TONI MEŠTROVIĆ

19.11. — 5.12.2020.

GALIĆ SALON

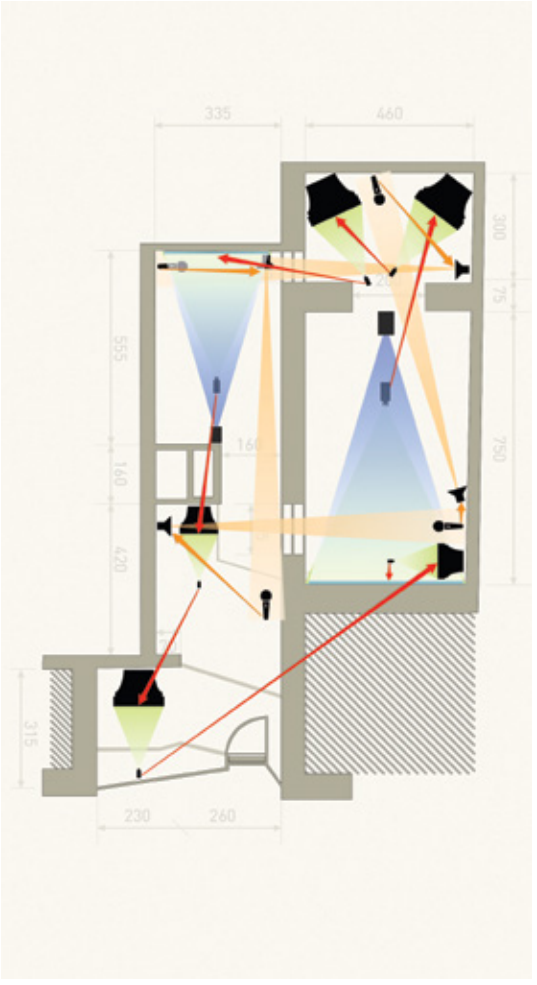
NADZIRANJE NADZORA

U suvremenom svijetu premreženom novim informacijskim i komunikacijskim tehnologijama svjesnost o prikupljanju, pohrani i dostupnosti najrazličitijih informacija postaje sve zastupljenija tema, kako u javnom diskursu, tako i u umjetnosti. Sve više smo svjesni da informacije o našem kretanju, zadovoljavanju osnovnih potreba preko usluga i robe koju konzumiramo, do ljudi s kojima komuniciramo, izlaze iz sfere privatnog u javni prostor te da posljedično gotovo u potpunosti gubimo kontrolu nad njihovom distribucijom. Kontrolu, na osnovi prikupljenih podataka, preuzimaju strukture koje manipulacijom mogu utjecati na ekonomski, društveni i politički aspekt života svakoga od nas. No, što se u tom procesu događa sa samim informacijama i tehnologijom kojom se prenose? Tko ili što kontrolira načine na koje se prikupljaju i pohranjuju? Jesmo li konstantno pod nadzorom moćnih pojedinaca/grupacija ili je kontrola prepuštena tehnologiji u uvjerenju da su početne postavke po kojima je ona osmišljena potpuno stabilne? Što se uistinu događa s informacijom dok se filtrira kroz sam medij koji ima vlastitu logiku i zakonitosti?

Upravo se ovom problematikom bavi Toni Meštrović u najnovijoj instalaciji nazvanoj *Nadziranje nadzora* kojim nastavlja svojevrsni eksperiment započet u projektu *Hakiranje sustava* koji je 2018. godine bio predstavljen u Galeriji umjetnina. Tada je u autor u čitavom izložbenom prostoru postavio interaktivnu zvučnu i videoinstalaciju zatvorenog kruga koja je kao medij koristila muzejski sustav video nadzora. Iako je taj sustav u osnovi benigan i ne zalazi u privatnost pojedinca, Meštrović ga je iskoristio kako bi kroz iskustvenu komponentu isprovocirao posjetitelja da izađe iz razine apstraktne informacije, te da kroz imerzivnu instalaciju na doživljajnoj razini u potpunosti percipira problem nadzora. Ovoga puta, u *Nadziranju nadzora* autor posjetitelja stavlja sa strane i fokusira se na samu tehnologiju, odnosno na ono što se s njom događa nevezano od potencijalnih posjetitelja izložbenog prostora.

