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Working title of the dissertation project: Provoking Art History: Ready-mades and Changes in the Perception and Status of Artworks (Reflections on 20th Century Art and Visual Culture in Croatia)

The Transposition of Artistic Phenomena from Metropolises to Eastern Europe

The primary subject of my dissertation is the phenomenon of the ready-made, more precisely the path it took to arrive in Croatia and its neighboring countries, the modifications it underwent through this process as well as its repercussions on the local art scene. The working title ("Provoking Art History: Ready-mades and Changes in the Perception and Status of Artworks (Reflections on 20th Century Art and Visual Culture in Croatia)") is indicative of a concern not so much with the ready-made as an artistic phenomenon in itself - although in-depth knowledge in this area is necessary for further interpretation - but with the ways in which it shook the artists', art institutions' and broader public's understanding of what an artwork is and/or should be.

It was to be expected that the appearance of the ready-made, or at least its variations, derivatives and associated ideas would disrupt the artistic *status quo* in some way. My research has led me to evaluate the oeuvre of those artists living and working in Yugoslavia, more precisely in Croatia, that came in contact with Duchamp himself or his ideas through various channels (written correspondences, publications, artworks, word-of-mouth exchanges, etc.) and appropriated some of them, adapting them to their personal ideas and goals, as well as those of their specific socio-political surroundings i.e. those of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, of which Croatia was a constituent at the time. It has also raised numerous questions concerning the nature of art and, more specifically, its nature and role in this Socialist context considering institutional restrictions, government policies with regards to art and ways that artists rebelled against them, or perhaps conformed to them.

The nature of the ready-made, or the "readymade strategy" and the "strategy of appropriation" (which would be broader and more appropriate terms in this instance) is surely provocative and held on to some of this galling character even after its transposition into Eastern European countries such as Croatia, Serbia and Slovenia. However, it is even more challenging to determine in what specific ways the phenomenon of the ready-made morphed and why it did

so in this process. An analysis of correspondences, artworks, indicative exhibitions, publications and other factual data, including recent exploration of the topic, can only take one's research so far. Certain questions remain unanswered, such as: Why did the idea of the ready-made arrive (in Croatia) when it did? What preconditions had to be set for this to be possible? Which protagonists can be identified and why them? How, to what extent and why do artworks produced by these artists differ from the Duchampian ready-made? And, last but not least, how did the creation of these artworks influence the local understanding of art and its further production by younger generations of artists?

Just as the ready-made irreversibly changed the concept of the artwork on a global scale, so its repercussions did on this slightly narrower diapasón. It is left to determine by whom and when, but even more importantly how and why.