo

več kot enoletnega sina. Delila sva si skupno površino platna, ki je v kuhinji na steni bilo vedno na razpolago za uporabo. Platna so bila prepuščena tudi drugim naključnim ustvarjalcem, tako da so svoje 'prikrite' rokopise na njih pustili tudi Erikova mama Nina, njegova sestrlična Julija in verjetno še kdo, ki se pod sliko ni podpisal.«¹¹

Kritiki so opazili, da je v tem obdobju nekdanjo posredovanost – ki je sicer še vedno prisotna v njegovih delih, zamenjala neposrednost:

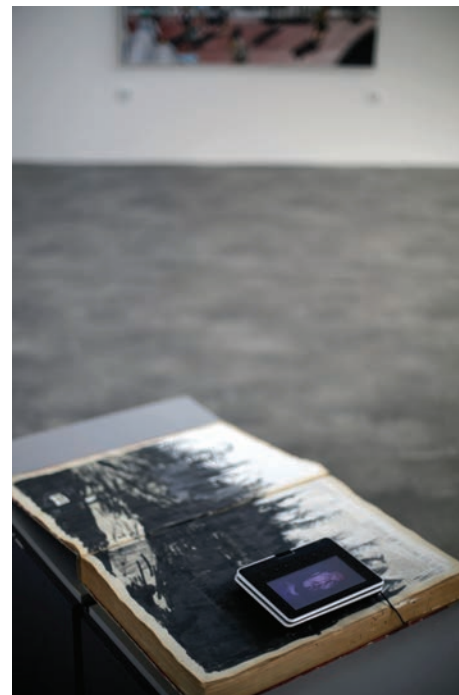
»Razstava, na kateri so meje spontano zabrisane, kjer sta na delu neobremenjena 'desakralizacija' in 'neodgovorno onečaščenje' vzvišene Umetnosti, njeno veselo povezovanje z igro, v kateri je umetnik otrok in otrok umetnik, oba pa sta človeka brez povodcev, nagobčnikov, kravat in slinčkov. Osvežujoče.«¹²

¹¹

Sašo Vrabič, zapis ob razstavi "To delo prvo moje", Koroška galerija likovnih umetnosti, Slovenj Gradec, 2007, umetnikov osebni arhiv.

¹²

Vladimir P. Štefanec, »Brez povodcev, nagobčnikov, kravat in slinčkov, Sašo Vrabič: Razmeroma dostopne slike Galerija Eqrna, Ljubljana 30. 11.–17. 12. 2010«, *Delo*, Ljubljana 11. 12. 2010, p. 14.



Ljubezen in strah, 2014,
Galerija Velenje, Velenje,
ambient s slikami, risbami,
videom, zvokom in objekti,
kuratorka Petja Grafenauer

¹³

Petja Grafenauer, »Mobilni flâneurji«, *Far Away, so Close*, Galerija Kresija, Ljubljana 2016, p. 2.

Razstava *Ljubezen in strah* v velenjski galeriji se je arhitekturno prilagodila razporeditvi galerije v dveh nadstropjih. V spodnjem prostoru je bila upodobljena ljubezen: od zvokov in glasbe, ki jih je nekdanj umeščal v slike, instalacij, jih ustvarjal in delil z občinstvom, je ostalo le še prasketanje gramofona, od ljubezni izginjajoči poljub, dom pa je bil le hišica iz kartona, a v njej je vendarle svetica lučka. Na drugi strani – ali bolje v zgornjem nadstropju – pa so podobe govorile zgodbo strahu negotovega prekarnega življenja, surovih vojn in vojn surovega, ljudi, ki svojo neobčutljivost skrivajo za ekrani in svet trpečega družbenega subjekta.

Slikar Sašo Vrabič je 17. maja 2016 ob 21.10 na Facebooku objavil video, ki si ga je do 24. maja ogledalo 7600 ljudi. Več kot večino razstav sodobne umetnosti. Tehnologija je omogočila vidnost. [...] Vsi na slikah te razstave so na mobilcih. Policisti in flâneurji, turisti in lokalci. Vsi potopljeni v digitalni svet. Ta servira tudi nov jezik, jezik OMGjev, LOLov, WTFjev in podobnih signalov, s katerimi poleg informacij delimo tudi čustva in reakcije. Nova resničnost je tu, vsepovsod, tudi v Ljubljani. Poglejte Vrabičeve slike, ekran svojega pametnega telefona, ali pa se preprosto ozrite skozi galerijsko okno na ulico. Tokrat vse podobe pripovedujejo eno zgodbo.¹³



Daleč stran, tako blizu, 2016, Galerija Kresija, Ljubljana, slikarska razstava, kuratorica Petja Grafenauer



Sašo Vrabič z majico lastne izdelave
za umetniški projekt Made in
China, 2012, sitotisk na bombažnih
majicah, vodja projekta Viktor
Bernik, kuratorica Petja Grafenauer



