

After the lull during the 1972/73 period, some artists turned to new technical mediums — mostly video tape, in which there emerged some, though limited, possibilities for work. In their works there appeared the old dilemma of the extent to which the medium is the content of the message and the message the content of the medium, and how far the message should be adapted to the medium in order to be used properly. Attitudes differed: for some it was a means of disseminating their work in a different medium, others were interested in the character and scope of the medium, so that they immediately started to explore its fringe regions and possibilities, while yet another group combined it with their earlier experience and the characteristics of other phenomena of contemporary art to form complex approaches and multi-media works, in which the new technical devices were an integral and necessary but not the only part. Their works therefore show an analytical approach alongside combinations of a global one: of play and imagination or strict discipline and careful design and the possibility of expressing views and aesthetic messages.

Work in video tape, for which there were then only occasional opportunities and the conditions are far from satisfactory even now, required from the artists a clearly defined attitude to and within the medium. Video tape led to many theoretical discussions and even to a split of opinions among the professional circles associated with contemporary art.

Because of the announced mobility and the democracy that results from the comparative availability and the possibility of applying video tape as a medium of alternative information — the exhibition in Graz (Trigon 73), the theme of which was *The Audiovisual Message* offered an opportunity for several Zagreb artists to work in this field on the basis of their interests and the selection made by Vera Horvat-Pintarić, professor of visual communications at Zagreb University. For Boris Bučan this was simply a means of presenting his work *The Lie* to a wider audience. Goran Trbuljak saw it as an opportunity of presenting the scope of the new medium by using the principle of tautology. He filmed the ceiling with a camera turning in circles as long as the cable that was wound around a stand allowed. Somewhat later, in Motovun in 1976, he recorded the cutting of a tape on which the process of the cutting was being recorded at the same time. He thus brought the medium into the position of the subject within a very lucidly interpreted technological subject of presenting himself — by himself. Dalibor Martinis and Sanja Iveković in a joint work in Graz performed the interpolation by video tape into a local television programme, demonstrating its characteristics and the way of identifying the content and message best suited to it.

Boris Bučan, however, did not continue in video tape but resumed his exploration of two subjects he became interested in earlier: the analysis of the character of visual arts within the context of complex, for the most part social structures of different meanings, and of the character of the semiology of the sign in the context of simple artistic structures. The work, based on the latter group of problems and shown at the Trigon, is his first monumental work, not because of its dimensions, though they are worth noting too, but because of the character of the »flag« bearing the word LIE. He recorded it for documentary purposes in Graz with the text in German and in Zagreb with the text in Croatian together with an opinion poll about the impression it made on the audience. According to the propositions given by the artist, the work was much more complex to understand fully. He defined it as a consciously produced fake dating it in the future (1977) and inscribing the word »lie« in sharp antiqua lettering on soft silk. He dedicated it to his friends — all of which was most often unknown to the audience and is anyway only of secondary importance in comparison with the clearly inscribed word »lie«, which stands as a monument to meaning.

The same method of blowing up the sign and meaning to gigantic dimensions can be observed his first one-man show presented at the Gallery of Contemporary Art in 1976: on the roof of the gallery like that of a hospital, he placed a large Red Cross sign without defining its role (Fig. 107); as a slogan of the dimensions of the show he set up the inscription FACHIDIOT = STYLE at the end of the exhibits (Fig. 108).

The purity of these forms and notions has a suggestiveness unknown in recent art with the exception of land art projects. Presenting these general truths in a hitherto unknown interpretation, he has elevated them to contemporary monuments which are not dedicated to personalities or events but to the concept and understanding of the world around us.

At the same exhibition Boris Bučan also presented his thinking on the relationship between his creative personality and the surrounding world; by juxtaposing the meaning of the word and the meaning of the painting — ie in a montage of contrasting complex structures — he created a third, entirely new and specific artistic structure. The most clearly defined were his comments on Modern Art History, in which he interpreted his creative attitude towards the artists of earlier periods, showing the extent to which creation and joke may be or are one and the same thing. He demonstrated his right to creativity and the ability to market the products of imagination with a strong note of criticism and sarcasm in a group of works entitled *The Palmolive Museum*, in which he turned the products and symbols of the consumer society into artists and their works, according to the semantic key of contrasting two familiar structures. An illustration of this type of work is the title-statement: »My name is an artistic experience« and the signature: Mercedes Benz.

