

Laibach is a cross-media collective formation, founded in 1980 in the industrial mining town Trbovlje. The name Laibach (Austro-German for the capital city Ljubljana) as well as the group's militant self-stylisation, propagandist manifestos and statements have raised numerous debates on their artistic and political positioning.

Due to official political ban on Laibach in Slovenia/Yugoslavia in 1983 the group initiated the founding of a wider collective of NSK (Neue Slowenische Kunst) in 1984 and its graphic department Novi Kolektivizem (New Collectivism), extending Laibach tactics and aesthetic into a wider and diverse media practice. This led to the establishment of a strong platform for cultural activity within the climate of liberalisation and pluralisation in 80ies Yugoslavia. NSK existed as a collective movement till 1992, when it modified itself into a virtual *State in Time*.

Laibach became internationally renowned in the music scene, especially with their violating re-interpretations of hits by Queen and the Beatles, but also by their unique concerts in occupied Sarajevo (1995) or their recent one in North Korean capital of Pyongyang (2015) and remaining a point of reference in terms of artistic cultural criticism.

During recent years the group underwent an international re-evaluation of their artistic practice in the course of an emergence of post-structuralist views on worldwide conceptual art production and has thus performed a special extended and sold out show on April 14<sup>th</sup> 2012 in London's Tate Modern - Turbine Hall. Extensive Laibach Kunst retrospective exhibitions were shown in Łódź (Muzeum Sztuki), Ljubljana (MGLC), Trbovlje (Delavski Dom), Maribor (UGM) and Zagreb (HDLU) in the period between 2009 - 2012. Laibach has also been subject of the large retrospective exhibition on NSK, presented by Moderna Gallery Ljubljana in 2015, in Van Abbe Museum in Eindhoven in 2016, in Garage Museum of Contemporary Art in Moscow, 2016 and in Museo Reina Sofía in Madrid, 2017.

“Laibach was formed in the atmosphere of postmodernism of the early 1980s. They were promoters of the postmodern “retro style”, and opposition to the soft forms of eclectic postmodernism (transavantgarde, neo-expressionism). They deliberately worked on the discourses of totalitarian regimes (fascism, Nazism, Bolshevism) in the forms of avant-garde and neo-avant-garde, which combined forms of high and popular culture. They placed symbols of the revolutionary past and media national symbols alongside the cult images of so-called realism, genre and historical painting alongside the Russian artistic experiment, Entartete Kunst alongside Nazi Kunst, Malevich's pointlessness alongside Heartfield's photomontages, partisan graphics alongside the images from medical manuals. Laibach simulated the behaviours of totalitarian military and paramilitary groups and manifested themselves as symptoms of political incorrectness in a “humanist-oriented socialism” and “Western liberalism”.

The years between 1981 and 1984 were a period of Laibach's intensive activities on the Ljubljana alternative scene, as well as its penetration in the global media and music scene. Laibach held exhibitions as evening events (*soirées*) in Škuc Gallery, they attracted numerous audiences and triggered turbulent reactions. The first image was compacted in a black cross. A number of iconic images followed: a metalworker, a sower, a deer, a drummer, freedom, a scream, engineers of human souls, red districts, a cogwheel. Images – disassembling and reassembling images, words, light and sound – also contributed to controversial media appearances and prohibitions. Laibach's referential field was broad: collective work and rejection of individuality, reproductive technique and combining contradictions, appropriation and layering of meanings that refer to art, history and politics. Laibach built their overall image on the basis of totalitarian ritual ceremonies and avant-garde procedures, and presented the public with enigmatic aesthetic practice as an open work and a complex construct that cannot be decoded without residuals, since the receiver or their

perception is a constituent part of the effect. In all this, the knowledge of the context, symbols, history of artistic practices and movements played a decisive role, and the reception was largely directed and determined by shock strategy and tactics of manipulation and provocation.