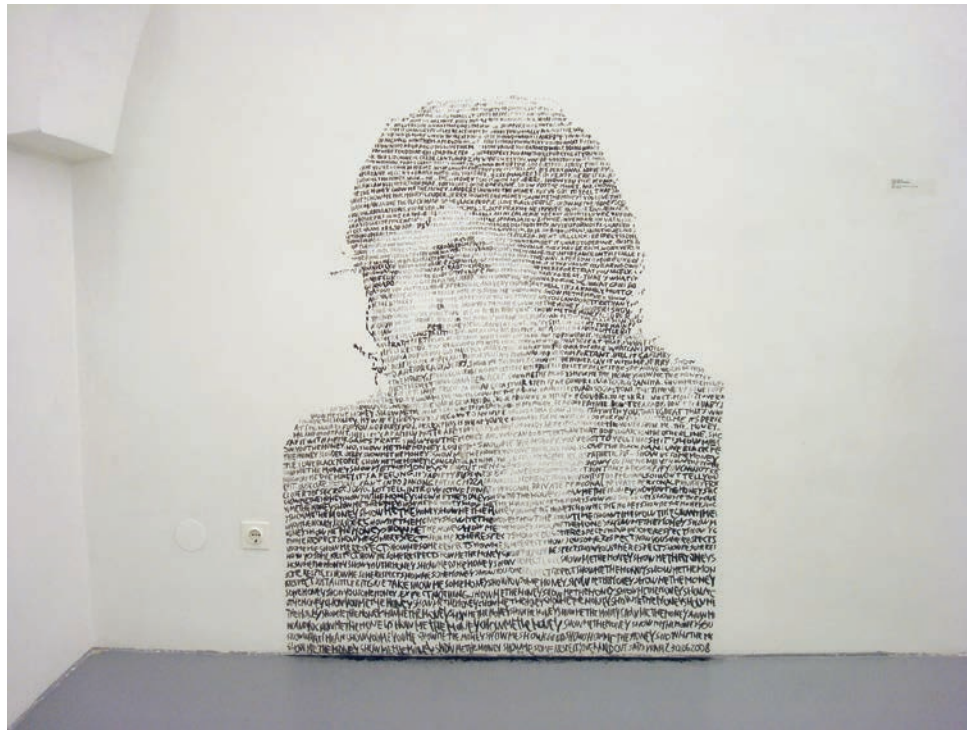
Pričakovati Karin, oglje
na papirju 217 x 101 cm,
last Umetnostna galerija
Maribor, foto: Damjan
Švarc

Pravzaprav vse podobe, zvoki in besede v ustvarjanju Saša Vrabiča tvorijo eno pripoved. Zanj je značilna močna želja po povezovanju v procesu ustvarjanja. Vrabičeva umetniška praksa je ena redkih, ki nima prav nič opraviti z egotripom umetnika Avtorja. Z bližnjimi in neznanci deli svojo intimo, jih vabi v umetniške procese in svoje slike brez kanca sramu in skrivanja za okopi. Visoke umetnosti označuje bolj za IKEA kot za Swarovski kristal. Zato mu lahko kdo očita, da namerno znižuje statusno in tržno vrednost vizualne umetnosti, predvsem slikarstva. Toda prelet njegovih projektov pokaže, da ni tako.

Prispevek, ki ga je Sašo Vrabič podaril svetu sodobne umetnosti na Slovenskem od konca 90. let prejšnjega stoletja do danes, je velik. Sprva je s slikarskimi kolegi ob koncu 90. let prejšnjega stoletja slikarstvu našel mesto v spremenjenih tehnoloških, družbenopolitičnih in kulturnopolitičnih okoliščinah. V svoje ustvarjanje je uspešno vpletel številne medije, tudi zvok in glasbo. V začetku novega tisočletja je deloval v kolaboracijskih projektih skupine umetnikov zbrane okrog Galerije Ganes Pratt (Viktor Bernik, Jasmina Cibic, Ištvan Išt Huzjan, Jaša, Meta Grgurevič, Dejan Kaludjerović, Žiga Kariž, Arjan Pregl, Simone Settimo, Urša Vidic).



Detajl intervencije v prostoru, Bad Boys, Bad Girls (skupinski večmedijski projekt - Meta Grgurevič, Urša Vidic, , Jasmina Cibic, Jaša, Žiga Kariž, Viktor Bernik, Mark Požlep, Simone Settimo, Ištvan Išt Huzjan in Sašo Vrabič), 2007, Mestna galerija, Ljubljana



Pokaži mi denar, 2008, oglje na steni,
Galerija Ganes Pratt, Ljubljana (uničeno
po razstavi), iz razstave Navzdol po zajčji
luknji, kuratorki: Petja Grafenauer in
Nadja Gnamuš



CI-KEL-RA-ŽA (skupaj z Manjo
Vadla), 2009, intervencija
v prostoru in delih drug drugega,
Galerija Vžigalica, Ljubljana

Po tej izkušnji je samostojno dosegel možnost ustvarjanja ambientov, ki še vedno temeljijo na sliki in risbi, a ju širijo in prepletajo z besedo, zvokom, fotografijo in giblivo podobo ter vsakdanjimi ali predelanimi predmeti, ki na gledalca učinkujejo čutno in čustveno. Njegova praksa je sodobna s tematikami družine, zasebnega življenja, sodobnega čustvovanja, vpliva novih tehnologij na vsakdanje življenje in prekarnega dela. Male zgodbe v njegovem ustvarjanju zaživijo in spregovorijo v ritmu vseh nas, ki se opotekamo v življenju nemogočih izbir, ki so nam ga predale generacije pred nami, in skušamo v pospešenem vsakdanu zgraditi jutri za tiste, ki prihajajo za nami.

Sašo Vrabič
Ne-bo

11 May — 24 June 2017

The second catalogue by the Vodnik Homestead in Šiška was prepared with a "larder bereft of all provender", that is to say with strenuous cost-cutting in mind – all with the goal of being able to prepare the kind of programme we set out to do. From 2015, the gallery has been showcasing projects which link visual arts and literature, images and words. We have ventured into a number of territories, from illustration, comics, and typography to visual poetry, video poetry, and story telling. On this occasion, we present the Ne-bo atmospheric exhibition. We invited Sašo Vrabič, a visual artist, to participate, because he creates "images from words". This is undoubtedly one of the more interesting ways to fuse images and words we've seen locally in the past couple of years, since images and words combine to make an indivisible whole, all in an innovative and expressive way.

The exhibition and the catalogue are the first productions of a solo exhibition by a visual artist to have been independently prepared by the Divja misel Institute at the Vodnik Homestead Gallery. To set out the method and conditions under which we collaborate with artists when producing solo exhibitions we tried to guarantee a method of work and production that would set a standard for any other future project. Giving the artist more time, during which he or she can create his project in situ – at the gallery, made up for the lack of funds.