Kroz galeriju postavlja naizmjenično nadzorne kamere koje snimaju monitore ili projekcije, vezujući jedan element na drugi dok se ne vrati na početnu poziciju, odnosno na mjesto na kojem prva kamera snima sadržaj s posljednjeg monitora. Isto ponavlja i sa zvučnim segmentom instalacije — usmjereni mikrofon spaja na usmjereni zvučnik, čiji zvuk potom registrira sljedeći mikrofon i tako dalje sve do zatvaranja kruga. Mediji koji registriraju i reproduciraju signal tako postaju samodostatni jer provociranjem jedan drugog stvaraju sadržaj neovisno o onome što se događa izvan postavljenog kruga. Tehnologija se u osnovi počinje baviti sama sobom. No ipak, posjetitelj, iako nepotreban za realizaciju rada, svojom prisutnošću utječe na audio–vizualni feedback sustava i ostvaruje interakciju sa samim radom pojavljujući se u video slici, te unoseći zvukove u zatvoreni sustav. Ovakvim dodavanjem sadržaja se povećava mogućnost da se jasnije percipira promjena koja se dogodi od početnog impulsa do onoga što na kraju dobivamo kao informaciju.

Iako se *Nadziranje nadzora* bavi uistinu gorućom i suvremenom problematikom, metodološki i idejno Meštrović se vraća na samo izvorište razvoja video umjetnosti i u tom je smislu ovaj rad, kao i ranije spomenuto *Hakiranje sustava*, svojevrsni *hommage* sedamdesetim godinama prošlog stoljeća. U tom se formativnom razdoblju video umjetnost nastojala definirati u razlikovnom odnosu prema medijima filma ili televizije. Kao jedna od specifičnosti medija videa istakla se mogućnost korištenja *feedbacka* koji je izvorno preuzet od televizijske i radijske tehnologije, pri čemu je u tim izvornim medijima bio tretiran kao smetnja, odnosno je bio u potpunosti nepoželjan. No, umnažanje slike ili zvuka u video umjetnosti je rezultiralo nekim od najzanimljivijih videa zatvorenog kruga



kojeg su promovirali pioniri video umjetnosti poput Nam June Paika, Bruce Naumana ili Peter Campusa. Upravo na *feedbacku* i na analognoj tehnologiji Meštrović gradi oba spomenuta rada, pri čemu nekontrolirano umnažanje slike i zvuka postaje osnova prenošenja temeljne ideje rada. Značaj i relevantnost ovakvog postupka pokazuje autorovo razumijevanje da svojevrsni citat jednog od najzanimljivijih aspekata povijesti medijske umjetnosti može pružiti čitav set alata kojima umjetnik proizvodi radikalno nove strukture promatranja i nove kontekste korištenja video slike i zvuka u suvremenoj umjetničkoj praksi.