A great deal has been written about the ideological implications and semantic connotations of Laibach's work, but less on their artistic methods, procedures and specific works. When Laibach introduced composed collages and bricolages, taking advantage of the possibilities of a photocopier, a tape recorder and video devices. The technology was used subversively, and the reference field of the current use of *cut-up* techniques, the sampling of sound and images, the specifics of xerox aesthetics and performative stage-acting were complex and multifaceted, ranging from William S. Burroughs to industrial art rock groups.

Xerox changed the status of the copy, it introduced specific aesthetics and enabled simpler procedures for appropriation of images and their placement in a different context, and even more, it enabled new procedures for the construction of a complex image with text and distinctive typography, such as sequential photocopying, cutting and displacing, maximizing and minimalizing, repetition, overlaying, assembling into images of large dimensions and ambient layouts, inserting a fragment of one painting into another. In collaboration with various video artists, Laibach made a series of short videos in which the performative stage-acting of the band and found footages, transformed and assembled in a frenetic rhythm, were at the forefront”.

## **Selected CHRONOLOGY / EXHIBITIONS**

### **1980**

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LAIBACH founded in Trbovlje.

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ALTERNATIVA SLOVENSKI KULTURI (*ALTERNATIVE TO THE SLOVENE CULTURE*) – Delavski dom (*Workers' Home*) Cultural Centre, Trbovlje, Slovenia, Yugoslavia; first public manifestation of Laibach with collective exhibition and a concert; the event was banned before opening.

### **1981**

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LAIBACH KUNST – Galerija Srečna nova umetnost (*Happy New Art Gallery*), SKC (*Student Cultural Centre*), Belgrade, Serbia, Yugoslavia; first exhibition of Laibach paintings, graphic works, articles and presentation of Laibach's music from the tapes.

### **1982**

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ŽRTVE LETALSKE NESREČE (*VICTIMS OF A PLANE CRASH*) – Disco FV 112 / 15, Ljubljana; installation and first public concert by Laibach. The group introduces the record player as an instrument and vinyl records as a sound sample source.

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AUSSTELLUNG! LAIBACH KUNST – ŠKUC (*Student Cultural Centre*), Ljubljana; exhibition of paintings and graphic art, concert of a Laibach sub-group 300.000 VERSCHIEDENE KRAWALLE.

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AUSSTELLUNG LAIBACH KUNST – SKC (*Student Cultural Centre*), Belgrade; exhibition and concert. Laibach uses military smoke bombs as special effects within the show.

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TOUCH OF EVIL – Laibach performance (exhibition, concert) at the festival YU-rock Alternativa Festival, RANS Moša Pijade (*Mosha Pijade Hall*), Zagreb; due to alleged controversy of the show military officials investigate and question members of the group before and during the concert.

### 1983

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AUSSTELLUNG LAIBACH KUNST – REŽIMSKA TRANSAVANTGARDA (*REGIME TRANS-AVANT-GARDE*) – Galerija PM – Prošireni mediji (*Expanded Media Gallery*), Zagreb; Laibach exhibition banned and closed after four days due to 'inappropriate motives exhibited'.

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AUSSTELLUNG LAIBACH KUNST – MONUMENTALNA RETROAVANTGARDA (*MONUMENTAL RETRO-AVANT-GARDE*) – ŠKUC (*Student Cultural Centre*), Ljubljana; exhibition of art works and presentation of Laibach's first video film *Documents of Oppression*.

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XY – NEREŠENO (*XY – UNSOLVED*) – TV Tednik (*TV Weekly*), RTV Ljubljana; controversial TV interview with Laibach.

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Laibach forbidden by MK SZDL Ljubljana (City Committee of the Socialistic union of working people of Ljubljana). The ban was later officially announced in Uradni list Republike Slovenije (*The Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia*).

### 1984

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THE DEBATE OVER MAN ("A Polemic Monologue as Artistic Method: Position, Problems, Perspectives") – presentation of Laibach manifests at the video festival held at Georges Pompidou Center in Paris, France.

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WAS IST KUNST? – SKC, Belgrade; Laibach performance/exhibition

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On a meeting between the members of the three groups Laibach, Irwin, and Gledališče sester Scipion Nasice "NEUE SLOWENISCHE KUNST" was established in Ljubljana. The establishment of NSK was connected with the official Laibach ban and it was part of the strategy to expand Laibach aesthetics and philosophy into other media.

