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Dematerialization of the Art Object in 20th Century Croatian Art - Works in the Collections of Zagreb Museums

As one of the main procedures of modern art reduction starts with the avant-garde at the beginning of the 20th century and reaches the height of its developments with abstraction. Later on, during the second half of the 20th century, manifests itself in dematerialization as its ultimate form, the remaining material conception of the work of art.

Although the term dematerialization was introduced for the first time in 1968 in the context of conceptual art (Lippard), its emergence is much older, and its definition is not precisely outlined. Dematerialization is interpreted as a process of radical reduction of the art object on the one hand, and as an example of artistic work where the result is not the art object in the traditional sense on the other. It gradually brings down to: 1) reviewing the material nature of the work (processuality); 2) time (event); 3) idea, concept and language. As a radical procedure it changes the nature of the object of art, thus calling into question its sustainability, not only in the artistic and philosophical sense, but also in the social and political sense.

The first part of the doctoral dissertation will try to establish a conceptual and terminological definition of dematerialization in art in the context of its different interpretations (Lippard, Massota, Celant, Morris, Berger) depending on the context in which it occurs.

Then, the term will be applied to a part of Croatian art of the 20th century, which is called the *second line*, starting with the avant-garde influences of the 1920s, the enformel of the 1950s, the neo-avant-garde of the 1960s (Gorgona), concluding with conceptual, minimal and neo-conceptual art. At the same time, this corpus will be connected to comparative material of parallel events elsewhere (Yugoslavia, Europe, America).

On the aforementioned opus theses will try to build that the dematerialization of the art object was preceded by the reduction of form like the abstraction of historical avant-gardes and the entry into language as a form of expression. In the second half of the 20th century,

dematerialization appeared as an exit from the material concepts of the art object. Furthermore, the concept of emptiness, which dematerialization is trying to achieve, will be examined in the context of existentialism as the dominant philosophical direction of the that time. In addition, the thesis aims to establish how emptiness stands in relation to later conceptual processes of dematerialization that are linked to materialist theories. Finally, the thesis will examine the museum-gallery institutional relationship to dematerialized art which is becoming an integral part of art and museum collections and is thus change them, introducing time as the main determinant through new media, while in the museological sense, documentation is reaching a status equal to the of a works of art.

This topic requires an interdisciplinary approach and different tools in the interpretation of the work. Therefore, changes in art will be reflected on several levels: art-historical (A.H. Barr, M. Seuphor, Y.-A. Bois), media-technological (W. Benjamin, G. Deleuze, J.-F. Lyotard), philosophical (M. Heidegger, Ž. Paić). The methods of social history of art (T. J. Clark), semiotics (M. Bal, N. Bryson) and visual studies (W. J. Mitchell) will be included, as well as questions about the philosophy of art (A. C. Danto), the end of art (D. Kuspit), the end of art history (H. Belting).

Besides that, archival document, from a number of institutions in Zagreb will be researched (Museum of Contemporary Art, National Museum of Modern Art, Institute of Contemporary Art, Institute of Art History, Tomislav Gotovac Institute, galleries and private funds).

In this thesis, topic dematerialization of the artistic object in Croatian art will be the subject of wider research with the aim of questioning its role, no longer as marginal, but in some ways crucial in the development of Croatian modern art.