

Siniša Labrović
Useless, Leisure and Apple

Exhibition lasts: 21 June – 18 July 2014
amt _ project
Štetinova 1, Bratislava

Siniša Labrović /1965/ was not originally trained as a visual artist; he took a degree in Croatian language and literature at the Faculty of Philosophy in Zagreb and took up an artistic career only later in 2000.

In Croatia, Labrović, is well known to local audiences as a socially engaged performer who by his artistic practice addresses, reflects and questions a wide range of serious issues - from the position of the artist in society, to politics or mass media and mainstream television's impact on people - present in the contemporary society in Croatia.

As a performer he naturally centers his artistic practice on his body, which becomes his tool, medium and artwork at the same time. Using his body to express ideas he does not restrain himself from often drastic moments or interventions into his own flesh (e.g. cutting the form of a smile on his face with a razor blade in *Smiley, 2008*, or using parts of his skin surgically removed and affixed to three canvases in a series of "pseudo-paintings" entitled *Abstraction: Artist selling his skin for cheap, 2010*). Despite this radical element, his works usually feature simplicity of form, which, when digging deeper, hide more complex issues lurking beneath the surface, often accompanied by a wry humour and irony.

He is also not indifferent to the political climate in Croatia. In 2010 he challenged Božo Biškupić, the then minister of culture, to a boxing match, for which he obviously did not turn up and therefore, as a winner, Labrović declared himself a new minister. Later, meeting Biškupić at his office, he returned to his career as an artist. In 2005, in his work *The Flock*, casting seven sheep as main protagonist of his "show", he parodied the shallow and superficial culture of TV reality shows and how it permeates everyday lives of people from the former Eastern Bloc. One of Labrović's flagship works, best demonstrating his artistic approach is a performance *Perpetuum Mobile, 2009*, which in an ironic way addresses the artist's position in society, his desire to live on his art. Perpetual efforts to produce work and feed himself, often existing in a vicious circle, were by Labrović presented in an impossible attempt to drink his own urine, straight from his penis while standing naked on stage in front of the audience.

Labrović's artistic practice, though romantic in a way, however, often discomforts audiences especially by their unexpected involvement in his performances or by introduction of issues, which are either a poignant reminder of Croatian past or its current status quo.

Labrović has participated in many shows and events home and abroad. In 2009 at the 11th Istanbul Biennial he presented the work (book) „Lisansustu Egitim/Postgraduate Education. In 2012 he represented Croatia at the 13th Venice Architecture Biennale, titled Common Ground, together with Pula Group, Hrvoslava Brkušić, Igor Bezinović and Boris Cvjetanović.

Katarína Slaninová

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