

P74 Gallery, Trg prekomorskih brigad 1, 1000 Ljubljana BÁLINT SZOMBATHY Telephotography of the 1980s

20 February – 16 March 2013

Exhibition opening: Wednesday, 20 February 2013 at 19:00h, P74 Gallery

Curated by: Tadej Pogačar

Bálint Szombathy's exhibition Telephotography of the 1980s is dedicated to the lesser known, yet very important and interesting segments of his creation: his experimentation with the medium of photography. During the "return to painting" era of the 1980s, Bálint Szombathy devoted himself to communication technology. As the graphic editor and designer of the Novi Sad daily newspaper Magyar Szó, he was attracted to a "special" medium of printing, which had yet to be properly exploited in the art world. This was the "facsimile telegraph", a machine which transmitted a newspaper image from a distant location to an editorial office with the help of telephonic impulses. These old "Mufax" machines, which used a rotating drum covered with brown paper, were replaced in the 1980s with a new generation of machines which reproduced photographs on a soft, white surface. Thus the technology saw both its rise and fall in the 1980s. Since the majority of photographs contained a number of errors and distortions, the device lost its primary informational function and at the same time gained an artistic one.

Consequently in the 1980s Bálint created an exceptional opus of appropriated telephotography. That work contains visual alterations, graphisme, micro structures, repetitive patterns often reminiscent of the techniques of collage, montage, etc., which were impossible to create using traditional means and machines. At the same time every telephotographic work was unique, its repetition impossible. In this way it was fundamentally different from a graphic work or a photograph, both based on methods of multiplication. Of course, we can't deny a noted measure of irony in the fact that the machine which was designed for operating completely in an information system, exhibits a "sensible" dysfunction.

Bálint Szombathy is a representative of the "new artistic practice" and stands for one of the most significant figures of contemporary visual arts in the region. Since 1969 his art represents an example of a distinct nomadic and hybrid artistic practice. He creates drawings, graphics, books, comics, photography, performances, interventions, visual poetry, conceptual art, etc. Szombathy in his actions and stagings most often connects avant-garde activism,

neo-avant-garde and post-conceptual art. Through semiotic investigation he represents how the mechanisms of production, exchange and consumption reconstruct meanings and values.

Bálint Szombathy has participated in many major international exhibitions in Europe, Canada and the US, among others on prestigious exhibitions of contemporary arts (Body and the East, After the Wall, Hungarian Contemporary Art) at the Ludwig Museum of Budapest, the Museum of Modern Art Ljubljana, and Moderna Museet, Stockholm. He is the recipient of numerous awards for artistic creation including being a multiple prizewinner at the Book Fair in Novi Sad and Belgrade. He lives and works between Novi Sad and Budapest.

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Contact

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Gallery hours

Monday–Friday 12:00–18:00 and by appointment

Saturday, Sunday closed