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Laibach takes part in the New Year's exhibition of paintings and graphic works in ŠKUC Gallery, Ljubljana.

### 1985

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NOVE TENDENCE V UMETNOSTI '80 (*NEW TENDENCIES IN THE ART OF THE 80s*), ŠKUC, Ljubljana; Laibach takes part in a group exhibition.

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BERLINALE '85 – West Berlin; participation at the video festival "Infermental".

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DAS IST KUNST – performance in Belgrade, SKC Hall; official Laibach concert posters are banned.

## **1986**

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NO FIRE ESCAPE IN HELL – eleven performances with Clark & Co. at Sadler's Wells Theatre in London.

## **1987**

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LIFT '87 – presentation of the entire NSK at the London International Festival of Theatre, with Laibach performance at Riverside Studios, London.

## **1988**

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LA VIE C'EST MOI – performances at the occasion of Divergences/Divisiones Festival, D.M.A.2., at Entrepots Laine Hall in Bordeaux, France.

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N.Y. '88 – two performances at the occasion of the N.Y. Festival of Art, The Kitchen, New York.

## **1990**

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DESET LET LAIBACHA – DESET LET SLOVENSKE SAMOSTOJNOSTI (*TEN YEARS OF LAIBACH – TEN YEARS OF SLOVENE INDEPENDENCE*) – Trbovlje, Termoelektrarna II (*Thermo-electrical power station II*); their first appearance in their hometown since their initial banned project of 1980, exhibition, performances,...

## **1992**

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NSK EMBASSY MOSCOW – collective NSK event in Moscow with the opening of the NSK Embassy and the concluding action "Black Square on Red Square". Proclamation of the NSK State in Time.

## **1993**

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NSK STAAT VOLKSBÜHNE – collective three days NSK event in Volksbühne in Berlin, with proclamation of temporary NSK State territory (Volksbühne) and with NSK State passport issuing.

## **1995**

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NSK STATE SARAJEVO – collective NSK event in the National Theatre in occupied Sarajevo. Proclamation of Sarajevo as a temporary NSK State territory, issuing NSK passports.

## 1998

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BODY AND THE EAST, From the 1960 to the Present – Laibach collaboration in group exhibition, Moderna galerija, Ljubljana (*Museum of Modern Art*).

## 2001

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NSK: RETRO-SPECTION – paintings by Laibach in the framework of the joint NSK exhibition, Halsey Gallery, College of Charleston, Charleston, South Carolina, USA & Thorne-Sagendorph Art Gallery, Keene State College, Keene, NH, USA.

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THE ART OF EASTERN EUROPE – Laibach included in 'A Selection of Works for the International and National Collections of Moderna galerija, Ljubljana' exhibition, Orangerie Congress, Innsbruck, Austria.

## 2003

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DO ROBA IN NAPREJ (*TILL THE EDGE AND BEYOND*) – Slovene Art 1975–1985, Moderna Art Gallery, Ljubljana.

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EINKAUF – public action in City Park, BTC Ljubljana; Laibach, wearing uniforms of German army officers from World War II, walked along the main "avenue" of the City Park shopping mall in the BTC shopping district in Ljubljana.

## 2004

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RAZŠIRJENI PROSTORI UMETNOSTI (*EXPANDED SPACES OF ART*) – Slovene Art 1985–1995, Moderna Art Gallery, Ljubljana.

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7 SINS – LJUBLJANA – MOSCOW ARTEAST EXHIBITION – collaboration in group exhibition in Moderna Art Gallery, Ljubljana.

## 2005

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THE RETROFUTURISTIC UNIVERSE OF NSK – Neil Rector NSK collection (including Laibach Kunst) exhibited in Frye Art Museum in Seattle, Washington, USA.

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TERITORIJI, IDENTITETE, MREŽE (*TERRITORIES, IDENTITIES, NETS*) – Slovene Art 1995–2005, Moderna Art Gallery, Ljubljana.