— Jasminka Babić

Biografija

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Toni Meštrović (Split, 1973.) je multimedijski umjetnik koji najčešće djeluje u formi video i zvučnih instalacija. Diplomirao je 1999. na Odsjeku za grafiku Akademije likovnih umjetnosti u Zagrebu gdje se bavio grafikom, skulpturom i instalacijom. Zbog interesa za elektronske audiovizualne medije 1997. studira Video/Digital Imaging na International Sommerakademie für Bildende Kunst u Salzburgu. 2004. završio je dvogodišnji poslijediplomski studij Medienkunst na Kunsthochschule für Medien, Köln gdje istražuje u videu, zvuku i video/zvučnim instalacijama osobnu percepciju mora i otoka uz koji je odrastao. Svojim povratkom u Hrvatsku 2004. godine nastavlja svoje umjetničko istraživanje u kojem se tematski bavi kulturnim nasljeđem, identitetom, te tranzicijskim promjenama na prostoru Dalmacije. Neke od kontinuiranih preokupacija Meštrovićeva rada su asimilacija linearnog i cikličnog vremena, dokidanje naracije na koju smo naviknuli te tema promjene, u širokom rasponu, od bilježenja isparavanja vode u closed circuit video instalaciji, do komentara društvenog konteksta.
Od 1992. aktivno sudjeluje na skupnim i samostalnim izložbama te video festivalima u Hrvatskoj i inozemstvu. Dobitnik je više stipendija i nagrada, poput nagrade za mladog umjetnika Hrvatskog društva likovnih umjetnika u Zagrebu 2007., i druge nagrade na izložbi T–HTnagrada@MSU.hr 2013. godine. Živi i stvara u Rijeci i Kaštelima, a predaje u zvanju izvanrednog profesora na Odsjeku za film i video Umjetničke akademije Sveučilišta u Splitu.

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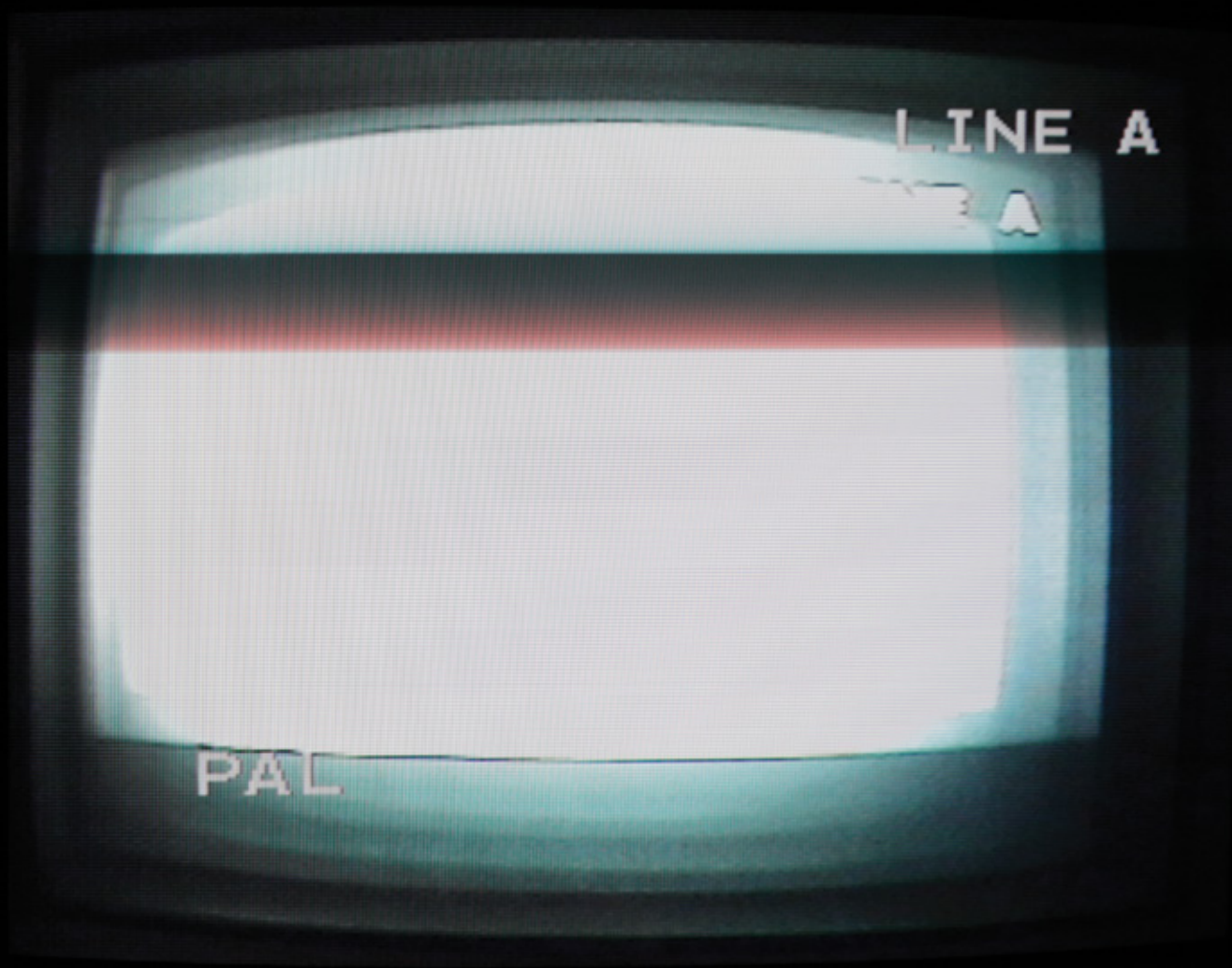
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TONI MEŠTROVIĆ

