

The Wolf Artists in Residence: Lenka Đorojević: Cube No. 837456-9305.00 and Lenka Đorojević & Matej Stupica: D BUK

There is no true history, only points of view: Characteristics of graphic art and the book as a formal tool to relay complexity

Lenka Đorojević is a visual artist, theatre set designer, curator, editor and reviewer of contemporary art based in Ljubljana, Slovenia. Her art practice takes on different art forms; since she has a master's degree in graphic art this multiplicity is often present via various aspects in her work. She has been developing many complex art works in the form of artistic events, art performances or installations presented at numerous exhibitions.

On several occasions she has collaborated with Matej Stupica—also a visual artist using various formats of artistic expression. Besides exhibiting extensively they are also among the most active members of the Slovenian contemporary art scene and they function as a link with artists of a younger generation. As such, they focus on evolving new modes of collaboration and self-organization among protagonists of the contemporary art scene, differentiated from the standard practices of today's very precarious art system. They are co-founders of the OFFTIR Association for Visual and Sound Art, whose first public show was the *Liminale* project shown at the 7th Triennial of Contemporary Arts in Slovenia. OFFTIR is an artists' association with two main focuses: OFF operates with visual and TIR with sound production. The current conditions for participation in and the production of culture forms a kind of cohesive thread for their artistic language. In their modes of operation the DIY (do it yourself) and DIWO (do it with others) principles prevail in how they collaborate, communicate and organize themselves. Re-use and recycling of materials and flexibility in searching for new possibilities of artistic creation, enable them to have intellectual independence and self-sufficiency.

For *The Wolf's Artist in Residence* feature, we have selected two art works that are innovative and multilayered examples of contemporary re-use of graphic art and the book.

Lenka Đorojević, *Cube No. 837456-9305.00*, 2013
Graphic Space Installation

Two videos taped at the Department of Immigration at the Ljubljana Administrative Unit, duration: 6 min.

Sound composition of the interior based on the artist's proposal: Staš Vrenko

Cube No. 837456-9305.00 is an installation composed of outer and inner parts. The outer part is composed of 48 prints (50 x 70 cm in size) created by a combination of graphic techniques (aquatint, etching, drypoint, collagraphy, vernis mou), painting techniques, collages, assemblages and video, as well as commercial reproduction techniques (silk screen, photocopying, digital print).

An integral part of *Cube No. 837456-9305.00*'s interior is an interactive sound and light aspect. The walls of the interior are covered in wallpaper showing a barcode found on the numbered tickets distributed in the Department for Aliens' waiting room. The floor is covered in zinc panels (matrices of prints which make up *Cube No. 837456-9305.00*'s exterior). The contrast between the exterior and the interior echoes the contrast between the positive and the negative used in graphics (matrix vs. print).

The use of numbers implies an ironic view of the significance of the original (the artist always signs her prints with a different number) and points to the number as a sign of control over man (personal no., tax no. etc.). This is even more evident in the interior of *Cube No. 837456-9305.00* where images of faces are repeated as numbers (barcodes). The contrast between the interior and the exterior of *Cube No. 837456-9305.00* is achieved and enhanced by transiting from an oversaturated outside to an empty inside. Sound, noise and light are triggered by the visitor's movement and are turned off when the visitor stands still. The silence and darkness that follow enable the visitor to identify with the present moment and encourage his or her own associations.

By using several different media in setting up her installation, the artist tries to penetrate the essence of graphics with its special characteristics (chance, error, intention, the physical effort of printmaking, the relationship between the original and the copy, reproduction, etc.) inherent to the technique, but also inseparable from the ways it can express meaning. She uses these characteristics as a formal tool with which she relays complex concepts, ranging from her personal story to the role of the individual and its footprint in today's world.

Lenka Đorojević & Matej Stupica, *D BUK*, 2013

D BUK is an artist's book composed from 35 double-sided prints with dimensions 17 x 12 x 55 cm, the last one marking the length of a metal rod to which the prints are attached, created by a combination of graphic techniques (assemblage, etching, drawing, painting etc.), bound by a metal ring. *D BUK* is formed as a circle and, as such, questions the form of an ordinary book and the characteristics of the medium.

Books exist, by definition, as a form with a beginning and an end—which defines it as a ‘fact’. The content is coded for reading, usually from left to right, page by page, from beginning to the end. In this sense, its form doesn't allow for an alternative way of reading.

D BUK is made to allow for these alternative ways of reading. In fact, the distinction of the ‘proper’ and the ‘alternative’ way of reading disappears. *D BUK* has no beginning and no end. With its placement in space it exists like a floating planet which must be explored. A ‘factual’ reading is formed by each reader and his or her way of reading. The circle forces the viewer to intervene, to walk around, to search for meanings, to become a part of it.

The creation of *D BUK* started because of the artists’ physical separation (they studied apart in Ljubljana and Prague). They communicated via Skype, which proved to be crucial for the development of *D BUK*’s concept and content. Besides the collective evolution of their ideas, their conversations’ concrete results were drawings—individual indexes of thoughts, feelings and being. But one consequence of Skyping was disturbance: glitches and deformations of information. Mediated through virtuality, this became the so-called virtual counterpart, deformed new reality, which sometimes resulted in a completely new image, often making the original completely unrecognisable. The artists used several kinds of printing techniques and printed materials as the basis for undertaking further interventions in their dialogue.

By moving around *D BUK*, one must always take a point of view. To observe and identify the content from different perspectives, as opposed to an ethnocentric, colonialist point of view. There's no correct globalist view, as there is no right and accurate history. Only opinions trying to be facts.

Simona Žvanut

L&M: *Guide to the project D BUK*, 2013, Lenka Đorojević: *Grafika regeneracije*, 2013. Thanks to Anja Kovač