

# MG+MSUM

Press release

## 8<sup>th</sup> Triennial of Contemporary Art U3

### Beyond the Globe

3 June 2016 – 18 September 2016

Moderna galerija / Museum of Modern Art, Cankarjeva 15

Jože Barši | Marko Batista | Boris Beja | Goran Bertok | The Body of Confucius curated by Chang Tsong-Zung and Gao Shiming | BridA/Tom Kerševan, Sendi Mango, Jurij Pavlica | Ketī Chukhrov | Jasmina Cibic | Lenka Đorojević & Matej Stupica | Femkanje (Katarina Petrović & Bojana Knežević) | Vadim Fishkin | Maja Hodošček | Ištvan Išt Huzjan | IRWIN | Sergej Kapus | Staš Kleindienst | Nina Koželj | Tanja Lažetić | Gregor Mobius | Marko & Marika Pogačnik | Uroš Potočnik | Marjetica Potrč | Lina Rica & Boštjan Čadež | Sašo Sedlaček | Ali Van | Anton Vidokle | Yaji Garden curated by Chang Tsong-Zung and Gao Shiming | Arseny Zhilyaev | Dragan Živadinov::Miha Turšič::Dunja Zupančič

Curator: **Boris Groys**

Press conference: **Thursday, 2 June, at 11 a.m. at Moderna galerija / Museum of Modern Art**

Opening: **Friday, 3 June, at 8 p.m. at Moderna galerija / Museum of Modern Art**

On 3 June 2016 at 8 p.m. the 8th Triennial of Contemporary Art U3 is opening at the Museum of Modern Art in Ljubljana. The main topic of the U3 Triennial 2016 is the Cosmos. This time the curator of the triennial is **Boris Groys**, eminent art critic, media theorist, curator, and philosopher. In our cultural imagination "Cosmos" functions as a code word for the danger of the final extinction of all life on earth, and at the same time for the most radical utopian aspiration of universal harmony.

The 8th edition of U3 brings an important change: it takes the exhibition outside the national framework. The new concept of U3 focuses on a dialogue between Slovene space and other contexts that are relevant for it. In this it follows the good practice of certain established "peripheral" biennials that focus on their specific time and place and function as a platform for produced meanings and contents with long-term, positive effects on their spaces.

The Triennial features 29 artists and art collectives from Slovenia and the international art scene. The exhibition will be on view at the Moderna galerija, with a few works also displayed at the Museum of Contemporary Art Metelkova and the Reactor Center in Podgorica near Ljubljana. On the day of the opening, a special visit to the Reactor Center will be organized, for a guided tour of Ištvan Išt Huzjan's project.

A catalogue in Slovene and English accompanies the exhibition. The texts were written by the exhibition curator Boris Groys and the participating artists. The catalogue editors are Igor Španjol and Tamara Soban, and it is designed by New Collectivism.

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## OPENING EVENTS:

**Tuesday, 31 May 2016**, from 10 a.m. till noon: Opening of the exhibition *Nuclei* by Ištvan Išt Huzjan at the Reactor Center Podgorica (Podgorica pri Ljubljani) as the first event of the Triennial corresponding the 50th anniversary of the Reactor.

There will be an **organised visit of the exhibition** on Friday, 3 June, at 5 p.m. with the artists' guided tour on the site. **Please INFORM US if you want to take part.**

## OPENING OF THE TRIENNIAL

Friday, 3 June 2016 at 8 p.m., Moderna galerija.

## GUIDED TOUR BY THE CURATOR

Saturday, 4 June 2016 at 12.00, Moderna galerija. Guided tour by Boris Groys.

## LECTURE

Saturday, 4 June 2016 at 5 p.m., Moderna galerija, basement. Gregor Mobius: DNA Semantics, Visual Representation of DNA and RNA

## More about the concept of the Triennial:

In the age of globalization we have learned that we are dependent on everything that happens around the world – politically, economically, and ecologically. But the Earth is not isolated in the Cosmos. It depends on the processes that take place in the cosmic space – on black matter, waves and particles, star explosions and galactic collapses. And the fate of mankind also depends on these cosmic processes, because all these waves and particles go through human bodies. This dependence of mankind on cosmic events that are uncontrollable and even unknown is the source of a specifically modern anxiety. One could say a cosmic anxiety. The anxiety of being a part of the Cosmos – and not able to control it. Not accidentally, our mass culture is obsessed with visions of asteroids destroying the Earth, or of aliens coming out of the cosmic blackness with the goal of destroying the human race.