Time, which truly is money and which we had in abundance due to programme cuts, also enabled us to start working on a catalogue commissioning photographs of the exhibition. Like us, you might also chuckle at the thought that while catalogues, made by national institutions, are published with monthly delays or even end up at the bottom of the drawer, the lack of funds enabled the Vodnik Homestead Gallery in Šiška to photograph the new exhibition and publish the results in a catalogue (while some institutions try and make up for the lack of funds in visual arts by preparing exhibitions made up of their collections, we were able to dedicate our work to a new production and give it the time it needed).

Enjoy!

— Vodnik Homestead
Gallery, Šiška
Miha Colner
in **Petja Grafenauer**

Sašo Vrabič:
Ne-bo

Miha Colner

Today, the human species finds itself in a multi-speed and multi-tier world, filled with countless parallel universes. Societies belonging to the so-called "developed world" are drowning in myriad content that the individual must first filter and second, must attach meaning to, through the prism of their own worldview and their experience. Consequently, the border between private and public life is becoming increasingly blurred. The individual – especially one working in a creative profession – is expected to be endlessly productive and adaptable. The visual pollution and the preponderance of messages, which are hallmarks of our daily life, are leaving indelible traces on our social and interpersonal relationships, our social mores and on our way of life.

All this is plainly visible in Sašo Vrabčič's art since the artist has dedicated his work to studying these phenomena by observing and depicting his immediate surroundings – both his intimate family life and his social environment. Today, these two sides can be and, indeed, often are inextricably linked. The artist is mainly interested in small and seemingly unimportant stories, intimate everyday moments and fragments of daily life, telling the collective story of the contemporary state of mind as a *pars pro toto*.

On the one hand, Vrabčič is attracted by the generic nature of modern communication and its constant susceptibility to new content, which the individual arbitrarily monitors and is monitored in turn. Contemporary life has become, by and large, virtual. Meanwhile, the (communication) media have, in reality, become an extension of humanity. For a number of years now, the artist has therefore been depicting groups of

people completely absorbed in the act of browsing on their mobile phones.

This aspect of contemporary society is only one of the components included in the *Ne-bo* installation – a title as layered and polysemic as the world we live in. In recent times, nothing has changed the way people communicate more than the emergence of mobile phones and other smart devices, which have become the most important gadgets in people's lives. Nowadays, almost everyone has a mobile smart device, the primary purpose of which is fast communication, but also "killing time" and/or alleviating boredom. However, boredom – a period during which we can delve into our own thoughts – is itself a creative activity, out of which new ideas and concepts can emerge. Yet, we find ourselves in a situation in which we are ruled by perennial disruptions and by our pursuit of complete fulfilment, leaving us with very little time, space and energy that might have been used for the creative production of ideas, analyses and reflections.

The concept behind the *Ne-bo* "total artwork", on the other hand, is much broader and more universal, stemming from the artist's many reflections, ideas, obsessions, remembrances and desires – from those things which define an individual's status within a social collective. *Ne-bo* is a visual diary that doesn't rely on excessive linear narration. Rather, it uses visual cues to communicate the artist's personal relationship with the world. It draws from the banalities and absurdities of the contemporary media landscape; from associational images created according to (always unreliable) memories of traumatic trials and tribulations linked

to eternally enigmatic interpersonal relationships; and finally from phenomena, such as water and the colour blue – both representing the artist's feelings, which he associates with escaping everyday routines, reflection, and inner peace.

The multimedia and multi-layered spatial installation – which includes paintings, drawings, poetry, moving pictures, spatial elements and music – represents the eclectic nature of the contemporary moment expressed through its totality. The presented images are usually extremely ambivalent, as they have been taken out of their original context, which is tightly linked to its photographic source material. As a rule, Vrabič's paintings and drawings are based on mediated images either captured by the artist or found among the cornucopia of media images, which are then combined into a unified whole. Here and there, they seem like faithful representations of reality, frozen in time; at other times, they are more like imaginary collages.

The common theme of the exhibition is first and foremost the colour blue, which materializes as water, the sky, clouds, swimming pools and swimmers. The author's obsession with swimming pools and the people who bathe in them stems from his personal fascination with them and with what they imply. Swimming pools are places offering relaxation, leisure, joy and rest – states people usually associate with vacations and free time. Vrabič is fascinated by the potential for voyeurism afforded by looking at floating bodies in motion from down below – a point of view more or less espoused by our *zeitgeist*. He is also drawn by the element itself, water, and its apparent blue colour, always implying

PHOTO ON PAGE 27:
Blue is For Boys, 2017, oil on
canvas, 30 x 80 cm

depth and mystery, something which is in stark contrast to the banality and triviality of contemporary being.

He also feels the need to analyse media images, which inevitably shape public opinion and set aesthetic standards, particularly to do with body image. This segment was examined more thoroughly by the author in his *Vogue* (2002) cycle. In it, Vrabič highlights the glamour (and misery) of a alluring media spectacle. In his painting *Mala smrt* (La Petite Mort, 2017), the artist depicts the ecstatic figure of an elderly woman during orgasm; however, her contorted facial expression could also be understood as communicating suffering, exhaustion or even the pangs of death. Behind her, we see the seductive image of a young woman dressed in undergarments, as though she came right out of a billboard. In this artwork, Vrabič tackles the omnipresent taboo of growing old and ageing, focusing on aged bodies and sexual pleasures, which the elderly still crave. He is interested in physical discomfort, triggered by self-consciousness that comes from self-awareness that the physical body does not fit the desirable image of the ideal body. At the same time, he is attracted by the almost ineffable psychophysical discomfort, which is felt with adultery – a socially stigmatized act that represents a painful betrayal of a loved one. He recreates the traumatic situation, caused by adultery, by depicting what seem like ordinary scenes from a family album and combining them with associative painting collages, containing fragments of intimate letters which the artist exchanged with his partner. The manuscript fragments in *Vse mi povej* (Tell Me Everything, 2017) therefore do not reveal the intention and detailed content of the short messages taken out of context; rather, they impart individual meaningful and heartfelt phrases.

