

For Our Economy and Culture, Slovenian Pavilion at the 55<sup>th</sup> International Art Exhibition La Biennale di Venezia, editor's note  
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National presentations at the Venice Biennale always bring with them the disclosure of art's positioning and value within specific countries. Whether it is understood as an independent field where a selection panel made from art professionals decides upon the commissioner, the project and the artist/s or it is delegated by national representatives as is often the case with countries where the art sector is underdeveloped or not hand in hand with the capital. The relevance of this question does not lie as much within the problematics of geo-politics as it does within soft-power. What is more, we could easily argue that the Venice Biennale is one of the best case studies for measuring soft-power index. Each selection process encounters lobbies and politics, whether they are delegated by the art sector or the government. What we do not know about, are all the power struggles behind these selection processes, the decisions overturned and committees resolved.

Slovenia's representation at the 55<sup>th</sup> Venice Biennale presents the project *For our Economy and Culture* by the artist Jasmina Cibic that enters the debate directly with the mechanisms of the national selection itself. For her project Cibic has researched the history of Slovenia's relationship between the nation-state and its myth-making tactics from 1930 onwards. She has been researching the formations of national myths and has developed her project in collaboration with a vast number of professionals from fields as various as entomology, scientific illustration, architecture, typography, philosophy and art. The project *For our Economy and Culture* is a culmination of a lengthy research process, each of the invited contributors playing a vital role in its outcome. As factories and craftsmen employed in the project are carefully selected by the artist, for similar reasons she invites specific academic researchers and writers – for the relevance of their own history and context. The visuals and essays presented in this publication all illustrate the nature of Cibic's work, a performative mode of operation, where the delegation she employs manifests itself in

objects as well as textual pieces. Whereas the visual part of the publication tries to narrate the development of the visual structure of the project from the beginnings to its final execution, the textual pieces try to point out and analyse the major themes that the project addresses. In her text, Dr Petja Grafenauer, freelance curator and writer, outlines the development of the strategies that Cibic applies in diagnosing the neuralgic spots of intersection between the ideology of image-making/selecting and the politics of their display. This dimension of Jasmina Cibic's work is further developed in the curatorial text by Tevž Logar, which through the dissection of particular elements of the artist's biennale project identifies her desire to, on the one hand, shed light on the underlying ideological apparatus and on the other, offer the spectator a potential point of emancipation from the set dispositive of the visible. Questioning the visible, or to be more precise, the rendering of space, especially in terms of architecture, is one of Jasmina Cibic's central interests. This is tackled in Nika Grabar's text, focusing on the oeuvre of the 'official state architect' of the socialist Yugoslavia, Vinko Glanz, and his constant endeavours to find the appropriate architectural language which is to duly represent the new system. Jane Rendell follows Cibic's rendering of the changing symbolic world of an ideology as well as the site-specific nature of her work. Her site-writing piece walks parallel with Jasmina Cibic's minute strategies of an embedded *acteur* - while Cibic adopts the mechanisms of the phenomena she investigates, Rendell's text tackles her films not through observation, but through participation in the language of the artwork.

But Jasmina Cibic's site-specificity goes further than that: her own participation as a "national representative" becomes another way of illuminating the incessant ideology of the state representation. Lina Džuverović investigates this very line of Cibic's project through the lens of soft power, punctuating the artist's over-identification with her role of a state representative as means of unravelling the underlying burden of politicisation. This is not far from Suzana Milevska's account of Cibic's "political economy of name", thus describing the artist's investigation of the paradox-ridden apparatus of scientific taxonomy in its unhappy relationship with changing political constellations.

As Jasmina Cibic builds her total work of art at the Slovene Pavilion in an attempt to shed light on the totality of ideological programming, thus the publication at hand follows in the footsteps of her project, bringing together and developing different

points of departure into a coherent yet multifaceted work in its own right. It is simultaneously a building element of the installation and an independent entity that partakes in Cibic's strategies of archaeology, mechanisms of exposure and constant endeavours of re-examination of the seemingly neutral, echoing Foucault's imperative: "Never consent to be completely comfortable with your own certainties".

Tevž Logar, Vladimir Vidmar

Editors