The point of departure for Dalibor Martinis and Sanja Iveković in their first work for video tape in Graz and later on was the actual observation of the situation, object or event — which have or are given special meaning though they are part of the general experience. The television programme, which they treat in a creatively critical way, was the starting point both in the work they produced jointly and in their subsequent individual works. They include *TV Timer* — a broadcast made in Graz, *Sweet Violence*, in which Sanja Iveković criticized the aggression of advertising by placing a few lines like bars on the screen during commercials, and *Still-Life* by Dalibor Martinis, an arrangement of a classical still-life with a TV set during a news broadcast recorded on tape, which at that moment was already obsolete and was getting more so with time.

The popular picture of the world and its expansion preoccupied Sanja Iveković in her work outside video tape as well. In Dalibor Martinis the bare picture of the banal details of everyday life remains deliberately subdued in its reduction, regardless of which medium he uses.

In her video tapes Sanja Iveković used and interpreted consumer culture objects and attitudes within the iconography of the woman's world: *Un jour v'olente* (Fig. 122), *Make up — Make Down, Instructions*. She included even her private world by using her photographs and reminiscences as patterns aimed at stimulating thought in *Reconstructions 1952—1976*, in which she recorded four circular views in the same room, each of which corresponds to a particular period in her life and in her learning to observe. A similar relation is recorded in a work in which she compares her private photographs with analogous ones in advertisements and women's magazines, shown at her exhibition called »Documents 1948—75«, at the Gallery of Contemporary Art in Zagreb. The sensibility and even sensuality felt in these works is more prominent still in her actions. At the Gallery of Contemporary Art in Zagreb she greeted the audience at the opening of her own exhibitions with her mouth gagged while the amplified beating of her heart could be heard over the loudspeaker; in Trieste, again with her mouth gagged, she communicated with the audience in an isolated room by the sense of touch only (Fig. 119). In two video performances, *Inter Nos* in Zagreb (Fig. 121) and *The Belgrade Performances* in Belgrade (Fig. 120), the subject of contact with the audience was transferred to the exploration of conventions such as the attitude to the television idol and to the official guest and friend. Sanja Iveković put herself in their position, and after exploring the possibility of medium contact, she looked into the possibility of direct contact with the audience in the gallery, in which the circumstances are determined by the artist herself.

Before and during her work on video tape Sanja Iveković also used other media in which she showed or critically interpreted the popular consumer culture world created by

advertising and the popular press. In these works she showed her own behaviour, analyzing and evaluating the dependence on contemporary conventions in the life of women (*The Double Life*, Fig. 118 and *The Tragedy of a Venus*). By adopting the principle of critical opposition, Sanja Iveković translated these colourful »pictures«, rich in attractive and superficial content, into the language of social phenomena in which the age and individuals clash.

Dalibor Martinis' work on video tape also shows a new approach to his own personality — as the subject of research and a medium of expression, ie the object in the capacity of medium, which is another form of treating the problem of identity. In the video-action »Portrait of Dalibor Martinis by Marijan Susovski« he drew his own portrait on the screen following Marijan Susovski's description. His portrait was assembled by the spectators by means of patterns for robot-portraits in actions performed by the audience (Fig. 125). He became part of the action of video tape when he recorder himself on the same tape as he was winding it around his head instead of on the recorder reel (*Open Reel*, Fig. 124), or when he recorder himself taking a »shower« under the video rays of the same camera (*Videoimmunity*, 1976). In these, like in his first works, the basic characteristic is restraint bordering on dryness. This sophisticated approach became so much part of him that the recorded picture, in spite of its illustrative character, became equally dry as his most restrained works produced by means of printed forms and other printed matter that exist in the organization of modern urban life, shown at the exhibition *Falsifications* at the Gallery of Contemporary Art. In the search for methods of his own, Martinis explores in a peculiar way the functioning of old and new procedures in visual arts. The most important part of this work are the constructions and propositions that he gives for the functioning of his own processual works, ei for their re-examination in a given medium.

After the withering away of the TOK only Vladimir Gudac continued its activity. His first individual works were shown in the exhibition on perspective illusion, in which Gudac wanted »to prove to himself and to others that he can work in the classical medium and that he is a master of his craft«. He then started to collect photographs documenting the things and events around him and wrote theoretical texts of a sociological and culturological nature, while continuing to »learn to look«. He presented the first results of that period in a series of posters inspired by great novels and summed them up in the exhibition »In Spite of the Fact« (Figs. 115—117) shown at the Gallery of Contemporary Art in 1976. In the posters he tried to express his critical attitude towards the phenomena that have characterized human behaviour from time immemorial, commenting on them by means of contemporary equivalents (two photographs of a nuclear explosion as an illustration of *Crime and Punishment* (Fig. 114), a gun and a knife for *War and Peace* and the body of a pin-up girl and the corpse of a soldier for *The Naked and the Dead*). In his further exploration of the highly charged semantic media he used a simple pictorial-linguistic structure which he presented in his »files«.