But this anxiety also takes more subtle forms. As an example one can cite the theory of the “accursed share” that was developed by Georges Bataille. According to this, the Sun sends more energy to the Earth than the planet, including the organisms living on its surface, can absorb. After all the efforts to use this solar energy for the production of goods and to raise the standard of living of the population, there remains a non-absorbed, non-used portion. This energy is necessarily destructive, and can be spent only through violence and war, or through ecstatic festivals and sexual orgies. Human culture and politics thus become determined by such cosmic energies, forever shifting between order and chaos.

However, the cosmic space presents itself at the same time as the last frontier, the last chance for genuine human endeavor. The exploration of the Cosmos does not have any immediate utilitarian function (except, perhaps a military one), and thus is similar to the Romantic ideal of art and poetry. Before and after the Russian Revolution the artists of the Russian avant-garde saw the Cosmos as the true place for a Communist society to be realized, beyond all the borders that divide men on Earth. The hope that contact with cosmic space would make all cultural and ethnic divisions irrelevant can also be found in many sci-fi novels and films. In our time of identity politics the Cosmos thus functions as the last remaining horizon of universalism – and not religious or ideological, but a materialist universalism. The Cosmos unites not our souls but our bodies, integrating them into universal material processes. But the technology

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used to explore space is at the same time used as a tool for surveillance, and would also be central to any future nuclear war.

Therefore, as a topic for an exhibition, the Cosmos offers many possibilities for artistic exploration. While the connection between the artistic and scientific imagination is the most obvious of these, it is also possible to carry out an analysis of sci-fi culture, examine various perspectives on corporeal immortality, present critiques of contemporary technology, and so on.

Already the architecture of Plečnik signals a desire to make contact not only with world history, but also with the mystical and mythical components of cosmic life – while doing so in an absolutely modern way. Next, one cannot overlook the work of Dragan Živadinov in relation to the project for the cosmic spaceship developed by Noordung (Herman Potočnik); or the work of Marko Pogačnik, whose approach towards the materiality of the Earth and Cosmos has a more individualistic and intuitive dimension. One also cannot ignore the attachment of many Slovene artists, including those of the younger generation, to the utopian vision of Malevich and, in general, the early Russian avant-garde. This vision still informs many of the Slovene art practices – especially when referred to in a critical, ironic or absurdist way.

**Boris Groys** is an art critic, media theorist, curator and philosopher. He is currently a Global Distinguished Professor of Russian and Slavic Studies at New York University and Senior Research Fellow at the Karlsruhe University of Arts and Design in Karlsruhe, Germany. Since 2013 he has also been a Professor at the European Graduate School in Switzerland. Groys' work first focused on the Russian avant-garde, as well as the various artistic movements that came after it in the twentieth century. Groys eventually broadened his reflections to encompass contemporary art, analyzing the legitimacy of works in public spaces and examining new media. His curatorial projects include the Russian Pavilion at the Venice Biennale (2011), and his work as co-curator of the Shanghai Biennale (2012). His recent books include: *History Becomes Form: Moscow Conceptualism* (2010), *An Introduction to Antiphilosophy* (2012), *Under Suspicion: A Phenomenology of Media* (2012), and *On the New* (2014).

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plus Muzej sodobne umetnosti Metelkova / Museum of Contemporary Art Metelkova  
Windischerjeva ulica 2, SI-1000 Ljubljana, Slovenia, T: +386 1 2416800, www.mg-lj.si, info@mg-lj.si

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## Information:

Andreja Bruss  
Moderna galerija  
Windischerjeva ulica 2 1000 Ljubljana  
T: +386 (0) 12416 817  
W: [www.mg-lj.si](http://www.mg-lj.si)  
E: [andreja.bruss@mg-lj.si](mailto:andreja.bruss@mg-lj.si)