19.11. — 5.12.2020.

GALIĆ SALON

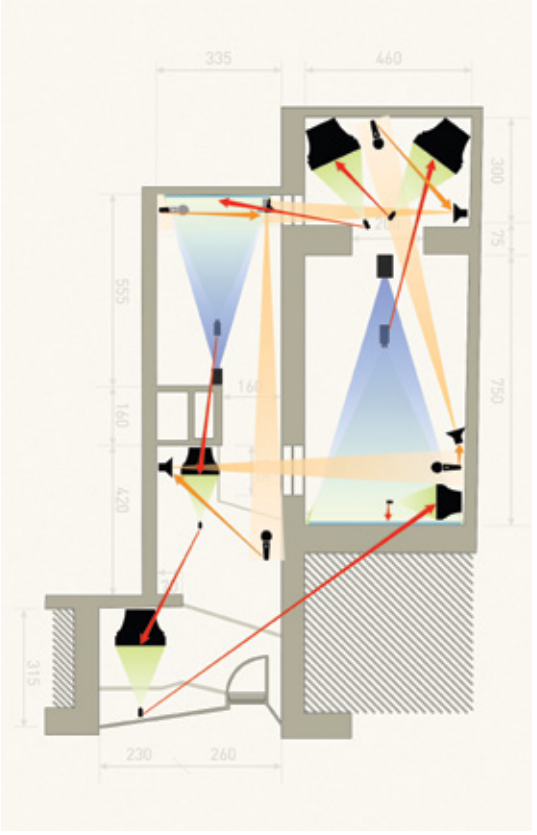
SURVEILLING SURVEILLANCE

In the contemporary world, enveloped in a network of new information and communication technologies, the awareness of the gathering, storage, and availability of the most diverse types of information is becoming an increasingly represented topic, both in public discourse as well as in art. We are becoming ever more conscious that information regarding our whereabouts, the satisfaction of our basic needs via the services and goods we consume, and the people we communicate with, go beyond the personal domain and extend into the public space. As a result, we almost entirely lose control of the distribution of such information. Structures which, through manipulation, can affect the economic, social, and political aspects of each of our lives now seize control based on the data they've gathered. Yet, what happens in this process to the very information and technology through which it gets transferred? Who or what controls the means by which information is gathered and stored? Are we constantly under the surveillance of powerful individuals/groups or is control surrendered to technology under the premise that the settings in its initial design are completely stable? What is truly happening to information as it gets filtered through a medium which has its own logic and laws?