Consistently following the principle of work without originals, copies or reproductions, in which every experience created in the mind of the audience is the original, Vlado Gudac withdrew all his works from sale so that they could not be purchased for the collection of some institution, inviting all those who are interested to come to see them in his flat.

His contrasting of famous pairs or his selection of »singles« in text and pictures have been elaborated to the point at which it is possible to read the message without hesitation or special knowledge. The ease with which his works can be understood stands in contrast to the inevitable barrier in the intellectual type of the more recent art, particularly conceptual art. Depending on the ability of the audience, the »reader«, the different strata of the wholes organized by Gudac can be interpreted. The work then becomes an instruction to the spectator, who must realize his own version of the work's form and content. Gudac offers the finished structure, which, while directing our thoughts to a certain field, contains the creative attitude of the artist and poet who doubts the irrefutability of facts. — This is also characteristic of the works of other Zagreb artists who are interested in similar problems.

Gorki Žuvela also belongs to the circle of Zagreb artists both by his early and later works as well as by the place of his exhibitions, in spite of the fact that he returned to Split after graduating from the Zagreb Academy of Visual Arts, where he combines artistic work with that of art teacher and designer.

All Žuvela's works show an interest in the social aspects of art that began in his urban projects. Within the artistic activity in the narrower sense the continually looks for unusual contents and mediums. He does not strive for consistency or homogeneity — but nevertheless achieves entirely new meanings in familiar forms. For his one-man show at the Gallery of Contemporary Art in 1976 he chose the medium of the envelope (like mail art) to emphasise, in a montage of addresses of senders and addressees, the contacts and tensions brought about by letters that can change the course of the policies and even that of the history of some countries. In a work that reminds us of Carl Andre he painted a number of slabs red and called them »A Piece of the Red Square — dedicated to good communists«, thus calling forth various social and cultural associations. Like Andy Warhol in his repeated maculature portraits, he »treated« Stalin and Kissinger, calling attention to the historical developments associated with the activity of these two personalities.

He imitates Japanese paintings on silk in his mock Letters of Thanks addressed to the countries which are in the possession of art works and monuments that were simply removed from their countries of origin. In a number of works he takes everyday objects and presents them in a new context created by his own interpretation; for instance, *The Beautiful*, *The Ugly* and *The Important Cube* are in fact three equally worm-eaten wooden cubes, by means of which the artist expresses his doubt in the *a priori* values determined by convention.

Though his works belong to the field of visual arts, their meaning and functioning result from the definitions of a new language of objects and words.

Žuvela's artistic activity takes on many different forms: he conducted an opinion poll on errors as a motoric factor, he has recorded topical and concrete social subjects on posters for cultural events, he has participated in the production of »performances« in museums and in other forms of animation and production of free projects in the Brothers Borozan Workshop, a Split based organization set up by younger artists, whose concern are new forms of expression. The transformation of mental processes into concrete forms and even documents is Žuvela's attempt at combining art and everyday life, which, in his view, is dominated by politics.

He has shown, more than anyone else, that for an artist, politics too is a subject for analysis, concluding that even truths only recently considered as absolute are subject to change and that all values should therefore be continually re-examined.

There are many of other young artists who started to work around the same period as those described above, but only a few embraced the new trends and attitudes of the 1970's. For instance, Vladimir Bonačić transferred his luminous and dynamic objects to the urban environment, while Vladimir Petek in his work as photographer, based mainly on neo-constructivist and stage experience, realized the need for recording on film the activity of the TOK group with whom he signed the works for a time, though he was never directly involved in their creation.

Of all the artists who have explored the possibilities of modern technical devices, only Ladislav Galeta has succeeded in moving away from the concepts of the past decade. He has developed a sensibility and a totally new activity within the actual problems of an art which does not content itself with the fascination of the technical effect but uses technical devices only as an alternative medium for subjects that may be expressed when necessary by using the most sparse media (Fig. 111).

Galeta's works are not illusions — on the contrary, they are the realization of illusions and the materialization of the imagined — outside the space and time that we are familiar with. The solutions that he chooses for the materialization