PHOTO ON PAGE 28:
La Petite Mort, 2017, oil on
canvas, 50 x 40 cm

PHOTO ON PAGE 29:
Tell Me Everything, 2017, ink,
charcoal, paper, oil on canvas,
40 x 30 cm

The visual layout is also accompanied by a sound installation, where the author focuses on creating voices and tones, a part of his daily, artistic practice. In his artwork, Vrabič simply cannot avoid questions about the act of creation, about the link between privacy and professional obligations, between intimate family life and public artistic activities. Just as an artist's professional career inadvertently intrudes into the intimate sphere, private life also constantly invades the sphere of creation. The artist therefore analyses engagement in various disciplines, such as music and art, as well as the links between them. The musical backdrop of the installation is composed of ornate and synthetic sounds, with almost no intervention from a human voice, which runs contrary to his otherwise established practice of using vocal music and vocal rhythmization. In contrast to an ambient and content-neutral audio backdrop, the performance involves the author blowing up blue balloons obsessively – doing breathing exercises for vocalists, or "yoga for vocal percussionists", as he calls them. While, in principle, it resembles singing, blowing up the balloons represents a true Sisyphean task; rather than creating sounds, the artist produces what seem like banal visual elements instead. And yet, this allows Vrabič to combine the different areas of his work into a singular whole, areas which otherwise rarely intersect in public space, though they permanently co-exist on the personal level. The *Ne-bo gesamtkunstwerk* thus becomes an audio-visual allegory of the artist's microcosm, of his life and work – both tightly, almost inextricably, linked.

**From the Archive:
1997-2017**

Petja Grafenauer

The home digital archive belonging to versatile visual artist Sašo Vrabčič (1974) contains 261 texts about his work, written by curators, critics, journalists and gallery owners in the twenty years since he began displaying his work to the public. The written material shows a nearly complete image of Vrabčič's visual creations; however, very little is known about his music. Vrabčič creates it using instruments, a computer, and vocals – he sings, beatboxes, uses vocal rhythmization, sometimes as a soloist and at other times as part of a band. Among the latter, his fifteen-year collaboration with the Perpetuum Jazzile a capella group is particularly noteworthy. Music plays an equally important role in his gallery projects, because most of them are permeated with it. Vrabčič has also made a number of paintings incorporating sound (alternatively, some were made like music, through "sampling").

For anyone looking to take a walk down the winding path of Vrabčič's exhibition projects, which lead to the *Ne-bo* project, especially those of an ambient nature, the archive of text represents a superb collection, since it shows us that the fundamental outlines of Vrabčič's creative process remain, mostly, the same – despite the varied embodiments they take on. For this reason – and also to preserve the multitude of voices and thoughts, which mark the two decades of his creation – the overview of the author's opus is made up of fragments and images of past projects, from 1997 to today.

Quite a bit has been written about Sašo Vrabčič's painting in the media in which he creates; however, we must take his lead and always take a holistic approach to his work, taking into account not only what is seen by the

PHOTO ON PAGE 32:

Zvočne slike (Sound Paintings), 1999, installation with three paintings, photocopy, paper and sound, Ernst Museum, Budapest, curated by: Gregor Podnar, part of the Young and Serious exhibition: Recycled Image

PHOTO ON PAGE 33:

Tetris (triptih) [Tetris (triptych)], 2004, acrylic, oil on canvas, sound module, sensor, Museum of Modern Art (today: MG +MSUM), Ljubljana, part of the *7 Sins* exhibition: Ljubljana – Moscow, curated by: Zdenka Badovinac, Viktor Misisano, Igor Zabel

spectator, but also bearing in mind that the whole work follows Vrabčič's method of thinking and creating, where the private and public are always intertwined, where life is permeated by technology, and where this artist's entire life and oeuvre reflect emotional survival in contemporary, productively-oriented society.

Vrabčič paints, draws, composes songs, programs, edits, records, designs and prints what he lives, feels, and thinks in the course of everyday life and in that particular moment of creation. Despite the apparent connection to mass media and technology, his creative output is deeply confessional. As implausible as this sounds, this avenue of thinking leads us to draw comparisons to surrealist automatism and other forms of automatic painting (recording, composing, writing, etc.). Vrabčič's visual approach to sampling, despite its similarity to working with music, design, and contemporary video, is very personal and at the same time almost automated, which means it cannot be fully translated to speech or enunciation.

The visual archive of exhibitions and accompanying texts unfurl a network of meaning, which spectators – mainly experts – can see in Sašo Vrabčič's work. The most interesting aspect of this is that the network almost doesn't change through the years; sometimes it drifts a bit in the direction of technology (especially in the 90s, when *Photoshop* seemed more mysterious than today) and at other times, it veers toward the personal, intimate, and socially critical. Even though almost every author adds their personal note, wish, need or conviction to their observation, the fundamental structure supporting Vrabčič's work remains quite uniform: an image, sound,

or work in all their permutations; coupled with an unresolved love affair with technology and the switch from analogue to digital; and always on the border between the personal, public, intimate and the social:

"It was in fact a very gradual process: when my gran babysat me, she would give me a pencil or crayons and a piece of paper, telling me to draw, because it kept me busy and gave her a chance to do some chores. When it came to cooking, my grandmother was her own kind of artist: she would make a pie and shape it to look like a face, book, heart... When I was a bit bigger, she gave me corn meal, so I could make buns and loaves; however, I usually used it to make scenery for when I played with toy cars: the whole thing made me extremely happy. I enjoyed it. They say grandad had an artistic vein: he was a chimney sweep, a musician, he had an ear for languages and liked to paint, although, only a few examples of his work survived. My mother sang with the *Fantje treh dolin* band for several years; two of her brothers were also members of the quintet and still are to this day. My father, on the other hand, was an engineer. I liked watching him work. I hung out with Peter Murko, who lived on our street, and we would often daydream about being artists; we often drew and made unique textile designs for extra school credit, which we were given by our arts teacher, professor Milan Unkovič. I have fond memories of him; he knew how to approach art in a simple and understandable way. Above all, he taught me how to appreciate art. I made a friendship pact with Peter: we would both go to Ljubljana and study at the School of Design and Photography. And that's what happened. In addition to my classmate, Marko Zorovič, I was also influenced by

