

EDITORIAL

This issue's phenomenon section focuses on the state of art and culture in the whole of contemporary Europe – not just the exclusive club of member countries known as the European Union – and also questions the state of European society in general, since the two are inextricably connected. This reflection upon where we are now and where we are heading was triggered, among other things, by two important events: the extensive debates surrounding the fortieth anniversary of May 1968; and the Slovenian Presidency of the EU 2008, the first presidency held by one of the new EU member countries. The latter occasion gave us an opportunity to ask ourselves again about the future of Europe and the position of art in its newly formed social context.

The effects of the current geopolitical situation on the new EU member countries are even more interesting to consider. Similarly to the Slovenia, these countries have gained access to the ever-expanding capitalist community and have also been marked by the experience of communism. What models and reforms control and dictate European cultural production and what has happened in the domestic cultural struggles that have taken place in the last seventeen years? What dilemmas dominate the cultural spaces of the countries of the previously Communist Eastern Europe as they position themselves in the greater cultural field of the EU? In both cases, we can see a discrepancy between inner struggles and regulation processes or, better yet, the 'normalization' processes that the new member states are subject to in adapting to the "common" European values. In opposition to the widely accepted belief that the category of Europe merely denotes the fortress of the EU, we were interested in the state of European democracy when it comes to the countries awaiting entry at the doorstep of the EU. Just what pressures do they face?

It has already been said that, with their 'Yes', the new EU member countries have actually managed to obtain a place in a new economic territory, for even from the viewpoint of the field of art and culture, the EU is mostly an economic category, which ever more clearly exhibits the shape of a neoliberal dictatorship.

The discussion on the future of Europe touches also upon the state of the field of art in post-Fordist society and is consequently related to the question of how to overcome the horizons of a capitalist regime by way of a social struggle. Or rather, how to organize a struggle for the reestablishment of art practices outside the structures and domination of the capitalist art market. It is a fact that, nowadays, we are witnessing the change of social relations to economic relations also in the field of art and culture. Capitalist production imposes on us ways of accepting and perceiving the self, the body, society and life; and is becoming an effective economy where intellectual production and creativity have the status of property.

Today, capital has "successfully" subjected the intellectual, creative part of social production; the field of art is increasingly more subject to commercialization at the local and global levels. Here, it is not only a matter of the phenomenon of the so-called cultural or creative industry; the seemingly less submissive art institutions and organizations are also caught in the commodified system of product exchange. But our purpose is not to moralistically condemn but rather to provide, through analysing social practices and phenomena as well suggesting possible solutions, an opportunity to spur discussions on new views on and possibilities for the category of Europe.

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