

Project Description

“Critique of Pure Image – Between Fake and Quotation”

First edition of the “International Project for Low and High Technics in Contemporary Media Art”, which will take place in Plovdiv, Bulgaria in October 2005 at the Center for Contemporary Art, Plovdiv, Turkish Baths

Under the topic: **“Critique of Pure Image – Between Fake and Quotation”**

A project of the **Art Today Association**

Curator and author of idea and text: **Dimitrina Sevova**

Opening	07 October 2005
International Exhibition	08 October-08 November 2005
Theoretical Symposium	08-10 October 2005
Open-Air Screening	09 October 2005
Production Workshop	12-18 October 2005

The Project in Context

The event is the successor project to **“Communication Front”** <project of electronic media art and theory>, which had three editions in Plovdiv, Bulgaria, in 1999-2001. If CFront arose in a very specific real situation, defined by the idea of developing networked artistic communities and solidarity in the struggle for overcoming the isolation and lack of information, on the backdrop of the blazing war in the Yugoslav republics falling apart and a new political, economical and cultural appreciation of South-East Europe taking shape, the new project is seeking an adequate answer to a changed situation, presenting a broader picture of the dynamics of the development of contemporary culture and art. At the same time, it leaves the opportunity for the situation of the moment to define the future approach and topics of the next editions of the project.

The continuity and link between the two projects on the conceptual and structural level takes a central role in expressing the priorities in terms of cultural politics of the Center for Contemporary Art, Plovdiv, Turkish Baths, and the Art Today Association, oriented towards the production, analysis and presentation of art and theory based on media art practices – electronic, communicative and digital. As a means, on the one hand, for the development and survival of the local artistic scene, and on the other, the elaboration of international strategies and perspectives of collaboration and cooperation, as the grounds for the development of critical debate and presentations related to the international and local artistic reality, but also as a chance for local actors to intervene in international events.

An International Laboratory for Critical Reflection

For a month the Center for Contemporary Art and the Art Today Laboratory will be turned into an international lab, a platform for interdisciplinary and cross-border encircling of the topic, seeking images and ideas about “Fakes” as artistic strategies for expressing social criticism in contemporary artistic practices.

Through artistic practices based on digital and communicational technologies and in the context of discussions around the contradictions that exist within contemporary culture, the project will explore the critical reflections and social aspects of questions raised by the main topic. The aim is to include the local audience in a process of approaching and engaging in the topic and material, and with discussions about the dependencies between such notions as art, technologies and society in relation to a common and inescapable technological progress, and at the same time the development of a democratic society with humanistically oriented culture.

A Project in Three Parts

The event is composed of three equally important parts, corresponding to three different approaches, as an opportunity to surround and explore the topic and find an adequate language: an international exhibition, a theoretical symposium, an international workshop for debuting artists from South-East Europe.

International Exhibition. International exhibition in the exhibition space of the Center for Contemporary Art, Plovdiv, Ancient Baths, and in other appropriate public places around the center of the city, such as the central train station, the central post office, computer shops, etc. This reflects the desire of the curator and organizers to break up stereotypes, to elaborate alternative strategies of communication between the work of the artists, the local environment and people, to ensure access to a broader and more diverse audience among the city's citizens. The exhibition will be open for four weeks starting with the opening of the event.

Based on a curatorial selection from the local and international art scene, around 25 media artists will be invited to present their works of documentation, critical interventions, media installations all the way to artistic expressions using low and high technics in public space in front of the local public.

The exhibition will aim to propose a broader understanding of the sense of the use of media and digital technologies in contemporary art and culture.

Theoretical meeting – interdisciplinary three-day symposium. Around 15-20 artists, art historians, theorists, researchers, media and political activists will be invited to develop their ideas, to present a given position and discuss among themselves and with fans of the event in a public theoretical meeting, a three-days symposium in the venue of the Center for Contemporary Art – Plovdiv, Ancient Baths. The aim is to provide a discussion forum with public critical debates and analysis, taking as a point of departure the topic proposed for the event, in a broader interdisciplinary theoretical framework of questions related to the development of technologies and the social dynamics and problems of these processes.

International workshop. Young artists and students in the last years of their education, after selection based on concepts prepared in advance, realistic in terms of time and technical resources required, on the topic of the project **“Critique of Pure Image – Between Fake and Quotation,”** will be invited to participate and realize their artistic intentions in the “Balkan mini format Web-based debut projects,” part of the **“International Project for Low and High Technics in Contemporary Media Art.”** The workshop will be held in the laboratory of the Center for Contemporary Art, Plovdiv. It is planned to create and present specific Web-based works in about one week of individual and collective work – artistic inspirations and experiments that expand on the questions linked to the basic theme of the project, followed by a public presentation in the space of the Center for Contemporary Art, Plovdiv, Turkish Baths and an international premiere – after the publication of the projects in Internet format. It is planned to publish the contributions later on an appropriate electronic media.

Newspaper and Web Publication. Before the opening of the event, a newspaper will be printed providing a theoretical background to the project and its curatorial approach, and presenting the participants, their ideas and their work. A Web documentation of the entire event will cover the exhibition, theoretical texts, discussions and the results of the workshop. Its publication in book form will fulfill the role of a document of the event, but will also endeavor to go beyond and broaden the theoretical and research framework of the topic, adapting other texts and materials with which to provide a deeper analysis and critique of the problem from a variety of points of views.