professor Janez Močnik – an excellent teacher, a very well read person, and someone in love with professional work. His well-thought-through approach offered me new insight and gave me confidence and respect for continuous improvement in drawing. He also gave me guidance and advice, convincing me to enrol at the Academy of Fine Arts and Design. There, I studied in Andrej Jemec's class. I graduated and continued my postgraduate studies in graphic arts. I wrote my master's thesis under the supervision of Lojze Logar. At the same time, I started getting interested in video, lectured by videomaker and professor Srečo Dragan. I realized that certain perspectives I knew from graphics were also present in painting, I learned computer programming, which was useful in graphic arts, and this in turn brought me to computer enhancements, moving pictures, and multimedia experiments, which included audio, painting techniques, design possibilities and computer animation."¹

Sašo Vrabčič is one of those artists whose work was accepted as contemporary art early on, with his very first exhibition in 1997, *The Triennial of Contemporary Slovenian Art*, curated by Peter Weibel. Vrabčič's appearance on the Slovenian painting scene was both sudden and unmistakable, surrounded as he was by a group of colleagues (Žiga Kariž and Miha Štrukelj in the beginning, followed by Viktor Bernik, Gorazd Krnc, Arjan Pregl and others), likewise painters, all of whom reacted to the altered reality of their time:

"Machines and media completely altered our perception of the world. The media are mostly telemedia. Machines built for watching, from the TV to the telescope, mainly

¹ Tone Turičnik, "Tudi nepomembno ni vedno nepomembno", interview with Sašo Vrabčič, Tone Turičnik, Pogovori, Cerdonis, Slovenj Gradec, 2004, p. 143.

²

Peter Weibel, Igor Zabel, "Mediji, stroji, slike", *U3 - 2nd Triennial of Contemporary Slovenian Art*, Museum of Modern Art, Ljubljana, 1997 [accompanying text to the exhibition].

give the feeling of distance. Machines for producing images, from the camera to the computer, have created new types of images. A panel or oil painting is no longer the sole type of image. Photography, film, video and computers are new technical carrier media for images; the image has therefore jumped from its historic medium to the screen. There has been an explosion of the visual. Today, artists working with images can choose from hundreds of forms and hundreds of techniques. This explosion of the visual, this deluge of images, could lead to the devaluation of the picture. The process of producing a picture is increasingly becoming more important than the end-product itself, the image. Technical changes and improved accessibility have also affected traditional painting. It now also uses machines and technical media, such as photography and television. This kind of mediatized painting, which employs new production and composition techniques, serves to emphasize the machine-induced changes to our perception.

Vrabič's paintings (the works on display are *Izbrani ekrani* [Selected Screens, 1997], *Sanje diamanta* [A Diamon's Dreams, 1997], and *Nočna vožnja* [Night Ride, 1997]) are based on fragments, recorded from a television screen, and consciously evoke the tradition of using a heterogeneous field and the imagery of mass media in painting (Rosenquist, Salle, Rauschenberg).³

In 2001, Vrabič put on an exhibition titled *Sunday at Bežigrad* at the Bežigrad Gallery. From the very beginning, the author prepared his exhibitions as comprehensive projects. He found inspiration for his paintings in photographs, various printed media,

PHOTO ON PAGE 37:

Slike kot ekrani [Paintings as Screens], 1997, painting cycle, Museum of Modern Art (today MG +MSUM), Ljubljana, (part of the *U3* exhibition; curated by Peter Weibel)

on the Internet and sometimes in his "own mind". The multimedia exhibitions were created using improvisational techniques, even though they included paintings in addition to other media. He is able to do this by painting quickly:

"Vrabič employs a much faster process of making paintings than the photorealists we're used to, which also means the paintings have less detail. He calls this method of painting, also present in his earlier work, rapid realism. He says it represents the logical consequence of the fleeting reality established by the modern media."⁵

Sunday at Bežigrad was made up of four large canvases – one depicted a mobile phone, two depicted a football match, while the last one contained the image of an on-line prostitute and an interactive CD-ROM:

The mobile phone, sexuality, and football also represent phenomena associated with contemporary (mainly masculine) society. This is also stressed by the exhibition's title, *Sunday at Bežigrad*, referring to men participating in football matches at the Bežigrad Stadium. At the same time, he uses these representative motifs (the mobile phone, the World Wide Web, and football) to define Bežigrad itself as a microcosm, a nexus for the previously mentioned phenomena: the central football pitch in Ljubljana; the mobile phone offering communication everywhere and anywhere (incidentally, the headquarters of the largest Slovenian mobile phone operator, Mobitel, are also located close to Bežigrad); and virtual pornography, which can be accessed from the comfort of private apartments. The

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Maja Šuštaršič, Public: Private, Bežigrad Gallery, Ljubljana, 2001, p. 4.

PHOTO ON PAGE 38:

Part of the exhibition *Nedelja za Bežigradom*, [Sunday at Bežigrad, 2001], Bežigrad Gallery, Ljubljana, painting exhibition, curated by Miloš Bašin and Maja Šuštaršič

⁴ Polona Lovšin, "Mobitel, spolnost in nogomet", *Finance*, št.164, Ljubljana, 13.9.2001.

fact that the paintings appeal to the sociological and urban characteristics of this city district is also borne out by the CD-ROM.⁴

The *Great Expectation* poster was created for the MGLC (International Centre of Graphic Arts), which was exploring the idea of art outside galleries at the same time as the artist. An advertising poster of this size was still relatively new in Slovenia, a fact which the artist gladly took advantage of, placing an unexpected image on a public, media surface, which the public simply did not expect. It showed no less than what we invested in it, our own expectations:

