

press to exit project space cordially invites you to the presentation

NAME Readymade

by Slovenian artists

Janez Janša, Janez Janša, Janez Janša

on Thursday, April 22, at Cultural Centre CK (Skopje), at 8pm

Everybody has a name. Not just a name, but usually a *Given name* and *Family name*, which together comprise one's *personal name*. But, what is a personal name? What is its role in society? A personal name is a conventional label used by people to differentiate a specific subject from others. A name is something that introduces an individual in a public environment. "Please, introduce yourself" means in fact "Please, tell me your name". But, just how personal is a personal name if it mainly has a public function? In what way can a name still be considered *given* and *family* if an individual has arbitrarily adopted it?



What happens when the personal name of a public figure is suddenly multiplied and starts to appear – locally and internationally – in contexts other than its original ones? What does a personal name mean – in terms of *brand* – in the contemporary neo-liberal society? What does it mean for a public figure to give up his established *brand* and continue his career with a brand-new name? In marketing speak: is it a "suicide" or can it be a strategic (and paradoxical) move of "visible disappearance"? Does the multiplication of the personal name as a signifier lead to the disappearance of the original referent or does it rather contribute to the popularity and the diffusion of that name? In which way does the multiplication of a personal name possibly render communication unstable due to the "hacking effect" it has on the unique identifier system?

What contradictions, paradoxes, tensions and legal questions, come to the foreground when valid identification documents are deemed – by specialists of the art field – innovative artifacts, new forms of *Readymade*?

NAME Readymade is a lecture/presentation about the "name changing" gesture perpetrated by three Slovenian artists, who in 2007 officially – with all the papers and stamps required – changed their names to that of the then prime minister of Slovenia Janez Janša. Since then, all of their works have been signed under this name; their private and their public affairs have also been conducted under this name.

"When the three artists changed their names to Janez Janša, they in fact adopted a critical stand to the state. To the Slovene government, in which until recently all posts seemed occupied as it were by a single person – Janez Janša. (...) Through the multiplication of Janez Janša's name, the function of the prime minister has assumed, within this specific artistic action, a similar position as the Campbell soup cans in Andy Warhol's works." (Zdenka Badovinac, *Name Readymade*, October 2008)

During the lecture, Janez Jansa will take you through a series of artistic, political, administrative and media actions performed by the three artists with a particular focus on their personal exhibition entitled *NAME Readymade* in which all of their valid personal documents (passports, ID cards, credit and bank cards ...) have been put on display.

“The use of personal documents as exhibition items is certainly a liminal case; it probes certain boundaries. It is liminal in that it is not clear whether or not such a use of personal documents respects the rights that you acquired when you were issued these documents. You cannot burn documents as this is a criminal offence, but what about the use of documents for artistic purposes?” (Lev Kreft, *Name as Readymade*, An interview with Janez Janša, Janez Janša and Janez Janša, *NAME Readymade*, October 2008)

Produced by Aksioma – Institute for Contemporary Art, Ljubljana

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RECOMMENDED READING:

Janez Janša | interview

An interview with J. Janša, J. Janša and J. Janša by Alessandro Ludovico

http://www.aksioma.org/name/press/interview_ludov.pdf

Name as Readymade

An interview with Janez Janša, Janez Janša and Janez Janša by Lev Kreft

www.aksioma.org/interview_kreft.html

NAME Readymade - THE BOOK

Museum of Modern Art Ljubljana, Oct. 2008

www.aksioma.org/name_book

The NAME Readymade lecture presentation has been presented at:

- Location One, New York, May 2009
- MNAC – National Museum of Contemporary Art, Bucharest, March 2009
- PSI – Performance Studies International Conference, Zagreb, July 2009
- Fabryka Trzciny, Warsaw, October 2009
- Atelier Real, Lisbon, November 2009
- Festival Amber '09, Istanbul, November 2009
- TheatreWorks / 72-13, Singapur, January 2010
- Art Laboratory Berlin, Berlin, February 2010

For the organizer:

press to exit project space was established in 2004 by Yane Calovski and Hristina Ivanoska as a special program-based artist initiative for research and production in the field of visual arts and curatorial practices. The project undertake a critical examination and evaluation of the questions raised by contemporary artists, curators, architects and theorists in Macedonia, the Balkan region and beyond, in relation to contemporary society and the practice of art.

The three main programs of activities are: Visiting Curatorial Initiative, New Project Productions and Lectures, Exhibitions and Publications.

The Visiting Curatorial Initiative – the only program of its kind in the region – is setup to provide an opportunity for emerging international curators to develop new projects in Macedonia, to share their knowledge and to gain understanding of the local context.

The New Project Productions is a program designed to engage Macedonian artists and curators in production of new projects which critically address issues of social, political, and cultural relevance by partnering them in development of the concept and the production by offering a start-up budget.

The Lectures, Exhibitions and Publications series has become an alternative educational platform putting artists, cultural theorists, performers, designers and critics under the same roof and encouraging them to share and present informal lectures and start new discussions. The Publication Series encourages collaboration between press to exit, the author and the designer in analyses of the book as a meaningful format for representing artistic and curatorial research projects.