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INSTRUMENTALNOST DRŽAVNEGA STROJA (*INSTRUMENTALITY OF THE STATE MACHINE*) – Laibach Kunst's sound installation was exhibited within a series of sound events,

performances, sound installations, workshops and lectures, called "Oscillations – 30 days of sound", Mala galerija (*Small Gallery*), Ljubljana.

## 2006

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INSTRUMENTALNOST DRŽAVNEGA STROJA (*INSTRUMENTALITY OF THE STATE MACHINE*) – Sound installation in KiBela Gallery of KIBLA Multimedia centre in Maribor, Slovenia

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RETURN OF THE REPRESSIVE – opening of the LAIBACH KUNST *inhibition* "Instrumentality of the State Machine" with a live premiere of the "Laibach Concerto for Magnetophone, Gramophone, Radiophone and Megaphone" at Custard Factory Gallery in Birmingham (UK).

## 2007

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KAUFHAUS DES OSTENS – Laibach installation "Monumental Retroavantgarde" exhibited at Kunsthaus Erfurt in Germany as part of the international show Kaufhaus des Ostens – KaDeOs.

## 2009

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AUSSTELLUNG LAIBACH KUNST – REKAPITULACJA/RECAPITULATION '09; – Laibach solo exhibition in Muzeum Sztuki in Łódź, Poland.

## 2010

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GESAMTKUNST LAIBACH, Fundamentals 1980 - 1990 - Laibach solo exhibition at the MGLC (International Centre of Graphic Arts,), Ljubljana

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DORM, The Model's galleries, Sligo, Ireland; participation at the group exhibition

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PROMISES OF THE PAST, Centre Pompidou, Paris, France; participation at the group exhibition

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SCHWARZGOLD, Schloss Beesenstedt near Halle an der Saale, Germany; participation at the group exhibition

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EINKAUF, Laibach Kunst Installation, Galerie Seiler, Munich

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AUSSTELLUNG LAIBACH KUNST - RED DISTRICTS + BLACK CROSS 1980 - 2010, Delavski Dom Trbovlje, solo exhibition

## 2011

- AUSSTELLUNG LAIBACH KUNST - PERSPECTIVES 1980 - 2011, UGM Maribor Art Gallery, retrospective solo exhibition
- AUSSTELLUNG LAIBACH KUNST - 'CECI N'EST PAS MALEVICH!' , HDLU Zagreb, retrospective solo exhibition
- RAUMSCHIFF JUGOSLAWIEN - Die Aufhebung der Zeit, Neue Gessellschaft fuer Bildende Kunst, Berlin; participation at the group exhibition
- AT HOW MANY LUX...? - GLOW Festival, Eindhoven; participation at the group exhibition

## 2012

- BEYOND OCCUPIED IMAGES, Galerija ŠKUC, Ljubljana, participation at the group exhibition
- MONUMENTAL RETRO-AVANT-GUARDE, Tate Modern, Turbine Hall, London,; special Laibach performance
- AUSSTELLUNG LAIBACH KUNST - GLUECK AUF!, Laibach Kunst installation at Velenje Coal Mining Museum, solo show
- LAIBACH PERFORMANCE at the National Gallery of Denmark
- RED, WHITE & BLUE: POP / Punk / Politics / Space; Chelsea Space Gallery, London; participation at the group exhibition
- YUGOSLAVIA: FROM THE BEGINNING TO THE END  
Museum of Yugoslav History / Museum May 25<sup>th</sup>, Belgrade  
Participation at the group exhibition

## 2013

- MATERIALITY, Kibla Portal, Maribor, Slovenia; participation at the group exhibition
- BIENNIAL OF CONTEMPORARY ART, D-0 ARK Underground; Atomic shelter, Konjic, BiH, participation at the group exhibition
- BLACK SQUARE - 100 YEARS  
Lion Arts Centre, Adelaide BC, Australia  
Participation at the group exhibition

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IDENTIFYING EUROPE  
TWENTE BIENNALE, Roombeek, Enschede, NL  
Participation at the group exhibition

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WAS IST KUNST?... RESUMING FRAGMENTED HISTORIES  
Halle fuer Kunst & Medien, Steirischer Herbst  
Participation at the group exhibition