"People who can remember at least twenty years back, can recall a kind of visual anxiety, which they felt when crossing the former Slovenian or rather Yugoslav border with the West. The main difference was that the, we could call it »visual design« or a visual impression of Slovenia was completely conservative, even drab, compared with the lively and vivid image of the world abroad. Like many other things here, we now have the opposite; in my experience, one rarely finds any city in the EU with more vivid and gaudy giant billboards, jumbo posters, ordinary posters (now slightly passé), electronic displays and, when all else fails, graffiti strewn everywhere. Under the pressure of capitalist logic, i.e. advertising and marketing, and the feeling of freedom, this drabness has been transformed into a media space, which unmistakably follows the principle of horror vacui. [...] The usual and most common type of design often aims to attract the attention of the potential viewer using a clever visual or linguistic idea. And yet, Vrabič's approach confines itself to the intimate world of small, everyday pleasures;

PHOTO ON PAGE 41:
Veliko pričakovanje, [Great Expectation, 2002], posters on advertising space in public spaces around Slovenia, a MGLC production, Europlakat, sponsored by: Prevent

it doesn't need advertising and goes against the logic of consumerism, the promotion of consumption, which was aptly defined by American artist Barbara Kruger in one of her truisms: »I shop therefore I am.«⁵

The *Privat(e)* exhibition, presented at the Gallery at Prušnikova 74, marked a turning point for Vrabič's work and was based on the author's personal crisis, experienced when juggling with modernity. Images, video, objects, sound – all these elements were based on the artist concentrating on the private, on thinking about escapism because of increasing obligations – the result of digitalization – and on displaying family intimacy to the public, a recurring theme in all of his work from then on:

"I'm very satisfied and proud of this exhibition, which had taken up a lot of my time. On the one side, it affords the spectator a somewhat nostalgic glimpse into private life; the chosen approach is at times quite subjective and must be observed from the sociological viewpoint. And yet on the other, the exhibition is more complex, since the psychological factor at play is escapism, i.e. escaping. While this does not describe all types of contemporary escape methods, just one – escaping into privacy, an escape from reality, from war and from public activities. [...] I wanted distance, escapism with an emphasis on subjectivity and nostalgia. I also wanted an intimate, more indirect relationship and interactivity with visitors."⁶

Obrigado meu amor (2005) was the title given to the exhibition at Mala Galerija in Ljubljana. Vrabič's central piece was a large painting on the gallery wall, while the exhibition as a whole used images and audio and centred on music, language, and ... Portugal:

⁵ Tomislav Vignjevič, "V nasprotju z logiko konzuma", *Delo*, Ljubljana 29 August 2002, p. 6.

⁶ Jaka Železnikar, "Sašo Vrabič", interview, *Mladina* [web access], Ljubljana 2003.

PHOTO ON PAGE 43:
Privat(e), 2003, Center and P74 Gallery (originally located at Prušnikova 74 in Ljubljana), Ljubljana, ambient with paintings, photographs, video and objects; curated by Tadej Pogačar

"Nina and I visited Lisbon because of Wenderson's film *Lisbon Story* (1994) and stayed in the country for a few weeks. We came into contact with Portuguese, but came nowhere close to mastering it. I'm absolutely fascinated by language, likewise with the music of the group Madredeus, Gilberto Gil, João Gilberto, and Tom Jobim. The difference between Brazilian Portuguese and Portuguese also seems significant to me. The Portuguese say that people from Brazil sing when they talk. Yes, the title of the exhibition and its background refer to my fascination with music and sound." [...]

"When working with vocals, I discovered a dimension that's basically the same as the one in visual artwork. My work involves the transformation of digital into analogue, electronic into acoustic. The translation of my voice, which mimics electronic rhythms, is an imperfect interpretation, just like in painting, only in this case, it involves electronic rhythms, musical patterns, mixing various sounds and the manipulation of frequencies without additional effects. These spontaneous interpretations involve a visible and audible illusion; it differs from a typical one by being imperfect, yet at moments it misleadingly imitates electronic media, a screen, electronic music and techno rhythms. The human hand and voice have their narrative power, while science gave us machines and androids. In fact, we've been talking to machines for quite a while now.

In an age of flawless digital photography, imperfection becomes alluring, human. Therefore older technology with all its flaws attracts us in a strange way. I most vividly remember films, which we used to pirate and copy onto VHS tapes by recording cinema screenings. I

PHOTO ON PAGE 44:

Obigado meu amor, 2005, Mala Galerija (now: Gallery Mak), Ljubljana, installation with paintings and audio; curated by: Bojana Piškur

remember them so well exactly because of the imperfect image; it made me follow the things happening in the dark image and the fuzzy sound even more attentively, since they represented an imperfect translation of the director's ideas. When making my video projects, I would therefore often record material, which had been re-recorded twice before, from the screen, editing it directly via the camera. In so doing, I created an effect, which was randomly produced by the TV and the magnetic tape itself. This is also used to create a random backlit-film effect in photography; in painting, it's used to create the effect of a blurry photograph; when working with sound, we can use it to create the splitting-frequency effect, the echo, and change the speed of the recording, which I create without any additional technology."⁷

Sašo Vrabčič prepared an exhibition encompassing three spaces and the outer walls of the former Ganes Pratt Gallery (at the time, it shared an outside yard with the Eurna Gallery) that focused on the duality of experiences. The project was based on the abduction of Madeleine McCann from a Portuguese seaside resort. Using numerous visual, audio, and lighting elements, the exhibition foregrounds mankind's fascination with childhood, which on the one side depends on the stereotypical image of childhood as a time of beauty, happiness, purity and helplessness, all the while having a much darker and macabre side:

"The first part of Vrabčič's atmospheric setting is more or less idyllic and seasonal. Vacations, beaches, swimming pools, frolicking in water, relaxed – even self-portrait – images of family life ... The happy and promising phrase: 'Let's go to the seaside', together with the images and

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Bojana Piškur, *Obigado meu amor*, interview published in the exhibition leaflet, Museum of Modern Art, Ljubljana 2005.