It is precisely these issues that concern Toni Meštrović in his most recent installation entitled *Surveilling Surveillance* with which he resumes a kind of experiment begun in the project *Hack the System* which was presented in the Museum of Fine Arts in Split in 2018. On that occasion, the artist set up an interactive closed-circuit audio and video installation in the entire exhibition space. As its medium, it used the museum's video surveillance system. Although this system is essentially benign and does not invade the individual's privacy, Meštrović used it to provoke the museum-goer by means of an experiential component. In doing so, the visitor could rise above the level of abstract information and, through this immersive installation, perceive the problem of surveillance in its entirety on an experiential level. This time, in Surveilling

Surveillance, the artist disregards the visitor and focuses on the technology itself, or rather on what's going on with it, independently of the potential visitors in the exhibition space. Throughout the gallery space, he intermittently places surveillance cameras which record screens or projections, connecting one element to the next, until they make a full circle, back to the place where the first camera is recording the content on the last screen. He does the same with the audio segment of the installation — he connects a microphone pointed at a speaker, which is then directed towards the next microphone which picks up its sound, and so on until the circle is closed. The media that register and reproduce a signal thus become self-sufficient because, by provoking one another, they create content regardless of what is happening outside of the assembled circle. Basically, the technology starts to refer to itself. However, the visitors, although unneeded for the work's realization, influences the audio–visual system of feedback with their presence and interacts with the work itself by appearing in the video image and bringing sound into the enclosed system. With this addition of contents, there is a greater chance that the change which occurs from the initial impulse to what we, in the end, receive as information is more clearly perceived.

Even though *Surveilling Surveillance* deals with a truly pressing and contemporary problem, Meštrović methodologically and conceptually returns to the very source of video art. In that sense, this work, like the aforementioned *Hack the System*, is to some extent an hommage to the 1970s. During this formative time, video art aimed to define itself based on its differential relationship towards the media of film and television. As a specificity of the medium of video, the possibility of using feedback, originally taken from television and radio technology, stood out. But within these original media,



it was treated as a nuisance; it was completely undesirable. Still, the multiplication of image or sound in video art has resulted in some of the most interesting closed-circuit videos promoted by pioneers of video art such as Nam June Paik, Bruce Nauman, or Peter Campus. Meštrović builds both of the previously mentioned artworks precisely on feedback and analogous technology. In doing so, a rampant multiplication of image and sound becomes the basis for the transfer of the fundamental idea of this piece. The meaning and relevance of such a process reveal the artist's knowledge of the fact that quoting one of the most interesting aspects of the history of media art can provide an entire toolkit with which the artist produces radically new structures for the observation and new contexts for the use of video images and sound in the contemporary praxis of art.

—Jasminka Babić

Biography

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Toni Meštrović (Split, 1973) is a multimedia artist working predominantly in form of video and sound installations. He graduated with a Graphic Arts degree from the Academy of Fine Arts in Zagreb in 1999, where he produced graphic arts, sculpture and installation. Due to his interest in electronic audio-visual media, he studied Video/Digital Imaging at the International Summer Academy for Contemporary Art in Salzburg in 1997, and completed a two-year postgraduate diploma in Media Art at the Academy of Media Arts, Cologne in 2004. Video, sound and audio-visual installations produced during Meštrović's postgraduate studies explore his personal perception of the sea, and the island where he grew up. After his return to Croatia in 2004, his work deals with themes of cultural heritage, identity and the transformations that have occurred in Dalmatia due to the period of transition. Some of his continuous thematic preoccupations are the assimilation of the linear and cyclical time and the exhaustion of a type of narrative that we are used to and expect in our quotidian lives, as well as a wide range of the topic of change, either as a record of evaporation of water like in a closed circuit video installation, or as a commentary of social change.
Since 1992, he has taken part in group and solo shows, as well as video festivals, in Croatia and internationally. He has been awarded scholarships and awards, such as the Young Artist Award by the Croatian Artist Association and the Second Prize at the T-HTaward@MSU.hr exhibition in 2013. He lives and works in Rijeka and Kaštela, and is Associate Professor at the Arts Academy University of Split, Department of Film and Video.

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