## **2014**

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AUSSTELLUNG LAIBACH KUNST - THE NEW CULTURAL REVOLUTION  
CIA Gallery, Hong Kong, solo show

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AUSSTELLUNG LAIBACH KUNST - RED DISTRICTS  
INDUSTRIAL ART BIENNIAL, Labin, Croatia (Participation at the group exhibition)

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BÖSE CLOWNS  
HMKV , Dortmunder U - Participation at the group exhibition

## **2015**

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GRAMMAR OF FREEDOM, FIVE LESSONS  
Garage Museum of Contemporary Art, Moscow  
Participation at the group exhibition

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NSK FROM KAPITAL TO CAPITAL - AN EVENT OF THE FINAL DECADE OF YUGOSLAVIA  
Moderna galerija, Ljubljana  
Participation at the collective exhibition

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Laibach special performance at the MSUM Zagreb

## **2016**

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NSK FROM KAPITAL TO CAPITAL - AN EVENT OF THE FINAL DECADE OF YUGOSLAVIA  
Garage Museum of Contemporary Art, Moscow  
Participation at the collective exhibition

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AUSSTELLUNG LAIBACH KUNST - RED DISTRICTS + BLACK CROSS, solo show  
Galerie Caesar, Olomouc, CZ

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COLD FRONT FROM THE BALKANS  
Pera Müzesi ('Pera Museum'), Istanbul - Participation at the group exhibition

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AUSSTELLUNG LAIBACH KUNST MASCHINE, solo show  
Galerija Sveta Srca, Pula

## 2017

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THE EIGHTIES Multimedia Practices and Venues of Production  
Museum of contemporary Art Metelkova (+MSUM), Ljubljana  
Participation at the group exhibition

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NSK FROM KAPITAL TO CAPITAL - AN EVENT OF THE FINAL DECADE OF YUGOSLAVIA  
Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, Madrid  
Participation at the collective exhibition

## 2018

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SELECTION FROM THE COLLECTIONS | Arteast 2000+ and National Collections  
Museum of Contemporary Art Metelkova (+MSUM), Ljubljana, Slovenia  
Participation at the group exhibition

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HELLO WORLD. REVISING A COLLECTION  
Hamburger Bahnhof, Museum für Gegenwart, Berlin  
Participation at the group exhibition

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DOUBLE LIVES. VISUAL ARTISTS MAKING MUSIC  
MUMOK, Museum of Modern Art, Vienna  
Participation at the group exhibition

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THE VALUE OF FREEDOM  
Belvedere 21, Vienna, Austria  
Participation at the group exhibition

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Sites of Sustainability. Pavilions, Manifestos, and Crypts  
Museum of Contemporary Art Metelkova (+MSUM), Ljubljana, Slovenia

## 2019

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SELECTION FROM THE COLLECTIONS | Arteast 2000+ and National Collections  
Museum of Contemporary Art Metelkova (+MSUM), Ljubljana, Slovenia  
Participation at the group exhibition

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EXHIBITION | 20th Century. Continuities and Ruptures  
Moderna Art Gallery (MG+), Ljubljana, Slovenia  
Participation at the group exhibition

**2020**

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Liberty Leads the People  
»S« Gallery, Ljubljana Castle, Ljubljana, Slovenia  
Solo exhibition

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Ausstellung! Laibach Kunst  
RE : CONS : TRUCT  
work · discipline · pleasure  
P74 Gallery, Ljubljana, Slovenia  
Solo exhibition

**P74 Gallery** represents/collaborates with internationally most renowned and established conceptual and post-conceptual artists from East Europe, like Sanja Iveković, Mladen Stilinović, Laibach Kunst, Dalibor Martinis, Tadej Pogačar, Jože Barši, Dejan Habicht, Milena Usenik and OM Production.

Among them the Gallery represent and support the generation of younger visual artists from Slovenia: Polonca Lovšin, Tomaž Furlan, Small but dangers and Uroš Potočnik.

Info:

P74 Gallery, Ljubljana

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