PHOTO ON PAGE 47:

Pogrešani ekrani [Missing Screens, 2007], Ganes Pratt Gallery, Ljubljana, ambient with paintings, video recordings, drawings, audio and objects; curated by: Petja Grafenauer and Primož Nemec

8

Vladimir P. Štefanec, "Izmuzljivost in levitve pomenov", *Delo*, Ljubljana 31 July 2007, p. 11.

sounds, transports us to an unknown beach, among playful children, cicadas and light-hearted melodies. The walls are covered by excerpts from their texts, which mostly foreshadow happiness and unforgettable adventures shared by couples; however, they can also be read differently, less innocently, with an implied meaning. In between, we see a few pictures taken from advertisements with a similar theme, while »story time« is rounded up with the image and mention of Red Ridding Hood, one of the most well-known and interpreted characters from children's literature. Red Ridding Hood is a contentious fairytale with potentially dark undertones; its presence is naturally due to much more than mere chance. Together with a few other elements, it infuses the idyll with a touch of unrest, a dark premonition, which becomes reality the moment the visitor steps into the next space.

Behind the Styrofoam-covered doors (an excellent sound insulator), visitors are confronted by a low, darkened, claustrophobic space, a kind of paedophile's den, which is intended to shock. Up to a point, it succeeds. It certainly transports us to another, much darker reality, which in addition to the images on the wall, also contains video recordings and the ominous sounds of locks being locked and unlocked. The video recording shows us what seems like a perfectly normal basement window with bars and the curtains drawn; however, it hides a great deal: the walls are also covered with songs, which take one a whole different meaning. Among the latter, we see shocking images – and yet these are just elements taken from everyday life. In their original context, they hardly shake up anyone. But now, we see them as part of a narrative, based on unprotected innocence, shattered innocence, abuse, lowly passions ..."⁸

"Sašo Vrabič managed to present one of his typical original ideas and conjure up an extraordinary atmosphere, encompassing everything from faithful painting photorealism to moving pictures and exhibited everyday objects. The *Missing (screens)* project is well conceived both in form and content; the latter is not completely unambiguous, offering ever new and subjective re-interpretations."⁹

His independent project *In situ* in Novo mesto represented another step forward in developing an atmospheric installation; in creating drawings from words; and, especially, in creating »in situ«, on the spot and instantly, fully knowing the artwork will disappear after the exhibition closes. The exhibition was created as an instant, direct response to the environment – the microlocation. Since Slovenian critique very rarely includes exhibits outside the capital, we only have the author's article to draw upon in *Mladina*, which perfectly sums up the situation:

"A few weeks ago, I spent a number of days at the Simulaker Gallery in Novo mesto, where I drew, painted and wrote directly on the gallery's walls, making objects on the spot (IN SITU) and »scanning« the environment around me. However, the theme of the exhibition was not solely limited to the act of freely creating on a »prestigious« ancient medium – a wall –, rather I was thinking about the human desire and all the emotions linked to it. The drawings and paintings, which form a kind of fragmented portrait of society, as seen in the moment of creation. In recent years, I began working directly on walls; I'm satisfied with being left with a

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Miha Colner, "Večznačne interpretacije", *Dnevnik*, Ljubljana 28 July 2007, p. 15.

PHOTO ON PAGE 50:

In situ, 2009, Simulaker Gallery, Novo Mesto, ambient with paintings, drawings, video recordings, sounds and objects; curated by: Matjaž Brulc

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Sašo Vrabčič, »Provokator«, Mladina, #38, Ljubljana, 24 September 2009, p. 58.

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Sašo Vrabčič, note from the exhibition "To delo prvo moje", Koroška Gallery of Fine Arts, 2007, artist's personal archive.

document after the exhibition closes, while the physical work fades away."¹⁰

Artwork, which was created and is still being created with family members as well as with other artists or friends from other professions, is a constant feature of Vrabčič's opus. He is happy to take part in creative collaborations; when the family grew to include his son, Erik, he also started taking part in the creative process of his father, the painter. The artwork created by the two Vrabčič family members were exhibited on several occasions: the first time was in Žalec, at the *Prijazno mesto* [Friendly City, 2006] exhibition, while the *Fairly Accessible Paintings* exhibition combined the work into a whole and was centred on family, in all its complex contemporary nature:

"During my 'collaborative work' period [2006, AN], I left my paid job at the *Koroška Gallery of Fine Arts* and dedicated my time to my child, Erik. I also managed to combine his playtime with my professional time. As a matter of fact, there isn't much difference between playing and serious work in this profession. The only difference is in age, experience, and the perception of time.

Erik's first canvases were created together with my own work, which means I adapted to the demands and wishes of my one-year-old. We shared a common canvas on the wall of our kitchen, which was always available for use. The canvases were also available to other random would-be-artists, so that Erik's mother Nina, his cousin Julija and probably other, who didn't sign their work, left 'hidden' traces on them."¹¹

Critics noticed that, during this period, he moved away from transmission (which is nevertheless still present in his work) to directness:

"This is an exhibition, where lines are spontaneously blurred, uninhibited 'desacralization' and 'irresponsible profanity' of haughty Art rain supreme, and where Art is happily associated with a game in which the artist is a child and the child the artist, while both are human beings without a leash, muzzle, tie or bib. Refreshing."¹²

The *Love and Fear* exhibition at the Velenje Gallery was architecturally adapted to fit the two-story gallery. The space below depicted love: out of all the sounds and music created and shared with his audience, which the author once integrated into his paintings or installations, we were left with only the scratching sounds of the gramophone, a love-forlorn kiss, while home was represented by a small cardboard house, only with a light shining inside. On the other side – on the upper floor – the images recounted the story of fear and an uncertain, precarious life, of brutal wars and wars of brutality, of people hiding their insensitivity behind screens; the story of a world inhabited by a suffering social subject.

"On 17 May 2016 at 9.10 p.m., Sašo Vrabčič posted a video on Facebook, which by 24 May was seen by 7600 people. More than most contemporary art exhibitions. Technology has provided visibility. [...] Everyone depicted on the paintings of this exhibition are on their mobile phones. Police officers and flâneurs, tourists and locals. Everyone immersed in their digital world. It also serves up a new language, one of OMGs, WTFs, LOLs and

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Vladimir P. Štefanec, "Brez povodcev, nagobčnikov, kravat in slinčkov, Sašo Vrabčič: Razmeroma dostopne slike, Galerija Eburna, Ljubljana 30 November–17 December 2010", *Delo*, Ljubljana 11 December 2010, p. 14.

PHOTO ON PAGE 57:

Ljubezen in strah [Love and Fear, 2014], Velenje Gallery, Velenje, atmosphere with paintings, drawings, video recordings, audio and objects; curated by: Petja Grafenauer

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Petja Grafenauer, "Mobilni flâneurji", *Far Away, so Close*, Galerija Kresija, Ljubljana 2016, p. 2.

similar signals, used to share not only information, but also emotions and reactions. The new reality is here, everywhere, even in Ljubljana. Look at Vrabič's paintings, the screen on your mobile phone, or simply look through the gallery window onto the street. This time, all the images tell a single story."¹³

All the images, sounds, and words contained in Sašo Vrabič's work form one narration. It is characterized by a strong desire to integrate himself within the process of creation. Vrabič's artistic practice is one of the few examples of its kind, in that it has nothing to do with the artist's ego trip. He shares intimate details with his loved ones and total strangers, invites them to take part in artistic processes, and proclaims – without shame or hiding in the foxholes of High Art – that art is more like IKEA than Swarovski crystal. It would therefore not be difficult for someone to accuse him of purposefully lowering the status and market value of visual art, especially painting. And yet, an overview of his projects shows us that such an accusation could not be further from the truth.

Sašo Vrabič's contribution to the world of Slovenian contemporary art from the end of the 90s to today is enormous. At the end of the 1990s, he and his fellow painters managed to find a place for painting in the new and altered technological, socio-political and cultural-political circumstances. He successfully integrated a number of media into his work, including sound and music. At the turn of the new millennium, he participated on collaborative projects with artists associated with the Ganes Pratt Gallery (Viktor Bernik, Jasmina Cibic, Ištvan Išt Huzjan, Jaša, Meta Grgurevič,

PHOTO ON PAGE 59:

Daleč stran, tako blizu, [Far Away, so Close, 2016], Kresija Gallery, Ljubljana, painting exhibition; curated by: Petja Grafenauer

PHOTO ON PAGE 60:

Sašo Vrabič and a tee shirt of his own design, prepared for the *Made in China* (2012) art project; screen printing on cotton shirts; project manager: Viktor Bernik; curated by: Petja Grafenauer

PHOTO ON PAGE 61:

Pričakovati Karin [Expecting Karin, 2008, charcoal on paper, 217 x 101 cm, Property of UGM, Maribor Art Gallery, Photo by: Damjan Švarc

Dejan Kaludjerović, Žiga Kariž, Arjan Pregl, Simone Settimo, and Urša Vidic).

Following this experience, he achieved the necessary know-how to independently create ambients, which are still based on paintings and drawings, but expanded and intertwined using words, sound, photography and moving image, as well as everyday or altered objects, which have an emotional or sensual effect on the spectator. His practice is contemporary and includes themes such as family, private life, contemporary feelings, the influence of new technologies on everyday life and precarious work. Through his creative work, little stories take on life and speak out with a beat that encompasses each and every one of us, struggling through a life of impossible choices, passed down to us by preceding generations, trying to build a better tomorrow for our descendants in this hectic life.

PHOTO ON PAGE 63:

Detail from the *Bad Boys, Bad Girls* spatial intervention (group multimedia project – Meta Grgurevič, Urša Vidic, Jasmina Cibic, Jaša, Žiga Kariž, Viktor Bernik, Mark Požlep, Simone Settimo, Ištvan Išt Huzjan and Sašo Vrabič), 2007, City Art Gallery, Ljubljana

PHOTO ON PAGE 64:

Pokaži mi denar [Show Me the Money, 2008], charcoal on wall, Ganes Pratt Gallery, Ljubljana (destroyed after the exhibition), from the *Down the Rabbit Hole* exhibition, curated by: Petja Grafenauer and Nadja Gnamuš

PHOTO ON PAGE 65:

CI-KEL-RA-ŽA (in collaboration with Manja Vadla), 2009, intervention in space and parts of each other's work, Vžigalica Gallery, Ljubljana

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— V popolnosti je praznina.
SAŠO VRABIČ

— There's an emptiness in perfection.
SAŠO VRABIČ

Sašo Vrabič, rojen leta 1974 v Slovenj Gradcu, se ukvarja s slikarstvom in drugimi oblikami vizualne in zvočne umetnosti. Študiral je slikarstvo in grafiko na Akademiji za likovno umetnost Univerze v Ljubljani in za svoje delo prejel že več nagrad in priznanj.

V dvajsetih letih ustvarjanja je imel 38 samostojnih razstav, sodeloval je tudi na skupinskih razstavah, projektih, projekcijah, delavnicah v 31 državah sveta, večinoma po Evropi, obeh Amerikah in Aziji. Več o njegovem delu lahko najdete na www.vrabc.si.

Pretoči si glasbo z razstave:
www.sasovrabc.bandcamp.com.

Sašo Vrabič, born in Slovenj Gradec in 1974, is a painter and also works with other forms of visual and sound art. He studied painting and graphic arts at the Academy of Fine Arts and Design in Ljubljana, receiving several awards and prizes for his work.

His twenty-year creative path spans 38 independent exhibitions; he also took part in group exhibitions, projects, screenings, and workshops in 31 countries, mainly around Europe, the Americas and Asia. You can find more information about his work by visiting www.vrabc.si.

Download music from the exhibition:
www.sasovrabc.bandcamp.com.